



**CABINET – 12 JUNE 2018**

**MANAGING TRAFFIC IN LEICESTERSHIRE'S COMMUNITIES**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT**

**PART A**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to continue to review parking in county towns as part of day-to-day work to manage traffic and, where appropriate, to develop action plans that support the local economy in Leicestershire.

**Recommendations**

2. It is recommended:
  - (a) That the continued use of parking reviews, as part of the Council's traffic management programme, be approved;
  - (b) That it be noted that individual reviews will be carried out as part of this process over the next two years (2018/19 and 2019/20), with any proposed changes being the subject of action plans for the town in question and subject to further consideration;
  - (c) That it be noted that the outline proposals to introduce on-street parking charges as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy will not be taken forward at present.

**Reason for Recommendations**

3. As part of its work to manage traffic in county towns the Council will, where appropriate, continue to undertake parking reviews. This will ensure that it continues to meet its statutory duties and support the local economy, in line with its strategic priorities.
4. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19-2021/22 (MTFS) included proposals for on-street parking charges, estimated to produce £600,000 per annum from 2019/20. However, whilst this is feasible, there are wider economic issues that require further consideration. Given this, and ongoing national economic uncertainty (particularly in relation to Brexit), it is not considered that it would be appropriate to pursue this at present.

### **Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

5. Reviews of parking in county towns will be undertaken as part of the Department's usual work over the next two years (2018/19 to 2019/20). The introduction of any measures identified as part of these parking reviews will be undertaken as part of the traffic management programme.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

6. The Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) was approved in 2011. It identifies six goals, one of which is to support the economy and population growth. 'On-street' parking is highlighted as a factor that can affect the economy. An action to continue to develop and refine the approach to on-street parking is included in the Plan.
7. The Council's Network Management Plan (NMP), approved in April 2014, sets out how the Authority will ensure that the highway network remains fit for purpose. The overall aim of the NMP is to provide a holistic approach to network management in Leicestershire, helping to deliver positive outcomes for the economy and quality of life. The NMP notes that illegal and/or inconsiderate parking can cause congestion, reduce road safety and cause problems in towns and villages for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport or other motorists. The Council seeks to encourage sensible and safe parking to keep traffic moving, make the road network safer, improve access for emergency services and reduce pollution, helping to improve air quality and making the County more attractive to businesses and visitors.
8. The Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), the draft Strategic Growth Plan and the Council's Strategic Plan and Enabling Growth Action Plan all highlight the importance of towns to Leicestershire's economy. The draft Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan sets out the growth challenge faced in the area.
9. The Council's Strategic Plan, which was approved in December 2017, includes the need for a strong economy, improved health and wellbeing, keeping people safe, and developing thriving and integrated communities. This will be supported by the Authority's approach to traffic management.

### **Resource Implications**

10. The county town parking reviews will be undertaken as part of day-to-day work to manage traffic in county towns effectively.
11. The Environment and Transport Department's budget includes £50,000 'advance design' capital funding to undertake work to identify and develop future programmes. The parking reviews will be funded from this 'advance design' allocation in 2018/19 and 2019/20.
12. The parking reviews will consider potential changes to support the local economy and, if appropriate, will include action plans and identify resources required to implement measures.
13. Any parking measures funded by the County Council would need to align with regulations and current criteria. Their introduction would be subject to funding

availability. Alternatively, where third party funding is available, the Authority will continue to work with communities to implement appropriate legally compliant measures.

14. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identified a saving of £600,000 against this initiative from 2019/20. However, the intention not to pursue the option of charging for on-street parking removes the ability to deliver this saving. The implications of this will be addressed through the MTFS refresh process that will take place over the summer, where future funding projections and cost pressures will be reassessed and some of the 'savings under development' will be incorporated into the financial position.
15. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

### **Officers to Contact**

Ann Carruthers – Director, Environment and Transport

Tel: (0116) 305 7000

Email: [Ann.Carruthers@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Ann.Carruthers@leics.gov.uk)

Ian Vears – Assistant Director, Environment and Transport

Tel: (0116) 305 7966

Email: [Ian.Vears@leics.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Vears@leics.gov.uk)

## PART B

### Background

#### National Policy

16. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 provides the current legislation to control waiting and loading and to provide suitable parking places where needed to allow this to be achieved. This is undertaken by the use of legal orders to introduce parking restrictions, Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).
17. The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA Act) places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the 'expeditious movement of traffic' on their road network and gives authorities additional tools to better manage parking policies, moving traffic enforcement and the coordination of street works.
18. The TMA Act introduced civil enforcement powers for highway authorities. In July 2007, the Council took responsibility for the enforcement of non-moving traffic offences (illegal and inappropriate parking), which can cause congestion. This enforcement is currently undertaken in partnership with the district councils in Leicestershire, which employ Civil Enforcement Officers on behalf of the County Council.

#### Current Parking Policies

19. Up to 2015, Leicestershire County Council had a parking policy within the Local Transport Plan (LTP3), along with a number of guidance documents. In response to Department for Transport guidance<sup>1</sup>, a parking policy document was developed, combining all relevant policies, information and working practices and providing links to other relevant policies and guidance documents. The Leicestershire Parking Board, a partnership body of the County and district councils, helped shape the final document, which was agreed in March 2016.
20. This policy (Leicestershire County Council Parking Policy: Consolidation of Existing Policy, Guidance and Working Practices) was published on 16 March 2016 and can be viewed on the Council's website at: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cars-and-parking/parking-enforcement>.

#### Future growth

21. County towns such as Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Castle Donington, Coalville, Hinckley, Loughborough, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton Mowbray, Oadby and Wigston are important to Leicestershire's economy, providing vital services to communities and their hinterland. Parking reviews will help to ensure that people can access towns effectively and efficiently and minimise congestion through circulating traffic within the towns.

<sup>1</sup> *Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and Enforcement Traffic Management Act 2004 (Department for Transport. March 2015)*

22. Traffic levels in county towns have broadly increased over the last decade. Continued population growth will increase the number of vehicles on the road network, which is predicted to make congestion worse.
23. The environmental effects of congestion and the impact that it has on quality of life is also of concern to many residents and road users, with air quality and noise pollution often being raised as problems where congestion occurs.
24. It is therefore important that the Council seeks to ensure that the local transport system operates as effectively and efficiently as possible. Effective management of on-street parking in county towns is a vital element of this. This also enhances towns' attractiveness and vitality.

### Financial Context

25. The MTFS, which was agreed by the Council in February 2018, included the possible introduction of charging for on-street limited waiting parking bays (all on-street parking in the County is currently free of charge). However, although this would be feasible, wider economic issues that potentially affect towns need to be considered.
26. Preliminary work has indicated that the one-off capital set-up costs of introducing on-street parking charges (e.g. installing meters and signing) would be in the region of £2.5m. That work also indicated that a surplus (i.e. ongoing income minus ongoing operating costs) of around £0.9m might be generated if charges were to be introduced at every existing on-street space (the MTFS saving would equate to the introduction of charges on around 65% of on-street spaces, a prudent approach that would have allowed tolerance to reflect local needs and circumstances).
27. So, whilst the introduction of on-street charges would have been technically and financially feasible, wider economic issues that potentially affect towns need to be considered.
28. In light of this, and with ongoing national economic uncertainty (particularly in relation to Brexit), it is not intended to take these proposals forward at present. Nationally, few towns comparable to those in Leicestershire currently have on-street parking charges and, where these are in operation, tend to be associated with major tourist attractions.
29. There are currently significant pressures on Highways and Transport resources. This includes from increasing opportunities to bid for funding and a number of successful funding bids for significant projects such as the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road, which now need to be progressed.

### Parking Reviews

30. Given the context outlined above it is now proposed to undertake parking reviews in county towns over the next two years (2018/19 and 2019/20), as part of day-to-day traffic management work of the Department.
31. The reviews will establish whether any changes need to be made in order to ensure that the Authority continues to meet its statutory duties, effectively manage traffic, support the local economy, and minimise the impact of traffic on communities.

32. Any proposed changes to existing parking arrangements would be set out in an action plan for the town concerned. The implementation of any changes would be subject to consultation with local members, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders, the necessary approvals, and the availability of funding.
33. Any changes would be aimed at contributing to the Council's strategic outcomes, by delivering a range of benefits for communities, key stakeholders and partners such as:-
- Reducing congestion;
  - Supporting the local economy;
  - Improving air quality; and,
  - Minimising the impact of parking on residents.
34. Any changes to existing parking arrangements would of course seek to maximise benefits and minimise dis-benefits to residents, businesses and communities. Each review will provide an opportunity to explore local issues and concerns and will help inform any proposals.

#### Timeline and Next Steps

35. It is intended that parking reviews in County towns will be undertaken over the next two years (2018/19 and 2019/20), as part of the Authority's day-to-day traffic management work.
36. The implementation of any changes would depend on their scale and complexity and the level of resources and funding required, but is unlikely to take place before 2019/20.

#### Equality and Human Rights Implications

37. There are no equality and human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
38. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Authority to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between different protected groups. Equality implications will be considered as part of the individual reviews and where relevant, an appropriate equality and human rights assessment will be completed as specific reviews and/or measures are taken forward.

#### Environmental Impact

39. The reviews will provide an opportunity to consider the impact of the parking on climate change, carbon emissions, congestion and the street-scene.
40. All of these matters will be considered as part of the reviews. Where relevant, an appropriate environmental impact assessment will be completed as specific reviews and/or measures are taken forward.

**Background Papers**

County Council Strategic Plan

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/council-plans/the-strategic-plan>

Medium Term Financial Strategy

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=4433&Ver=4>

County Council's Network Management Plan

[https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/1/5/network\\_management\\_plan.pdf](https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/1/5/network_management_plan.pdf)

County Council's Parking Policy: Consolidation of Existing Policy, Guidance and Working Practices

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cars-and-parking/parking-enforcement](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cars-and-parking/parking-enforcement)

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