

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	1 st February 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Lead Member for Environment and Transport
Head of Service	Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
Report author	Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager
Title	Draft Car Park Investment Plan

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. To provide details of the Council's draft Car Park Investment Plan for the period April 2024 to March 2029.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To enable the Communities Scrutiny Committee to examine the content of the draft Car Park Investment Plan, including the suggested programme.
- 2.2. To provide Committee with details of the previous Car Park Investment Plan, including what activities were delivered.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix A) as part of its considerations.
- 3.2 That Communities Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report, and provides observations on the proposed report, as appropriate.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Council operates 47 public car parks, 40 of these are pay and display car parks. The remainder are free to use.
- 4.2. All car parks contain various assets. For surface-level car parks; the most expensive asset will usually be the car park surfacing itself, which will typically be constructed from tarmac. Other assets within our car parks include boundary walls, hedges and fences; pay and display machines; signs and posts; road markings; litter bins; trees, hedges and shrubs; kerbs; drainage gullies; lamp columns; CCTV; height barriers, and so on.
- 4.3. We also have two car parks which are actually buildings. These are Central Car Park in Rhyl (formerly known as the Underground Car Park), and the Multi-Storey Car Park at Barker's Well Lane in Denbigh. As well as containing most of the assets found in surface-level car parks; the assets in these car parks also include ventilation systems; the building structure and walls; stairwells; fire-fighting sprinkler and dry-riser systems; plant rooms, and so on.
- 4.4. In addition to periodic maintenance of the assets themselves, there is also the need to keep car parks clean, tidy and safe. For this reason, all car parks have an individual Service Level Agreement (SLA) for grounds maintenance. This includes activities such as emptying bins, litter picking, trimming hedges, and applying weed killer. This work is undertaken by the Council's Streetscene team, within Highways and Environmental Services. This is further supported by visual inspections that are undertaken by members of the car park team and parking enforcement team.
- 4.5. Investment in our car parks is funded from both the Car Park revenue budget and from the Traffic and Parking Block Capital allocation. Rising costs due to inflation have reduced the availability of revenue funding in recent years, placing a greater reliance on the Block Capital allocation.
- 4.6. The previous Car Park Investment Plan, was also the Council's first Car Park Investment Plan. It was produced in 2018, and covered a 5-year period until 2023. A copy of the 2018-23 Plan is included in Appendix B.

- 4.7. The actual work undertaken within the car parks over the lifespan of the 2018-2023 Investment Plan is detailed in Appendix C. The work undertaken varied from the original plan due to a number of factors. In the first two years of the Investment Plan, this variation was due to the need to prioritise works associated with major regeneration projects in Rhyl, coupled with an urgent need to resurface sections of the Vale Street car park in Denbigh on health and safety grounds. The planned work to resurface the upper decks at Denbigh Multi-Storey Car Park had to be placed on hold owing to the identification of a number of issues relating to the car park's mechanical and electrical systems. A package of remedial works to rectify many of the issues identified within the Multi-Storey Car Park was undertaken instead.
- 4.8. Year 3 of the Investment Plan onwards was the year of the pandemic, of course. From that point onwards, the amount of spare car park revenue available for reinvestment has reduced, resulting in fewer activities in the second half of the Investment Plan compared to the first half. Rising inflation since the pandemic, especially around the cost of construction materials has exacerbated this further.
- 4.9. Despite these challenges, the 2018-23 Car Park Investment Plan has seen some significant achievements being delivered. Nearly all of our pay and display machines are now networked and accept card payments as well as cash payment. The networking of these machines also means that they are now all linked to a back office system, providing important management information around tariff sales, fault status and how full the cash collection box is. The 2018-23 also saw major investment in the Central and Sky Tower Car Parks in Rhyl to complement regeneration projects. A new car park has also been created on Water Street, on the site of the old Post Office building, to provide central short stay parking, whilst also serving the Town Hall which is now the site of the relocated Registry Office. The 2018-23 Plan also saw the introduction of smartphone-app based payment methods for all of our car parks, adding further convenient payment options for our customers.
- 4.10. The last two years have seen the introduction of electrical vehicle (EV) charging points in 12 different car parks across Denbighshire. These provide enough charging points to be able to charge over 70 electric vehicles at any one time. The EV charging hub at West Kinmel Street Car Park in Rhyl, which was

project-managed by the Council's Fleet team, is the second largest EV hub in the UK.

4.11. A copy of the Draft Car Park Investment Plan for 2024-29 is included in Appendix D.

4.12. Where much of the focus on the first plan was on improving car park payment and information systems (pay and display machines, car park signage etc) The new Plan focuses on the physical car park infrastructure. However, there will also need to be realism in light of the uncertain financial situation over the next few years.

4.13. It is proposed that we will aim to resurface a minimum of two of our car parks every financial year, and this will be prioritised based on a condition assessment for all of our car parks. We will also use the new Plan to programme in works to repair, replace and/or rebuild car park boundary walls and fences where necessary, and where the ownership lies with the Council.

4.14. The new Investment Plan also includes proposals to pilot a motorhome/campervan parking area in one of our car parks in the south of Denbighshire, subject to consultation with the local members and Town/Community Council.

4.15. We also recognise that the importance of keeping our car parks clean, safe and tidy. This will mean ensuring that we continue to review our Service Level Agreements to ensure that they're efficient.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. The Car Park Investment Plan will support the delivery of a prosperous, better connected, greener, fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire

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

6.1. Estimated costs are provided in the draft Car Park Investment Plan in Appendix D to this report. The majority of these costs are expected to be funded from the annual Traffic and Parking Block Capital allocation, which means they will be included in a detailed Business Case submitted to Capital Scrutiny Group for

approval annually. Some of the smaller costs may be funded from the revenue budget, depending upon actual car park income levels.

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

7.1. It is important that we continue to maintain our car parks to keep them safe, clean, tidy and welcoming to use. Whilst national transport policy gives a higher priority for modes of transport other than the car, private car use will continue to play an important role in a predominantly rural county like Denbighshire. Effective, well-managed car parks are important for the local economy especially in terms of retail and tourism.

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

8.1. The presentation of this report to Communities Scrutiny Committee, will form the basis of the consultation on the Car Park Investment Plan. There is no statutory requirement to produce a Car Park Investment Plan, nor to consult on it. However, it is suggested that an annual update be provided to the Committee by way of an information report, to inform the Committee on progress.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. As highlighted in the report at paragraph 4.12 the financial constraints on the council now and in the future will have an impact on all services. Whilst there will always be a need for the capital block allocations, those block allocations will need to be reviewed over the next few months and scaled down. The review will consult with all service areas, CET, SLT and Members

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

10.1. There is no statutory requirement to produce a Car Park Investment Plan. However, a failure to produce such a Plan could lead to inefficient use of limited financial resources for reinvestment into our car parks.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. 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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