
Meeting: Executive
Date: 31 May 2011
Subject: Consultation on Central Bedfordshire's draft Approach to Parking Management
Report of: Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services
Summary: This report seeks Executive approval to consult the wider community on the draft Approach to Parking Management.

Advising Officer: Alan Fleming – Interim Director, Sustainable Communities
Contact Officer: Basil Jackson – Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive
Key Decision No
**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** N/A

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The Central Bedfordshire priorities supported in this paper are:

- Creating safer communities.
- Managing growth effectively.

Central Bedfordshire's vision is to be "globally connected, delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all". The context for this is growth, including 27,000 new jobs and 26,000 new homes by 2026. Our focus is to deliver a highly attractive, well-connected prime location for businesses, and ensure that a choice of transport is available to take people to employment, education, healthcare, shops. Car parking management is an integral part of realising the economic vitality of our town and village centres.

Financial:

The available revenue budget for parking management and enforcement (£1.26million) was broadly cost neutral in 2010/11. In addition, enforcement services and car park offerings in Central Bedfordshire are in need of significant modernisation. The attached draft approach explains the challenges facing Central Bedfordshire, both in terms of revenue (for enforcement activities) and capital (for infrastructure improvements).

Legal:

Central Bedfordshire Council is the highway and traffic authority for the road network in the district of Central Bedfordshire. An important function of the traffic authority is to manage on and off-street parking. We currently discharge our legal responsibilities through a contract with Vinci Park Services. To be legally enforceable, parking services must be compliant with the Traffic Management Act 2004

Risk Management:

Failure to deliver efficient and effective parking enforcement would be detrimental to the safe and expeditious use of the road network and could be damaging to economic growth. Failure to deliver a cost neutral parking enforcement service could have detrimental financial implications to the Authority.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

N/A

Equalities/Human Rights:

Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Creating an attractive and accessible public realm has a part to play in getting people out and about. One objective of enforcing traffic restrictions is to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community have fair access to the public realm. Disabled people, in particular, place a high priority on the provision and enforcement of disabled parking bays and the provision of dropped kerbs. An efficiently managed parking system is therefore crucial for allowing equality of opportunity. An Equality Impact Assessment will be developed to ascertain the adverse impacts these proposals may have on different groups of people.

Community Safety:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Council places a statutory duty on the Council: without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. Parking enforcement activities can support a reduction in crime and disorder through the use of CEOs to act as eyes and ears as they undertake their duties. They often become aware of key pieces of intelligence which can support and assist in the detection/investigation of crime and disorder.

The Traffic Management Act was introduced in 2004 to tackle congestion and disruption on the road network. The Act places a duty on local traffic authorities to ensure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road network and those networks of surrounding authorities. The Act gives authorities additional tools to better manage parking policies, moving traffic enforcement and the coordination of street works which are all important components of community safety.

Sustainability:

The effective management of parking is a key part of accommodating Central Bedfordshire's growth agenda and ensuring that we are "open for business."
A good, well-connected public transport network encourages patronage and provides the alternative to travel locally without using without using the private car.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

- N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. that the Executive approve the proposal to consult the wider community on the attached draft Approach to Parking Management, including seeking the views of Overview & Scrutiny, before reporting back to a future Executive meeting.**

Reason for Recommendation: To involve the community and key stake holders in developing an approach to parking management for Central Bedfordshire.

Executive Summary

The rural nature of Central Bedfordshire means that the motor vehicle plays an important role in transport journeys for many residents and businesses. As a result, parking plays an important role within the transport system, as well as being a key element in economic viability and success of our district and therefore Central Bedfordshire Council needs to take a strategic and proactive approach to the management of on and off-street parking. The attached (Appendix A) draft document outlines basic draft policies which form a strategic approach to parking.

Background

1. Central Bedfordshire has a growing and diverse economy. It is home to world leading companies, universities and education institutions, a high quality built and natural environment, a skilled labour force and effective communications links to major population centres. Our approach to managing parking must therefore support the economic aspects of our town centres and villages as well as supporting growth and regeneration in the district.
2. The rural nature of Central Bedfordshire means that the motor vehicle plays an important role in transport journeys for many Central Bedfordshire residents. As a result, this approach will not only consider parking management, but also the related effects of congestion and road safety arising from car use.

Issues

3. The Authority provides numerous off-street car parking facilities within Central Bedfordshire, mainly focused on parking provision in Dunstable/Houghton Regis and Leighton Linlade, as our two largest areas of population and employment. Central Bedfordshire also provides “Residents’ Parking Zones” in these towns along with further minor provision in Biggleswade and Flitwick. These are zones where residents can purchase permits to park within their streets, giving them a fair opportunity to park in the road in which they live.
4. In addition, there are other facilities which are run by the town & parish councils, the rail operators and other private companies.
5. The draft Approach will articulate the Council’s position on the following elements:
 - overall management of car parking in Central Bedfordshire;
 - managing the Council’s car parking stock;
 - parking enforcement and congestion management;
 - setting of appropriate parking charges;
 - town and parish visitor parking;
 - parking at railway stations, and
 - safety and mobility issues.

Conclusion

6. The Approach will outline how the Authority expects to develop its parking services, provide greater detail and clarity on how parking operates in Central Bedfordshire and provide parking guidance to facilitate achieving the objectives of the Local Transport Plan.
7. Consultation will take place with ward members, parish councils and stakeholder groups, such as Chamber of Commerce over a 13 week period. This will include exhibitions to be held at key locations around the district during the consultation period, including Priory House and Watling House.
8. It is recommended that the views of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought prior to a further report to Executive for decision.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Approach to Parking Management

Background Papers:

None