

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 4th July 2019

Lead Member/Officer: Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment/
Head of Planning and Public Protection

Report Author: Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager

Title: Car Parks in Denbighshire

1. What is the report about?

1.1 To provide an update regarding the implementation of the Car Park Investment Plan and other car parking initiatives.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 Approximately two years ago, we developed an Asset Management Register for our car parks. Prior to this, no records were kept of car park assets which obviously made it difficult to manage those assets effectively. This resulted in too much unplanned, reactive maintenance work taking place, whilst investment in planned maintenance work was insufficient. In early 2018, a Car Park Investment Plan was developed to identify and prioritise car park investment over a five year period.

2.2 Our car parks play a key role in supporting our town centres and tourist attractions. They serve as a gateway to our towns; and for many car-based journeys, they will often be the first thing that visitors see when they alight from their vehicles. It is thus very important that our car parks are kept safe, clean, tidy, and are well-maintained.

2.3 Previous reports concerning the Car Park Asset Management Register and Investment Plan were presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee in July 2017 and March 2018. At the March 2018 meeting, the Committee requested a further progress update in 2019. A copy of the March 2018 report is included in Appendix A to this report, for convenience.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That the Committee considers the contents of the report, provides observations, and supports the continuation of the work to implement the Car Park Investment Plan and other parking initiatives detailed within the report.

4. Report details

Introduction

4.1 We recognise that well-managed car parks can play an important role in supporting our town centres and tourist attractions, and form a key part of regeneration work.

- 4.2 The Car Park Asset Management Register and Investment Plan will assist us to manage our existing assets more effectively. However, the Investment Plan is also about improving the facilities within our car parks, such as through better information provision for car park users and providing more flexible ways of paying for parking.
- 4.3 The following sections outline the various work that has been undertaken in our car parks since the previous update report was presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee in March 2018.
- 4.4 The original Investment Plan is included in Appendix B to this report. In practice, we have had to amend this Plan during the first year to coordinate car park improvement work with some of the significant regeneration projects that have been taking place.
- 4.5 The original Investment Plan proposed £566k of expenditure in Year 1 of the Plan, (which was financial year 2018-19); this was to be funded predominantly from prudential borrowing, to be repaid over subsequent years from the car park revenue budget. However, the ongoing work to redevelop the Rhyl Central Car Park (formerly known as the Underground Car Park), plus the need to carry out urgent works at some other car parks has resulted in changes to the Investment Plan. The revised Investment Plan is included in Appendix C and now includes a greater level of spend in Years 3, 4 and 5 of the Plan, when compared with the original Plan. This change is partly due to the need to reprioritise some work to tie-in with regeneration projects and partly because we want to fully evaluate the impact that some recent projects will have on car park revenue before we commit to any further borrowing.

Details of improvement work undertaken in Year 1 of Investment Plan (2018-19)

- 4.6 The work undertaken in Year 1 of the Investment Plan is listed on the first page of the Revised Investment Plan in Appendix C, with some photographs of completed work in Appendix D. A summary of the work is provided in the following paragraphs.
- 4.7 Fifteen pay and display machines were replaced by new machines near the end of financial year 2018-19. This brings the total number of new machines up to 30, which means that 33% of our machines offer the option to pay by chip and pin card, contactless payment or coin payment. These new machines are also networked, providing us with information about fault status, ticket sales and cash levels. The latter information will enable more efficient planning of cash collections.
- 4.8 The refurbishment of the Rhyl Central Car Park (formerly Rhyl Underground Car Park) was completed recently, with the car park reopening in early April 2019. The refurbishment work included the formation of new pedestrian accesses, the widening of the existing vehicle entrance, new canopies over the central stairwells, a new ventilation system, new fire alarm system, new lighting, new signage and a new CCTV system. We have also changed the way we manage this car park to improve maintenance operations and through creating the completely new role of car park site supervisor. This latter role covers both Central Car Park and, increasingly, will also cover the Denbigh Multi-Storey car park.
- 4.9 The past twelve months has also seen the refurbishment of Vale Street Car Park in Denbigh. This is a project that was originally planned for nearer the end of the Investment Plan. However, we brought this scheme forward to Year 1 because some

areas of block paving within the car park had become loose, creating a potential trip hazard for pedestrians. The areas of defective surfacing have been re-laid. We also took the opportunity to change the layout of kerbing around the pay and display to make it safer for pedestrians and more accessible.

- 4.10 In the summer of 2018, a completely new short stay car park was opened on Queen Street in Rhyl comprising of 20 parking spaces.
- 4.11 The Sky Tower Car Park was also refurbished during February and March 2019 to tie-in with the external works to SC2. These refurbishment works included the resurfacing of the car park, improvements to the existing surface water drainage, the refurbishment of street furniture and some reconfiguration of the car park layout.
- 4.12 Following the work last year to refurbish the central Nova car park in Prestatyn. Further refurbishment work has taken place this year to the Nova West car park to improve accessibility, replace the pay and display machine and to renew the signage.
- 4.13 A scheme to renew all the car park tariff and information signs within the Rhyl and Prestatyn car parks was implemented in March 2019. Work to replace the signs in all the other Denbighshire car parks is currently at the design stage, with the new signage likely to be installed over the next three months.
- 4.14 Physical improvements to the landscaping were recently implemented in Park Road car park in Ruthin to replace the temporary concrete blocks that were originally introduced to discourage anti-social driving in the car park, especially at night time.
- 4.15 A section of free parking spaces (like those in Market Street, Ruthin and Factory Ward, Denbigh) were introduced in Morley Road and West Kinmel Street car parks in Rhyl, following feedback from businesses and Rhyl Town Council.
- 4.16 Improvements have been made to the entrance of East Parade Car Park in Rhyl, including the provision of a new footway into the car park to improve safety.
- 4.17 New Service Level Agreements for all car parks have been developed to ensure that all car park grounds maintenance work is itemised accurately and to enable us to improve how we monitor the maintenance of our car parks.
- 4.18 An extra hour of parking time for Blue Badge holders was implemented in June 2018. Car park users displaying a valid Blue Badge will receive an additional hour of parking time in addition to the time displayed on their pay and display ticket.

Work to be implement in Year 2 of Investment Plan (2019-20)

- 4.19 We are currently in the process of developing the specification for a new system to replace paper parking permits with a paperless system. The new system will be more convenient for permit holders and will significantly reduce the amount of administration work that the Council undertakes for the current system. The new system will work by storing the permit holders' vehicle registration numbers in a secure database which can be checked by enforcement officers using their smartphone. The new system will also be capable of allowing car park users to pay for parking using a smartphone app.

4.20 At the time of writing this report, we are currently out to tender for the procurement of a new car park cash collection contract. This will be both more efficient and safer than the existing in-house system and will not result in any job losses. It is also expected that the proportion of cash collected will reduce over time as cashless payment options become available in more of our car parks.

4.21 We plan to replace more of our pay and display machines in financial year 2019-20.

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

5.1 Connected Communities: Communities are connected and have access to goods and services locally, online and through good transport links. Accessible parking is vital for car-based journeys to town centres.

5.2 Environment: Attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity. Well-managed and attractive car parks can complement the tourist economy and the town centre retail economy.

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

6.1 The majority of the work detailed in the car park Investment Plan work is being funded from within the existing car park revenue budget. This includes the cost of repaying any prudential borrowing associated with the investment in the car parks.

6.2 The major investment in the Rhyl Central Car Park is subject to a separate business case relating to the forecast increase in usage due to SC2 opening.

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

As the report is providing an update on the implementation of a project and is not seeking a decision, then a Well-being Impact Assessment is not required.

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

8.1 This paper is a progress update following the previous reports presented to the Communities Scrutiny Committee in October 2016, July 2017 and March 2018.

8.2 When preparing the Car Park Investment Plan, all six Member Area Groups were consulted with separately.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

It is important that all future investment decisions continue to be taken to the Strategic Investment Group for discussion and approval if appropriate.

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

Borrowing too much and creating a future budget pressure. To reduce this risk borrowing decisions are developed in conjunction with Finance colleagues and then taken to Strategic Investment Group for approval.

11. Power to make the Decision

11. 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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