

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 29th January 2015

Lead Member/Officer: Lead Member for Public Realm/
Head of Highways and Environmental Services

Report Author: Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager

Title: Findings of the Traffic and Parking Review

1. What is the report about?

This report outlines the findings of the Traffic and Parking Review. These findings result in a series of recommendations for the Denbighshire towns covered by the Review.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 To brief the Committee on the main findings and recommended actions contained within the Traffic and Parking Review.
- 2.2 To seek support in principle for the recommended actions to be further developed, subject to them being subsequently discussed and agreed by the relevant Member Area Groups.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- 3.1 notes the contents of the Review report;
- 3.2 supports in principle the development of the series of recommended actions in the Review as summarised in Appendix C. (The proposed next steps will be to attach indicative costs to each of the actions and to discuss these actions with each of the respective Member Area Groups); and
- 3.3 supports the undertaking of a further piece of work to examine in greater detail the potential of varying parking charges between towns according to supply and demand as identified by the Traffic and Parking Review.

4. Report details.

- 4.1 The Council's Economic Ambition Strategy contains an action to undertake a county-wide Traffic Management and Parking Review. The reason for undertaking this Review is to explore what Traffic and Parking related interventions the Council could implement to benefit town centre retail in terms of increased footfall and trade.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 The scope and methodology for the Traffic Management and Parking Review was previously reported to and supported by the Communities Scrutiny Committee in March 2014 and is included in Appendix A to this report. It was agreed that the Review would be restricted to the ten main retail town centres in Denbighshire, Corwen, Denbigh, Dyserth, Llangollen, Meliden, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, Rhyl, Ruthin and St Asaph.

4.2.2 It was also agreed that there would be the following distinct stages to the review:

- i) Parking Supply Survey
- ii) Supply Performance Data Survey
- iii) Residents' Survey
- iv) Business Survey
- v) Analysis of survey data
- vi) Identification of recommended actions

4.2.3 The purpose of the parking supply survey was to identify the number and location of available parking spaces within each town centre both on-street and in car parks.

4.2.4 The Supply Performance Data Surveys monitored usage of parking spaces and also assessed elements like direction signage and the quality of the public realm.

4.2.5 The Residents' Survey consisted of questionnaires being sent 20,000 households. This was targeted at residents living within a 5 mile radius of the towns under consideration. A 10% response rate is typical for postal surveys so it was pleasing that an actual response rate of 19% was achieved. The survey was purposefully not referred to as a traffic or parking survey in order to introduce possible response bias.

4.2.6 A business survey was then sent to 294 businesses chosen from the Business Directory with 77 participating which represented a response rate of 26%.

4.2.7 Summary of main findings and recommendations within the Review Report

4.3 Report analysis, findings and recommendations

4.3.1 A summary of the main findings and recommendations within the Review Report is included in Appendix C as they are too numerous to list within this Committee Report.

4.3.2 Common to most of the town centre reviews is the observation that quite significant proportions of on-street parking bays are occupied by vehicles parking for longer than the permitted time limit as indicated on the adjacent parking signs. Some of this "overstay parking" is attributable to legitimate parking by blue badge holders who are permitted to park in on-street parking bays without time limit. The rest, however, is because of motorists parking for longer than they are allowed.

- 4.3.3 Overstay parking is a significant issue and its importance cannot be overstated in terms of its relevance to the Traffic and Parking Review. On-street parking generally provides free, short stay parking spaces that are close to the shops. The convenience offered by these spaces is vital in terms of improving the accessibility of town centres and it is thus important that a healthy “turnover” and availability of these spaces is maintained.
- 4.3.4 The overstay parking most likely occurs partially because existing time limits are not quite long enough but most likely because increased enforcement is needed. It is, therefore, proposed that both of these issues are tackled and amongst the Review’s recommendations increased enforcement and the change of many on-street bays to a 1 hour time limit. It is likely that an increase in the availability of on-street spaces may reduce car park income, however, this is likely to be compensated for by the income generated by increased enforcement of on-street parking bays.
- 4.3.5 An increase in the enforcement of on-street parking bays was commenced in October 2014. It is recommended that further surveys are undertaken in Spring 2015 to monitor the effectiveness of this increased enforcement. These surveys will be carried out by the Traffic Department and thus costs will be contained within existing staff budgets.
- 4.3.6 Another common issue picked up by the consultants undertaking the Review was that it was felt that pedestrian signs between car parks and shops could be improved.
- 4.3.7 The Review also concluded that there was scope to vary parking tariffs between towns according to supply and demand. Car parking tariffs are presently the same across Denbighshire, except where local subsidies are in place, such as in Ruthin. It is recommended that such changes should be considered in light of the findings of the Review.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

Supporting local business is a Corporate Priority. The Traffic Management and Parking Review is one of the actions within the Economic Ambition Strategy. The provision of good parking facilities and an attractive public realm can increase the attractiveness of town centres thus increasing footfall.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The recommended actions contained within Appendix C to this report are to be further developed which will include having cost estimates attached to each action. The actions will then need to be discussed by the respective Member Area Groups before they can progress.

The costs of the works identified would be potentially met from a range of sources such as the existing Traffic Management revenue budget or from capital funding such

as County Capital, Regeneration-linked funding or the Welsh Government's Local Transport Plan fund.

Any changes to Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) would require the usual input from the Legal Department in terms of the processing of legal notices and drafting of new or revised TROs. This is only likely to be a relatively modest amount of work and well within normal workloads.

Any changes to parking tariffs would need to be fully considered before implementation because of the potential income upon car park income.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?

Main conclusions of the EqIA are that the recommended actions contained within the Review are largely positive in terms of their impact upon members of the public with impaired mobility because the emphasis of many of the actions is to improve the availability of parking spaces closer to town centres. The impact of any changes on other protected characteristics is likely to be neutral.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The scope and methodology for the Review was reported to and supported by the Communities Scrutiny Committee in March 2014. It was also presented to the Economic Ambition Board in February 2014.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The Parking service is currently projected to be £200k overspent due to the reduction in income mainly in Rhyl and Prestatyn due to the free parking at, and re-location of key stores to, Parc Prestatyn along with a reduction in Penalty Charge Notice income. It is important that any developments take account of the need to bring this budget back into a break-even position. As noted in section 6 it is also important that the funding for any of the recommended actions is identified and business cases approved prior to final decisions being taken .

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

The only significant risk likely to result from the Review is the impact of any potential changes to parking tariffs in terms of their impact upon car park income. Any such changes, however, would be subject to a further piece of work to explore the likely impact of this.

11. Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3.3 of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's powers with respect to policy development and review

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