

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 20th July 2017

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Highways, Planning & Sustainable Development/Head of Planning & Public Protection

**Report Author:** Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager

**Title:** Update on the Management of Car Parks

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**1. What is the report about?**

To provide an update on the development of the Car Park Asset Management Plan and the other recommendations that were contained in the car park report that went to Communities Scrutiny in October 2016.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

The Committee requested that a progress update be provided to it on the various recommendations contained within the October 2016 report, a copy of which is provided in Appendix A.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee:

- 3.1 confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix D) as part of its consideration; and.
- 3.2 considers the contents of the report provides observations and supports the continuation of the work to develop the Car Park Asset Management Plan and the other initiatives listed.

**4. Report details**

Introduction

- 4.1 The report that was presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee in October 2016 had two functions; the first function was to report on the impact of the parking charge increase that had been implemented in April 2016. The second function was to propose a series of recommendations with the overall aim of improving the management of our car parks. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the various recommendations that were made in the October 2016 report and supported by the Communities Scrutiny Committee. Where items in the following report provide a progress update on those recommendations, a Roman numeral reference is given in brackets which relates to the recommendation reference in the October 2016 report.
- 4.2 Improving the management of the Council's car parks will ensure car parks are better maintained and that investment is prioritised appropriately. Central to all of this is the

recognition that our car parks are often the first experience that many visitors will have of our towns, and our car parks are thus gateways to our towns in many ways. It is, therefore, vital that they are easy to find, attractive, clean, well-maintained, secure and provide the appropriate information that people require.

#### Car Park Asset Management Plan (Recommendation iv)

- 4.3 A Car Park Asset Management Plan (AMP) is currently being developed for the purpose of improving the efficiency of how our car parks are managed, especially in regard to the way in which they are maintained and how investment in car parks is prioritised. A computer database is nearing completion which will contain details of all the assets within our car parks, such as Pay and Display machines, barriers, kerbs, drainage gullies, bollards and litter bins, to name just some.
- 4.4 Extensive survey work has been ongoing over recent months and is now close to completion. As well as establishing an inventory of all our assets, it has included an assessment of the condition of each asset using a scoring system to help determine when each asset is likely to need replacing.
- 4.5 The database will also include a photographic record of each asset. An example of a database record is provided in Appendix B.
- 4.6 The database will also be used by the Council's Streetscene team, who undertake routine inspections of our car parks to identify potential maintenance issues. These regular inspections will also help to keep the database up to date.
- 4.7 One of the key outputs of developing the Car Park AMP will be the production of a 5 year Investment Programme. It is anticipated that the Car Park AMP will be complete by the end of August 2017.
- 4.8 Whilst full details of the Investment Plan are still being developed, the following list details some of the emerging items which will need to be included in the Investment Plan:

	<u>Description</u>	<u>Estimated cost</u>
i)	Refurbishment of Rhyl Children's Village Car Park	£1.5 million
ii)	Re-waterproof decks in Denbigh Multi-Storey C.P.	£200k
iii)	New information signs for all car parks	£150k
iv)	Replacement of Pay and Display machines	£300k
v)	New car park height barriers	£200k

- 4.9 Once the Investment Plan has been produced, it will be necessary to identify the best funding strategy to enable the Plan to be implemented. This is likely to include some element of Prudential Borrowing given the scale of initial investment required.

#### Attendance at MAG Meetings (Recommendation iii)

- 4.10 The Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager is currently in the process of visiting each of the Member Area Groups (MAGs). The purpose of which is to seek local members' views on what they think the priorities should be for investing in the car parks in their respective areas, together with seeking members' views on the management of their local car parks generally.

#### Modern Pay and Display Machines (Recommendation v)

- 4.11 Rather than wait until the Car Park AMP is complete, before undertaking any investment, a total of 12 Pay and Display machines have recently been ordered because some of the existing machines were in need of replacement. These new machines offer considerable advantages over the old machines. For example, they offer customers more payment options, such as card payment, and can be connected wirelessly; which will enable their status to be interrogated from any PC connected to the Internet. Two of these machines will have full colour touch screens which are capable of printing vouchers, for example, to give a discount in local shops and cafes. These new machines are due to be installed during the next few weeks. A list of them is provided in Appendix C.

#### Flexible Ticketing and Short Duration Permits for Tourists (Recommendations vi, vii and viii)

- 4.12 A Car Park Task and Finish Group has been set up which comprises of officers from Parking Services, Countryside Services and Tourism. The purpose of the Group is to explore options to improve the visitor experience in terms of parking, such as considering options for flexible tickets which can be transferred between different Denbighshire County Council (DCC) car parks. Also being considered are short duration permits suitable for visitors to the area, and for purchase by operators of hotels and other tourist accommodation. The practical details of these initiatives are currently being investigated thoroughly by the Group. The Group is also reviewing the provision of tourist information signage within car parks.

#### Improved Parking Permit System (Recommendations vii and viii)

- 4.13 Preliminary work has been undertaken with ICT and Customer Services officers to explore the potential for a paperless parking permit system. The existing permit system is slow, paper-based and involves some double-handling of data which is thus inefficient. It is proposed to replace this system with a "paperless" permit system whereby customers can purchase permits online or, in person, by visiting a Denbighshire One Stop Shop. Upon completion of payment, the customer's vehicle registration number will be stored within a secure permit database. When carrying out parking enforcement within car parks, the intention is that the Civil Enforcement Officers will be able to access the permit database from their Smartphones which will tell them whether a vehicles has a valid permit.

#### Better Promotion of Parking Permit (Recommendation ix)

- 4.14 Discussions have taken place with the Council's Communications team and Web team with a view to better promoting the Council's long stay parking permits as there are still examples being encountered anecdotally where members of the public were previously unaware that they could purchase a parking permit from the Council.

- 4.15 The option of payment by instalments will be progressed once the new paperless permit system has been implemented as the existing permit administration process does not easily lend itself to a system where someone can walk out of a One Stop Shop with a permit that they have not fully paid for.

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

New Corporate Priorities to be determined.

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

The costs of the measures detailed in the Asset Management Plan plus the other parking initiatives listed will be fully met from within the Parking budget, albeit some Prudential borrowing may be required as the Investment Programme is likely to require a significant amount of capital investment in the first couple of years.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

The Wellbeing Assessment reflects that better management of our car park assets will benefit the local economy, will reduce energy consumption and potentially improve public safety within our car parks. Please see Appendix D.

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

This paper is a progress update following a previous report presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee in October 2016. The six MAGs are being consulted for their views on the priorities for the Car Park Investment Programme

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

It is important to understand the works required to maintain or develop the council's car parks. The production of an asset management plan will assist in this regard, highlighting both the nature of works required and estimated costs. It is assumed that the works required will be funded from within parking resources. Each project, as it emerges, will be subject to the council's internal approval processes, including reporting to the Strategic Investment Group (SIG).

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

A failure to develop a Car Park Asset Management Plan could result in future car park investment not being prioritised for where it is most needed. This could increase future costs because an early intervention can often be cheaper than instead of inadvertently allowing an issue to escalate owing to inaction.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Section 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's powers with respect to examining the impact of decisions and the application of policies.

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