



## Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Executive 6 November 2024 & 26 March 2025

Wards affected: Hinckley mainly (some car parks are operated in rural areas)

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### Hinckley Car Parks Study and Action Plan

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Report of Director Corporate and Street Scene Services

#### **1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To advise Executive of the car parks study undertaken in 2023 and seek agreement to the car parks action plan 2024-2028

#### **2. Recommendation**

2.1 Executive notes the Car Parks Study 2023 and that this and the action plan will be included within the local plan evidence base.

2.2 Executive approves the Car Parks action plan 2024 – 2028.

2.3 Executive notes the comments from the Town Centre Partnership within point 8 and agrees that the action plan is not changed following these comments.

#### **3. Background to the report**

3.1 The 2017 Car Parks study was updated in 2023 using UKSPF funding. The study concentrates on off street parking and re-examined parking demand in light of new developments and changes since the Covid 19 pandemic. See appendix 1.

3.2 Key findings include:-

- Car park charges are lower than those in Nuneaton and Loughborough
- Car parking demand does not exceed supply on average but demand for long stay car parking in particular has decreased.
- Almost all short stay car parks and all long stay car parks are generating less revenue in 2021/22 than in 2015/16.

- Parking levels and revenues, and footfall levels are rising year on year after the covid 19 pandemic. 2023/24 income now exceeds 2015/16.
- The privately operated crescent car park occupancy has also dropped reflecting a wider trend of decreased car parking across Hinckley.

### 3.3 The study recommends

- Improvements to the appearance of some car parks,
- Potential redesignation of some long stay car parks to short stay
- Ev charge point provision
- Potential scope to increase car park charges
- Monitoring of the free parking initiatives

### 3.4 A Car Parks Action Plan 2024-2028 has been developed (see appendix 2) to ensure the recommendations from this study are implemented. The action plan has 6 key aims, the headline actions for each being:-

- Aim 1: Improve the appearance, safety and usability of car parks. A car park by car park plan will be developed and implemented.
- Aim 2: Support the councils climate change and biodiversity agenda. Increased wildflowers and trees, covered cycle parking and adjustments for higher summer temperatures.
- Aim 3: Ensure car parks are fully utilised and classification meets demand. A watching brief with options to increase short stay spaces if required, and potentially to increase residents permits on underutilised long stay car parks.
- Aim 4: support town centre regeneration projects. The Haz improvements to Church Walk are already complete and the way marking strategy has commenced. On going support for other development proposals eg Hinckley Museum, NHS diagnostic centre etc.
- Aim 5: Greener travel. Engage with the Leicestershire County Council Electric vehicle strategy and increase charge points as demand increases including new EV charge points on the Leisure Centre car park.
- Aim 6: Pricing and car park incentives. Monitoring of free parking offers, charges and introduction of national parking app (when fully developed)
- Aim 7: review rural car parks. Review utilisation and costs, identify improvements, and develop a long term plan for these car parks.

The study and action plan were discussed at the Town Centre Partnership meeting and responses and comments received are detailed along with Officers response / comments are noted within point 8. No changes to the action plan are recommended following this meeting.

## 4. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

### 4.1 Open Session

## 5. Financial implications [AA]

- 5.1 Budgets for Car Parks are monitored monthly and presented quarterly to this committee. Improvements will be funded by 2024/25 existing budgets and any changes to it have to be approved in line with financial procedure rules.

## 6. Legal implications [JS]

- 6.1 Any amendments to car parking orders will need to follow the statutory procedures and ultimately be agreed by Full Council.

## 7. Corporate Plan implications

- 7.1 Car parks support the Corporate Plan aims for places (town centre) places (shaping development), and prosperity (enhancing town centres). The action plan reflects these key themes / aims.

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1 The study and action plan will be incorporated into the local plan adoption processes by the planning policy team. See 10.1
- 8.2 Following agreement from Executive on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the study and action plan were shared at the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 Town Centre Partnership meeting for comments and to seek recommendations.

Below are the comments we received: - *Officers response is in italics*

- EV charge points – Ensure EV charge point spaces can be used by all vehicles – *Dual use charge points are already designated at each of the sites. Removing all restrictions would risk EV drivers being unable to charge.*
- Free parking and no increase in charges requested. *The revenue raised by car parks covers the cost of operating the car parks and funds other town centre activities such as hanging baskets, events markets and cleansing.*
- Request for LCC to increase parking availability on the public highway. *LCC have advised this will be completed in the next few months.*
- Would like to see more trees/floral displays/wildflowers to soften the look of the car parks. *This is the action plan.*
- Can always hope for some concession on very short stay - say first 30 minutes free on all car parks to encourage pop and shop. Possibly an increase in the first hour from 60p to £1 would cover this. *Can keep this under review.*
- From my previous experience, everything suggested in the Plan is laudable but will clearly depend on budget availability. However, if any of the work

suggested in the Action Plan means an increase in parking charges, national surveys have suggested that this will only result in a negative number of visitors using those car parks. As can be clearly seen, Fosse Park is a huge attraction to shoppers not only because it also has a wealth of choice, but because (as so many people have commented) Car Parking is Free of Charge. *No increase in charges for 2020/2021.*

- The Hinckley Town retail offering is still high compared with many other similar sized towns in the Midlands, as are our services and food/drink offerings. But I cannot see how Government will achieve its current objectives without increasing taxes, rates and demanding other new sources of revenue through the coming Spring Budget. This will likely result in cutbacks in consumer spending, so if there is any budget available to reduce Car Park charges in Hinckley, this will be one of the most likely attractions to potential shoppers. *Currently this is unaffordable due to the level of local government funding.*
- Car parking charges if they go up, they go up, personally, I don't see 10p being a massive increase, BUT... if may have a detrimental effect on people coming to the Town Centre. If we can keep the charges as low as possible then it would be appreciated but the council have to bring in extra revenue from somewhere – lets get realistic !. *We can keep this under review.*

8.3 Any changes to the Parking Places order require consultation and these processes would be followed at the appropriate time.

## 9. Risk implications

9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

### Management of significant (Net Red) risks

| Risk description  | Mitigating actions   | Owner     |
|---|--|-----------|
| Failure to adjust car parks structures to meet demand (eg long / short stay)  | Ongoing monitoring and recommendations for adjustments as required | Lisa Rees |
| Failure to invest in car parks / improve amenity and usability resulting in detriment to town centre visitor experience | Car park plan to be developed and implemented.                     | Lisa Rees |

|  |   |           |
|--|---|-----------|
| Opportunity to general increased revenue as demand increases for parking | Monitor charges, free parking offers and make appropriate recommendations to Executive as appropriate | Lisa Rees |
|--|---|-----------|

## **10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications**

- 10.1 The emerging local plan will reflect the findings of the car parks study and will put forward policy to support the study and action plan later in 2024.
- 10.2 Parishes will be engaged as appropriate as part of the rural car parks review.
- 10.3 The action plan includes an action to provide blue badge holder accessible EV charging points, and as part of the usability aim car park bays (including blue badge holder bays) will be changed to meet national standards as opportunities arise.

## **11. Climate implications**

- 11.1 Aim 2 and Aim 6 support the climate change agenda and the action plan includes measures such as increased biodiversity, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and covered cycle parking.
- 11.2 Mitigation of climate change impacts is also included. For example tree planting to increase shading and consideration of tarmac specifications and rain gardens.

## **12. Corporate implications**

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:
- Community safety implications
  - Environmental implications
  - ICT implications
  - Asset management implications
  - Procurement implications
  - Human resources implications
  - Planning implications
  - Data protection implications
  - Voluntary sector

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Background papers: Appendix 1: Car Parking Assessment of Hinckley Town Centre  
Appendix 2: Car Parks Action plan 2024 - 2028

Contact officer: Caroline Roffey x5782, Lisa Rees X 5971  
Executive member: Councillor S Bray