

## **School Parking (recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny enquiry)**

Report of Councillor D McVicar, Chairman of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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### **This report relates to a Key Decision**

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#### **Purpose of this report**

1. To provide Members with the outcomes of the scrutiny enquiry into School Parking as reported to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **That the Executive**

1. **consider the report and recommendations of the enquiry at Appendix 1; and**
2. **respond to the report within two months indicating what action, if any, it proposes to take and if it decides to take no action, the reasons for that decision**

#### **Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations**

2. This report and its recommendations were ratified by the Sustainable Communities OSC on 12 January 2017, suggesting that each agreed recommendation be assigned to the appropriate directorate for delivery and that a copy of the report be circulated to all schools within the region.

#### **Background**

3. At their meeting on 1 July 2016 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SCOSC) requested a review of parking issues outside of schools in light of concerns raised by Members.

4. An enquiry was formed of Cllrs K Matthews, C Gomm, A Graham, M Versallion and T Swain, who undertook to review the subject and report back to the SCOSC with their findings.
5. Throughout the enquiry evidence was received from officers in the Council's Highways, Development Management (DM), Schools Planning, Travel Planning and Parking Enforcement Teams. Evidence was also received from schools and parents.
6. The purpose of the enquiry was to determine the best possible solutions with regards to car parking and vehicular access at schools to ensure the free movement of traffic around schools, particularly in light of the implications of school expansion.
7. Members were keen to deliver a cost-neutral policy which set out in an open and transparent manner how the Council would plan for transport and access to schools when planning an extension to an existing school, or developing a new school.
8. Members acknowledged the need to address where possible the current challenges experienced at some schools.
9. Members noted the importance of ensuring that any recommendations should support the objectives detailed within the Council's 5 year plan and the need to consider the most appropriate solutions to invest in to tackle parking problems isolated to very short periods within the day.
10. The detailed report attached contains a summary of the findings of the enquiry and recommendations that are proposed to be provided to the Executive to support improvements with regards to problems experienced by parking outside of schools.

### **Council Priorities**

11. The recommendations of the enquiry aimed to support the Council's priority of Enhancing Central Bedfordshire and ensuring it is a 'Great Place'.

### **Legal Implications**

12. The Highway Authority has a wide discretion as to the circumstances in which they can make Traffic Regulation orders. Whether any new Orders will be required to prevent vehicles waiting/parking will depend upon the individual site circumstances. Where parking takes place outside schools and controls may already exist then enforcement of those controls can be prioritised. A strengthening of the staff engaged could achieve this but will give rise to an additional cost.

13. The introduction of new areas where control can be enforced will require the making and publishing of Orders Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 there is a requirement to consult and take into account objections. The procedures are prescribed by regulation. The publicity requirements and order making procedure will generate a cost but once confirmed the orders can be enforced. There will be some additional costs in respect of road marking and signage that explain the extent and nature of the restriction which could be imposed at specific times rather than throughout the day.
14. The possibility of varying the local speed limit for traffic in the vicinity of schools is also available to the Highway Authority. The Road traffic Regulation Act 1984 specifies that restricted roads, ones that have lamp posts spaced no more than 200 yards apart would normally be subject to a 30 mph speed limit. The status of the road can be varied by the traffic authority and by the making a further regulation order a speed limit restriction can be varied. It will depend on local circumstances but these sites are likely to be located in the urban area and within an existing 30mph area.
15. The use of planning Conditions to limit local congestion or reduce parking must meet the tests of reasonableness, relate to the development, be appropriate and be enforceable. Conditions that seek to limit the use of the highway by particular users are illegal so they have to approach the issue by promoting change in behaviours and good practice for example advocating routing plans or promoting sharing of vehicles and the minimising of car use in connection with locating development at sustainable locations.

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

16. There are four recommendations that may incur additional costs: 3, 5, 7 and 8. During the course of the review it was confirmed that any costs would be met within existing budgets and the remaining recommendations use existing resources and will therefore not impact budgets.

### **Equalities Implications**

17. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Throughout the course of the enquiry, efforts have been made to ascertain and understand the complexities relating to the differing needs of parents / carers, children of different ages and local residents.

A range of balanced and proportionate recommendations have been identified which will support the development of flexible and locally focused solutions.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

18. The Executive is asked to consider the recommendations of the review and determine what action, if any, is necessary.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Detailed report of the enquiry

### **Background Papers**

None