

DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY FOR AYLESBURY TOWN CENTRE

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite comments from the Scrutiny Committee on the draft Parking Strategy for Aylesbury to help inform Cabinet's consideration of the Strategy and their recommendations to Council.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment:
- on the draft Strategy set out in Appendix 1
 - the phase one and two recommendations set out in Appendix 2 which include a proposed capital investment of approximately £400k (estimated by ARUPS), to upgrade the payment equipment and options.
- 2.2 Suggest which phase the recommendations numbered SM11 – SM16 on page 5 of Appendix 2 should be categorised as.
- 2.3 Comment on the proposed metrics set out on page 50 of Appendix 1.

3 Supporting information

The approach

- 3.1 It's a number of years since the council reviewed its parking strategy for its town centres. With the growth planned for the district and the new challenges and opportunities facing towns (particularly those the size of Aylesbury), it was agreed that parking studies should be commissioned for Aylesbury, Buckingham, Winslow and Wendover.
- 3.2 The outcome of the studies will be used to not only inform the council's investment and management decisions relating to parking but also to provide supporting information for the draft Vale of Aylesbury Plan.
- 3.3 The first study commissioned was for Aylesbury. A brief was developed in consultation with Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Town Council to ensure that the brief covered all parking issues related to the town centre and was not limited to parking provided by AVDC.
- 3.4 The primary objective of the study was to consider the parking provision within Aylesbury Town and the surrounding area of influence and how AVDC could work with key stakeholders to deliver an integrated, innovative, sustainable and financially affordable parking strategy that meet the needs of our customers, our communities and our businesses (whilst also encouraging sustainable modes of travel) between 2018 and 2033.
- 3.5 The scope of works included:
- understanding the current service and operational arrangements
 - reviewing and appraising current parking provision, infrastructure and capacity
 - identifying and evaluating constraints and issues
 - providing advice on potential solutions to address the constraints and issues
 - analysing future demand

- recommend the optimum parking provision for the town between 2018 –2033 taking into account emerging trends and technologies
- 3.6 After a procurement process, ARUPS was selected and appointed to deliver the brief for Aylesbury with the option for their work to be extended to Buckingham, Winslow and Wendover. The briefs would be tailored to the different localities as needed.
- 3.7 The tasks undertaken by ARUPS to produce the draft Strategy were wide ranging and included reviews of:
- related national, regional and local policy and guidance eg the National Planning Policy Framework, The Aylesbury Transport Plan, the draft Vale of Aylesbury Plan, the BTVLEP Strategic Economic Plan and the Aylesbury Town Centre Plan
 - on-site visits
 - best practice and emerging trends and technologies
 - condition surveys
 - customer feedback
 - available data on usage
- 3.8 Face-to face interviews also took place with operational staff, key stakeholders. Workshops were also held.
- 3.9 From the interviews and workshops, ARUPS identified a vision and six objectives to provide the framework for the Strategy. Together they define what needs to be achieved in the lifespan of the document in terms of successful outcomes for the residents, workers and visitors to Aylesbury.
- 3.10 The six objectives are each underpinned by a number of key themes:

Vision – To deliver an improved parking experience in Aylesbury for all
<p>1. Responsive to the needs of different groups and customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People centred • Provision and use • Legibility and convenience
<p>2. Positively contributes to the local economy and regeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assets and land use • Supporting business • Coach parking

<p>3. Commercially sustainable & efficient parking management model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Pricing and equipment • Enforcement
<p>4. Enhances the local environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place making • Ultra-low emission travel
<p>5. Integrates effectively with wider policy and plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning policy • Local transport authority
<p>6. Resilience and anticipation of future change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing growth • Evolving town centre • Automation and technology

- 3.11 The conclusions and priorities from the ARUPS work are set out in the draft Strategy (Appendix 1) and summarised in section 4 below. The more detailed recommendations which flow from the priorities are set out in (Appendix 2).
- 3.12 The recommendations are wide ranging in their complexity to deliver, cost, timeframe and ownership. In respect of the latter, some of the recommendations identify Bucks County Council as the 'owner' for delivering a recommendation, whilst others need to be delivered jointly by AVDC and BCC or with other stakeholders. (Members will note from Section 4 that one of the key phase one recommendations is to establish a joint board with Bucks County Council to do this).
- 3.13 It is fully expected that a number of the recommendations for Aylesbury will also be identified in the Strategies now being prepared for Buckingham, Winslow and Wendover. Where this is the case, a coordinated approach will be taken to their implementation.
- 3.14 Many of the recommendations also require more work to be undertaken before a decision can be taken on whether they should be implemented. In some cases a business case may need to be developed for further consideration by members.
- 3.15 There may be scope to apply for funding to investigate/deliver some of the recommendations. For example through Garden Town funding, or the Digital Declaration Fund.

4. Overview of the conclusions for each theme

- 4.1 The conclusions set out below relate to the AVDC parking service unless otherwise stated.

Responsive to the needs of different groups and customers

- A joined up approach to the delivery of the Strategy (and parking generally) is needed. A joint delivery board with BCC is proposed.
- Investment is needed to upgrade payment facilities to offer more and better options to pay which are available consistently across all car parks.
- New systems are needed to provide more robust data about car park usage.
- There are many opportunities to improve the customer experience but more regular customer engagement is needed to improve customer insight and inform service delivery.
- The quality of car park environments and the pedestrian routes to and from the sites need improving.
- The mismatch between the designation of some car parks and the needs of their most appropriate user groups needs addressing to make the best use of the capacity we have. For example, Friarscroft is the best located car park for commuters but closes at 8.30pm because of anti-social behaviour issues. Different security measures are needed to address the problem and make the car park the first choice of commuters.
- Off-street parking should become the focus of parking provision.
- Signage needs to be improved in all respects: journey to a car park, pedestrian wayfinding to and from car parks.
- Information generally about car parks needs aligning across providers and improved. For example, the development of an app aligned to sat nav software to show real time capacity across the town centre.

Positively contributes to the local economy and regeneration

- The distribution of parking across the town needs consideration
- There may be opportunities to address consolidating some car parking sites and release land for other regeneration purposes
- Access to the town centre by coach for large scale events should be facilitated and encouraged
- Congestion is an issue which impacts on parking. Providing more parking may only make the situation worse. Car parking plans need, therefore, to be aligned to the wider public transport plans.
- At least one new innovation or initiative should be piloted annually. For example, free parking for a selected time in a particular car park

Commercially sustainable and efficient parking management model

- Parking charges should be benchmarked and reviewed annually with differentiated charging promoted. In particular, the on-street parking charge should be higher.

- Back office systems need to be updated to provide real time information and digitise enforcement and management.
- The management structure for the service needs review with a single strategic parking lead identified.
- Joining/sharing elements of the service should be considered. For example the back office function with other providers should be considered to improve efficiency.

Enhances the local environment

- An asset management plan is needed to ensure car parks are well maintained.
- Low cost internal improvements eg planting should be investigated.
- Electric charging bays in selected car parks should be provided.

Integrate effectively with wider policy and plans

- The number of parking spaces permitted in policy for development in the town centre should be reduced.
- Electric charging points should be designed into any new developments.
- Cycle routes and cycle parking should be aligned and initiatives supported to deliver improvements (particularly in respect of the Garden Town opportunity).

Resilience and anticipation of future change

- We should invest in our existing car parks and maximise their use before delivering additional net provision.
- Permitted development parking allocations needs review.
- Plans should be in place for autonomous parking at multi-storey car parks.
- Areas within car parks should be reconfigured to enable drop-off and pick up points.
- Better/creative use should be made of redundant parking space in car parks eg Amazon lockers to add value to the customer experience and generate income.

6. Resource implications

- 6.1 The resource implications are not known for many of the recommendations. Establishing these costs will be part of the work commissioned by the proposed joint board. However, the upgrading of the outdated equipment to provide customers with more payment options across the AVDC car parks is considered a priority. The age of the current equipment carries high maintenance costs and the limited ways to pay, is a source of customer dissatisfaction.

- 6.2 ARUPS has provided a high level summary of the costs of replacing the equipment at each of the car parks and introducing new payment options such as contactless. The estimated capital cost is £400k. The annual maintenance costs are expected to be similar to current costs but there will be a new additional annual cost for card transactions. This is currently estimated by ARUPS to be about £25k.
- 6.3 The Committee is asked to note that whilst one of the recommendations from ARUPS is that a modest increase in the charging tariff would be reasonable to help pay for improvements, cabinet will consider a number of options for funding these initial improvements. As part of this discussion, cabinet will be taking into consideration the difficult trading conditions facing the Vale's town centres, and how it can support town centre businesses by offering attractive and competitive parking charges to encourage footfall.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

Teresa Lane 01296 585006
Specification for tender
Draft Parking strategy 2018
Recommendations Report 2018
Baseline Report 2018
Operational Review 2018