



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 5 December 2023

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| REPORT TITLE | WIRRAL PARKING STRATEGY |
| REPORT OF | DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE |

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the adoption of a parking strategy proposed to cover public on and off-street parking in Wirral.

Members will recall that on the 19 June 2023 a report was presented to this committee detailing work being undertaken to support the development of the parking strategy, which included surveys and modelling forecasts, reviews of research and best practice from other authorities, and also provided details of the Phase 1 of public and stakeholder consultation.

This earlier work, along with the feedback from a second Phase of public and stakeholder consultation, undertaken between 7 August to 25 September 2023, has been used to produce a parking strategy with the aim that it will support the safe and efficient management of traffic, help the local economy and businesses, and contribute to addressing the environment and climate emergency. The parking strategy is intended to provide a clear framework to manage on and off-street parking in Wirral within a wider context of sustainable economic growth and urban regeneration.

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to approve the parking strategy as set out in Appendix 1.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 A parking strategy will play a critical role to support safe and effective management of the highway network within the wider context of sustainable economic growth and regeneration.
- 1.2 The development of an effective parking strategy is critical to align with and support other 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.
- 1.3 A parking strategy is required to support the development and implementation of future parking policies and interventions for all modes. The parking strategy provides the framework for policies and interventions. Any traffic management or operational proposals to enable delivery of this strategy will be the subject of further reports to this committee and would be supported by further analysis, consultation, and evidence, including further survey/data collection as appropriate.
- 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 Liverpool 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 adopt a parking strategy. This is not considered an appropriate option as a parking strategy is an important framework to support the safe and effective management of the highway network and support sustainable economic growth and regeneration. If a parking strategy was not in place this could impact on the efficiency of the operation of the highway, as well as the ability to support the environment and climate emergency declaration.

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. The Committee resolved not to re-introduce car parking charges at that time but appointed a working group to consider

options and bring back a further report to the Environment, Climate Change and Transport Committee.

- 3.2 On 3 December 2020 the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee received the report of the working group and resolved that (amongst other matters) that the findings of the Working Group be noted and the recommendations be agreed, including the following:

“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”.

and

“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 were appointed and commenced the initial survey work to analyse the parking provision and usage in the borough.

- 3.4 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.

- 3.5 The study covered public on and off-street parking only as this is within the direct influence of the council and included a review of:

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

- 3.6 The findings of the baseline report and the first phase of consultation were reported to committee on the 19 June 2023. The committee resolved:
“That the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to undertake further consultation in Summer 2023 on the potential interventions to be considered for inclusion in a Wirral Parking Strategy”.

- 3.7 In line with the committee resolution a second phase of public and stakeholder consultation and engagement was undertaken. Phase 2 of consultation and engagement provided the public and stakeholders with an update regarding the parking study work undertaken to date and sought views specifically around the proposed interventions. The consultation ran from 7 August 2023 to 25 September 2023.
- 3.8 This earlier research and study work, along with the feedback from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the public and stakeholder consultations has now been used to produce a parking strategy with the aim that it will support the safe and efficient management of traffic, help the local economy and businesses, and contribute to addressing the environment and climate emergency. The parking strategy is intended to provide a clear framework to manage on and off-street parking in Wirral within a wider context of sustainable economic growth and urban regeneration.
- 3.9 The proposed parking strategy, attached at Appendix 1, has been prepared following consideration of the results of both phases of the consultation and proposes 10 policies which will be subject to further study and development and consultation as each policy matures through to delivery during the lifetime of the strategy. The proposed policies are divided in to short, medium and long term and further detail is provided in Appendix 1.
- 3.10 Short-term strategy policies include:
- Pricing travel demand management measures to tipping points (car parks, on-street, residential controlled parking zones and country parks);
 - Faster provision of electric vehicle infrastructure to encourage more low emission vehicles;
 - Increase numbers of residential controlled parking zones across Wirral; and
 - Public Space Protection Orders and/or Traffic regulation Orders to manage issues related to schools and kerbside management, especially for managing nuisance parking behaviours.

Medium-term strategy policies include:

- As short-term policies above; plus
- Smart mobility hubs; and
- Rationalising under-used car parks.

Longer term strategy policies proposed include:

- A short and medium term above; plus
- Workplace car parking levy;
- Dynamic pricing (mix of time-based and emissions-based); and
- Further additional residential controlled parking zones.

- 3.11 Each policy will require further work to develop and implement appropriate operational measures in support of delivery of the strategy. Any proposals to

enable delivery of this strategy will be the subject of further reports to this committee and would be supported by further analysis, including further updated survey/data collection as appropriate, and consultation, in some cases statutory.

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 is reported within the Neighbourhoods directorate.

4.2 Implementation of the parking policies/interventions may have financial implications, either by generating income or require a budget to implement. The financial implications of any individual interventions proposed in support of delivery of this strategy will therefore be presented in further detail for consideration by this committee in a future 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.

- Section 46 of the RTRA makes provision for charges for the use of designated parking places on streets.
- 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."
- 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...".
- Section 55 RTRA sets out financial provisions relating to designation orders in respect of designated parking places. 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 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;

5.2 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.

5.3 The development of a parking strategy will support the council to implement new parking measures and provide a framework to consider in respect of any legal challenges or objections that may be received during any statutory consultation processes.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 Existing staff resources will be used to support the delivery of the Parking Strategy.

6.2 There are no immediate ICT or asset implications as a direct result of this report however it should be noted that proposals around the use of a smart phone parking app and future reviews of underutilised car park assets may have implications for these areas in the delivery of the strategy going forward. Any detailed proposals would be subject to further reports.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Failure or delay to deliver the parking strategy will impact on the ability to implement traffic management measures and therefore negatively impact on the safe and effective operation of the highway network.

7.2 Failure or delay to adopt or implement the parking strategy may impact on the timeline for any parking proposals being implemented – this may a subsequent impact on budgets within the Neighbourhood Directorate.

7.3 Failure or delay to adopt and implement the parking strategy will impact on the ability to deliver against elements of the emerging Local Plan, Birkenhead 2040 and the Climate and Environment Emergency Declaration.

- 7.4 The parking study was commissioned in 2021 during the various lockdown periods brought about by the impacts of Covid-19. In order to avoid biased and unrepresentative survey data, the analysis used 2019 parking data as this was before the impacts of Covid-19.. Given this data collection took place in 2019, in order to mitigate the risk of changes in usage since that date any future traffic management or operational changes to support delivery of the strategy will be subject to further decision making to be supported by further analysis, including further updated survey/data collection as appropriate, and consultation, in some cases statutory.
- 7.5 Individual operational measures in support of delivery of the strategy will be subject of future reports to this committee. Further details regarding risk will be included in those future reports. The management of these risks will be undertaken by the project manager and monitored via the Project Management Office.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Two phases of public and stakeholder consultation have been undertaken, primarily using the Have your Say consultation portal however options were also available for paper versions including in Easy Read format. In order to maximise input to the consultation it was also promoted by:
- BirkenEds Place
 - Targeted stakeholder and Elected Member emails offering meetings to discuss if required
 - Organic social media (shared across Facebook, Instagram and X formerly 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
 - Staff email – Exec View (for Wirral Council employees).
 - Briefing sessions with Committee Members
- 8.2 A total of 2125 people responded to Phase 2 of the public consultation (7 August 2023 until the 25 September 2023) with 46 respondents to the stakeholder survey. A total of 2171 responses were received. In comparison Phase 1, undertaken between the 18 July and 9 October 2022 received 1188 responses.
- 8.3 Full details of the results of the Phase 2 Have your Say consultation can be found in Appendix 2. Phase 1 Have your Say consultation results were presented in detail to July 2023 Committee but are also summarised in the draft strategy document at Appendix 1.

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 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 development of a parking strategy provides an opportunity to ensure that the regeneration of Wirral supports the Cool 2 sustainability targets. An effective parking strategy can have a positive environmental and climate change impact through the efficient traffic management of motorised vehicles whilst also ensuring secure parking for cycles, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes is available to encourage and enable increased numbers of multi modal and 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 Climate and Emergency Action Plan. Current evidence shows a lack of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging is suppressing the uptake of EVs in Wirral which is below the national average. An aim of the parking strategy is to support the transition to emerging technologies (e.g. EVs).

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 undertaken in support of delivery of this strategy the Council will be looking to maximise further social value activity.

REPORT AUTHOR: Julie Barnes
Lead Commissioner Transport and Technology
Strategic Transport
Regeneration and Place Directorate,

Tel 0151 606 2365
juliebarnes@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Wirral Parking Strategy (Draft)

Appendix 2 - 'Have your Say' Phase 2 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 PAPERS

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-VISION090522.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting | Date |
|---|--------------|
| ECET | 3 Dec 2020 |
| P&R committee meeting re Car Parking Charges Option | 7 Oct 2020 |
| ECET | 19 June 2023 |