

<b>Report to</b>	Communities Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Lead Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Barry Mellor
<b>Head of Service</b>	Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
<b>Report author</b>	Traffic and Transportation Manager, Mike Jones
<b>Title</b>	Progress Update on Car Park Investment Plan

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

- 1.1. To provide an update on progress against the Council's Car Park Investment Plan for financial year 2024-25, which is Year 1 of the Car Park Investment Plan.

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

- 2.1. To review progress as we approach the end of the first year of the Plan, against the activities that were proposed for Year 1 of the Plan.
- 2.2. To update Committee on the proposals for Year 2 of the Plan (financial year 2025-26), included one amendment that has been made to the Year 2 programme since the Plan was introduced last year.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1 That Communities Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report, and provides observations on the proposed report, as appropriate.

## 4. Report details

### Background

- 4.1. At the beginning of financial year 2024-25, we introduced the Council's new Car Park Investment Plan. A copy of the Investment Plan is included in Appendix A for ease of reference. This is a five-year plan which sets out the works we intend to undertake to our car parks during those five years, in order to improve the condition of the car parks and to keep them well-maintained.
- 4.2. The Council operates 47 public car parks, 40 of these are pay and display car parks. The remainder are free to use. All of them need to be maintained.
- 4.3. The car parks each contain various assets which need to be maintained and repaired or replaced if they become damaged. For surface-level car parks; the most expensive asset will usually be the car park surface itself, which will typically be constructed from tarmac. Other typical assets within surface-level 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; and height barriers.
- 4.4. 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 many of the assets found in surface-level car parks; these car parks also include mechanical and electrical assets; such as ventilation systems; sprinkler and dry-riser systems. There is also the building structure itself, stairwells and ancillary areas such as plantrooms.
- 4.5. All our car parks also have individual Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for grounds maintenance. Grounds maintenance 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.

### Year 1 of the Investment Plan

- 4.6. Appendix B shows the work activities proposed for Year 1 of the Car Park Investment Plan. Progress against each item is provided in the column down the right-hand side.
- 4.7. In financial terms, just under 60% of the planned work is expected to be complete by the end of the current financial year. The capital funding allocated against the works can be “rolled-over” into the new financial year i.e. it isn’t funding that will be lost if it isn’t spent by the financial year end.
- 4.8. Whilst we would have liked to have made greater progress in the current financial year against the Investment Plan programme, we are still carrying a staff vacancy within the Car Parks team which we propose to address in the coming months. Following the retirement of a member of staff within the Public Protection team, the Car Parks team has also taken over the management of the Council’s CCTV service, which has also had some impact on the ability to deliver against the Car Park Investment Plan.
- 4.9. The works proposed to introduce height barriers in some of the car parks in North Denbighshire have been delayed due to some issues regarding third party land that requires clarification. This is, for example, where a third party has a right of access over our car park and thus where this access can potentially affect the introduction of a height barrier.
- 4.10. The Investment Plan also includes proposals to pilot a motorhome/campervan parking area. Since this proposal was included last year, the scope of this project has developed further with “motorhome aire” facilities such as fresh water supply, electricity supply and waste water disposal facilities being now considered as part of these proposals. This is a project that we are currently working on with colleagues from the Highways Streetscene team.
- 4.11. The copy of the Car Park Investment Plan includes our proposals for Year 2 of the Plan which is financial year 2025-26. The only change to the Year 2 programme since we introduced the Plan last year is the addition of the

resurfacing of the car park in Meliden to the proposals. This has been introduced as a precursor to us potentially introducing charges in the car park, which is currently free to use.

## **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. It was intended that the majority of these costs would be funded from the annual Traffic and Parking Block Capital allocation. However, the reduced amount of capital funding available generally, and the slow progress against the items contained within it, mean that there is currently no capital allocation for financial year 2025-26 for car parks. However, we are proposing to firstly complete the works contained within Year 1 of the Plan before potentially submitting an in-year bid for capital funding for consideration by Capital Scrutiny Group.

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

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment was produced when the Car Park Investment Plan was first developed last year. For ease of reference, a copy of the WIA is provided in Appendix C to this report.

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

8.1. The draft Car Park Investment Plan was presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee in February 2024. This report provides a follow-up on progress, now that 12 months have passed, and because it is one of the suggestions contained within the February 2024 report.

8.2. There is no statutory requirement to produce a Car Park Investment Plan, nor to consult on it. However, we consider it to be good practice to use such a Plan as a way to plan and prioritise capital investment in our car parks.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. As highlighted in paragraph 6.1 of the report, financial constraints on the council now and in the future will inevitably have an impact on all services. Whilst there will always be a need for the capital block allocations, the block allocations have needed to be reviewed and scaled down accordingly.

## **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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