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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 2 October 2012  
**Subject:** Publication of Parking Strategy  
**Report of:** Cllr Brian Spurr, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services  
**Summary:** This report seeks Executive approval to publish the Council's Parking Strategy as the approach to managing parking in Central Bedfordshire.

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**Advising Officer:** Alan Fleming, Project Director  
**Contact Officer:** Basil Jackson, Assistant Director Highways and Transport  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** N/A

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The Central Bedfordshire priorities supported in this paper are:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – creating jobs, managing growth, protecting our countryside and enabling businesses to grow; and
- Better infrastructure – improved roads, broadband reach and transport.

### **Financial:**

1. For parking and enforcement for 2012/13 the approved gross expenditure budget is £994K and gross income budget is £1,608K. This includes an efficiency target of £230K. There is a further efficiency target split over the next 3 financial years of £60k.
2. The available capital budget of £200K is currently split equally over 2012/13 and 2013/14. However, there may be adjustments to these figures over the medium term financial plan period as the Authority reflects on the need to acquire additional car parks, ticket machines and ANPR vehicles.

3. There are cost implications to adopting some of the policies; for example, parking on footways where additional signing and road markings will be required and to do that in every road would cost the Council a significant amount of money. As with any of these policies they will be phased to ease the financial burden.
4. While the policies, when adopted, will come into affect immediately after they have been adopted by Executive, their implementation will take into account the above financial constraint.

**Legal:**

5. Central Bedfordshire Council is the highway and traffic authority for the road network in the area of Central Bedfordshire. An important function of the Authority is to manage on and off-street parking. To be legally enforceable, parking services must be compliant with the Traffic Management Act 2004.

**Risk Management:**

6. 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. Other financial risks include failure to deliver efficiency targets. Failure to deliver an effective approach to parking may result in reputational damage to the Council. There is also a risk of failing to discharge statutory responsibilities.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

7. Not applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

8. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, to 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.
9. 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.
10. An efficiently managed parking system is therefore crucial for allowing equality of opportunity.

**Public Health:**

11. Not applicable.

**Community Safety:**

12. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 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.
13. Parking enforcement activities can support a reduction in crime and disorder through the use of civil enforcement officers (CEOs) to report key pieces of intelligence which can support and assist in the detection/investigation of crime and disorder, ensuring that sufficient, appropriate and safe parking areas are available and that appropriate parking enforcement services are in place.
14. 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:**

15. 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 the private car.
16. We will also support the roll-out of infrastructure in car parks for electric vehicle charging in line with national initiatives such as 'Plugged in Places'.

**Procurement:**

17. Not applicable.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

18. A number of additional policies were considered by Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 June 2012 for inclusion within the final version of the Parking Strategy.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Executive is asked to endorse the Parking Strategy, as amended to include the recommendations from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the exception of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation 2 that parking on grass verges not be permitted, as the published approach to parking in Central Bedfordshire.**

*Reason for  
Recommendation:*

*To ensure that the Council has an adopted Parking Strategy.*

## Background

19. On 12 July 2011 the Executive approved the proposal to consult the wider community on the draft “Approach to Parking” (Parking Strategy), including seeking the views of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, before reporting back to a future Executive meeting.
20. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 October 2011 endorsed the following recommendations and comments contained in a report from the Highways and Transportation Task Force setting out their conclusions in respect of the Council’s draft “Approach to Parking”:
  - the draft “Approach to Parking” is supported as the basis for the development of parking services in Central Bedfordshire;
  - that controlled parking zones be used as a major measure for the management of car parking, provided that such zones are selectively introduced following proper evaluation and are sufficiently and adequately funded;
  - that residents’ parking zones as such should not be used by the Council in the future as a parking control measure and that any further requests should be considered in the context of controlled parking zones; and
  - that the parking standards (as set out in Appendix C to the draft “Approach to Parking”) are fair and reasonable.
21. The Executive noted the above recommendations at its meeting of 15 November 2011 but resolved that, in some cases, residents’ parking schemes could be used in isolation outside of parking zones.
22. The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 June 2012 received a report that set out the changes that were planned to be made to the Parking Strategy as a result of the consultation that had been carried out on the draft “Approach to Parking”. In response the Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed the following issues in relation to existing and proposed new policies:
23. Residents’ permits
  - Residents’ parking zones provide a parking solution in villages where people park their car in a residential area before going on holiday.
  - The cost of a resident’s permit, where a resident owned more than one vehicle, was still to be determined.
  - Possessing a resident’s parking permit did not guarantee that the resident would always be able to find a parking space.

#### 24. Parking on verges

- In areas where verge / footway parking was permitted the dual use of the pathway by pedestrians would be retained. The designation of any verge / pathway parking would be determined by the Traffic Management Committee and would require the making of a traffic regulation order.
- The Committee agreed that parking should not be permitted on grass verges as this churned up the grass and obstructed pedestrians. In response the Assistant Director for Highways and Transport stated that there would be no parking on grass verges permitted as a result of the strategy. However, in extreme circumstance, the Authority may choose to formalise parking in such areas by “hardening off” grass verges and identifying marked parking bays.

#### 25. HGV Parking

- Concerns relating to the displacement of HGVs into villages if parking hours were restricted in lay-bys overnight. There were also concerns relating to the level of enforcement that the Council would be able to undertake overnight.
- Concerns that the Highways Agency was responsible for several roads throughout the Central Bedfordshire area and parking standards relating to HGVs needed to be managed in a consistent manner.

#### 26. Treatment of Persistent Offenders

- The need to ensure that blue badge holders did not incorrectly receive a penalty charge notice (PCN).
- Whether it should be permissible to allow an illegally parked vehicle to accrue 5 or more unpaid PCNs before being clamped and removed. The Council was legally required to permit an illegally parked vehicle to accrue 3 unpaid PCNs before it could be clamped and removed.

#### 27. Residential Parking Standards

- Following a report from Transportation Planning (International) Ltd a number of changes were proposed to the parking standards included in Central Bedfordshire’s draft Approach to Parking. In particular it was recommended that the standard for residential development should be a minimum standard (effectively one parking unit per bedroom) and that the minimum number of parking units should include the garage.

- It was suggested that if the garage was included in the minimum number of units stated in the report then these numbers were insufficient. In addition it was commented that planning applications should need to ensure a minimum 3.3 metre as the appropriate width for a garage. Members requested that the Design Guide reinforce the need for garages to be a minimum 3.3 metre width and that restrictions be put in place to prevent residents from converting the use of a garage to another function. The Design Guide is presently being reviewed and would be considered by the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to its further adoption. The Development Management Committee would ensure that planning applications provided appropriate numbers of parking spaces.

## **Recommendations from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**28. The recommendations to Executive from Overview and Scrutiny are:**

- 1. That the approach to localism and exploring ways of involving the local community in the delivery of parking services be supported.**
- 2. That parking on grass verges not be permitted.**
- 3. That verge and footway parking be permitted only in streets where no other parking provision can practicably be provided but that all proposals be referred to the Traffic Management Committee for the designation of a traffic regulation order.**
- 4. That the approach to restrict HGV parking in lay-bys to four hours only during the period 9pm to 7am be supported.**
- 5. That a letter be sent to the Highways Agency informing them of the intention of the Council in relation to regulating overnight HGV parking in lay-bys and asking them to continue to enforce HGV parking on major trunk roads throughout the area.**
- 6. That any illegally parked vehicle with 3 or more unpaid PCNs be clamped and removed to a safe storage location.**
- 7. That the suggested parking standards for residential schemes be amended as follows:-**
  - 1 bedroom (1 per unit minimum)**
  - 2 bedrooms (2 per unit minimum)**
  - 3 bedrooms (3 per unit minimum)**
  - 4+ bedrooms (4 per unit minimum)**

29. The Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services advises that recommendation 2 from the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is not required as this is already covered within recommendation 3.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

30. The Parking Strategy, as attached at Appendix A, if endorsed by Executive, will be published on the Council's website or will be amended if necessary to take account of the recommendations of the Executive before publication.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A Parking Strategy

### **Background papers:**

None.