

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL**CABINET****15 November 2007**

Report of: Director of Planning, Transport and Sustainable Development

Title: PARKING STRATEGY - NEXT STEPS

Ward: Citywide

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the next steps in implementing the Parking Strategy, as set out in the proposals section of this report, are approved and implemented.

Summary

The report reviews progress and sets out the next steps in implementing the parking strategy, and considers a new study on city centre parking which assesses the impact of the opening of Cabot Circus. The recommendations cover parking tariffs, variable message signs, residents parking, park and ride and district centre car parks, and general improvements to Parking Services.

The significant issues in the report are:

- A review of progress in delivering aspects of the City Council Parking Strategy;
- A report by ORC (Oxford Retail Consortium) outlining matters pertaining to the future use of the new Cabot Circus multi-storey car park;
- Requirement to expand and develop variable message signing within

the city centre to ensure city car parks are used effectively and to reduce mileage wasted looking for parking spaces;

- Implementation of strategy to displace long stay parking to park and ride sites and expansion of Portway Park and Ride and the development of proposals for a Park and Ride site to the north of the city.
- Proposed increase of long stay tariffs whilst freezing short stay tariffs and park and ride fares;
- Proposed implementation of residents parking zones and expansion of central Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) (as set out in a separate report to Cabinet) in conjunction with park and ride expansion to accommodate displaced commuters (as well as implementation of showcase bus routes/Greater Bristol Bus Network);
- Review of district centre car parks to support residents parking (to act as overspill facility) and to ensure fitness for purpose to help district centres thrive economically;
- Proposed replacement of all existing pay-and-display and pay -on-foot machines with state of the art machines by the end of 2008 subject to funding to improve customer service and protect revenue.

Policy

1. The Council's latest parking strategy was adopted on 13th October 2005, and contributes to the delivery of the Joint Local Transport Plan.

Consultation

2. Internal

Legal, Finance, all relevant PT&SD teams.

3. External

Each element of this report will be subject to formal consultation either through the publication of statutory notices or planning applications.

Context

4. A successful parking strategy is integral to the implementation of the Council's transport strategy, and accordingly good progress has been made in implementing the parking strategy actions endorsed by the Cabinet in October 2005. With reference to the specific recommendations of the Parking Strategy report the following progress

has been made. The original recommendation is in bold:

a) Local Members and the appropriate Scrutiny Commission are invited to comment further on these proposals.

The report was presented to the Physical Environment Scrutiny Commission on the 4th November 2005.

b) Park and ride fares are increased as set out in Appendix A.

Implemented January 2006;

c) A review of district centre car parks is undertaken to establish usage and continued need and to examine whether ticketing arrangements should be applied.

A review of the district car parks has not been undertaken to date. However, Parking Services are scheduled to complete a review of all district car parks as part of a proposed Asset Management Plan for all car parks managed by Parking Services in 2008, with their initial focus on those car parks within the proposed inner ring for residents parking zones.

d) Throughout the outer city area it is proposed that parking enforcement activity should be prioritised according to the need to avoid obstructions to traffic flow, to avoid road safety hazards and to maintain journey time reliability for buses.

Implemented through Parking Services' operational review April 2007, this has seen a major improvement on the clearways with a drop in obstructions to bus flow;

e) The boundary of the Central CPZ should be reviewed to remove anomalies, and consider extending it into areas experiencing the greatest pressure on parking.

The review of the Central CPZ boundary has been concluded with recommendations for amendment of the boundary contained in a parallel report to Cabinet on 15th November 2007

f) Subject to due process, the Kingsdown CPZ and residents parking proposal be reappraised in the light of current circumstances.

The proposed implementation of residents parking zones is the subject of a separate parallel report to Cabinet;

g) Long term contract parking arrangements are subject to review

A review of contract parking has been undertaken. As part of the current tariff revisions, discounts for contract and scratch card parking have been reduced to 10% and 7% respectively.

h) The proposed off street tariffs at council owned car parks as set out in Appendix B be approved, save in respect of the proposed Saturday evening charges at Trenchard Street and West End long stay car parks. The Trenchard Street and West End proposals will be subject to compliance with the statutory requirements including public advertisement and consideration of any objections.

Implemented 5th June 2006;

i) The anomaly of evening parking on yellow lines adjacent to charged parking bays is addressed following a review.

All single yellow lines in the Central CPZ are being reviewed with 3 possible outcomes:

- conversion to double yellow lines;
- conversion to pay and display bays;
- retention of single yellows with provision for pay and display at other times.

The review will be complete by the end of 2007 and it is intended that the TROs are amended and changes are proposed to be implemented by 31st March 2008, subject to due processes being concluded.

j) The definition of 'permitted evening hours' in the Controlled Parking Zones be varied to include Sundays and Bank Holidays, subject to compliance with the statutory requirements, including public advertisement and consideration of any objections.

This issue is being considered in a parallel report to Cabinet.

k) The proposed on street parking tariffs as set out in Appendix B be approved, save in the case of the proposed Sunday tariffs in the Controlled Parking Zones, dealt with in j) above.

Implemented 5th June 2006;

l) A Programme of implementation of residents' parking schemes is required, based on a prioritisation process that should be established linked to an objective assessment of the scale of the problems of conflicting parking demands.

The proposed implementation of residents parking schemes is the subject of a separate parallel report to Cabinet;

m) Residents parking set up (construction and legal) and administration costs should be borne by the residents benefitting from the parking permits rather than by council tax payers as a whole.

Noted;

n) No further residents' parking permits are issued within the Central CPZ, that are directly linked to new developments, albeit dispensation should be made for spaces to accommodate disabled individuals, car club initiatives or equivalent, and officers be authorised to instruct the Head of Legal Services to progress any associated changes to the Central CPZ orders accordingly.

Implemented;

o) The principles set out in Appendix C for the more effective deployment of parking resources are endorsed, developed and implemented.

The outcome of the Parking Review was implemented in April 2007. This has been largely successful although modifications to shift patterns and rosters have subsequently been made. The new system is now working effectively and, following a successful recruitment exercise, there will be a full complement of Parking Attendants on street from mid-November. This, in conjunction with the current focus on improving lines and signs will ensure a more effective parking enforcement regime.

5. Members will recall that these Parking Strategy actions were broadly geared towards encouraging modal shift by commuters from car to public transport, park and ride, or other options, thereby contributing to the Joint Local Transport Plan aspirations of reduced congestion, better air quality, better accessibility and improved road safety. At the same time assisting the retail and leisure sectors within the city, by prioritising short stay spaces.
6. In conjunction with the above actions, a study of the city centre retail parking capacity was commissioned in partnership with the Bristol Alliance and NCP. The study was carried out by the Oxford Retail Consortium (ORC) who predicted that there will be a 60% increase in demand for retail parking spaces once Cabot Circus is operational. This figure is likely to be even greater when the development first opens. The study shows, through bench-marking with other towns and cities, that with appropriate management (promotion of short-stay at the expense of

long-stay, and development of park and ride) the supply of car parking should be adequate. The importance of this study is that for the first time all operators have been considered together; the study has also considered all the known changes to parking and proposed land use changes.

Proposal

The Next Steps in implementing the Parking Strategy are outlined below:

7. The implication of the ORC study is that the city centre car parks need to be managed coherently if demand is to be satisfied. Central to achieving this will be the provision of a comprehensive Variable Message Signing (VMS) scheme to direct people to the nearest available car park and to avoid serious congestion in the vicinity of Cabot Circus. VMS is an integral element of our UTMC (Urban Traffic Management and Control) improvement plan.
8. There are currently 24 signs covering 6 car parks (City Council plus NCP plus Mall Galleries). The signs use outdated technology and it is proposed that they are replaced with 50 new signs covering 14 car parks (all operators) as well as the 3 park and ride sites. These signs can display car park data as well as other traffic information and will play a crucial role in reducing waste mileage, and therefore congestion, as well as encouraging visitors to the city centre.
9. The city centre elements of the VMS system should be implemented by September 2008 to coincide with the opening of Cabot Circus. The system will comprise 16 signs within the central area carrying real time information about the number of spaces available in nearby car parks and parking directions to those car parks. A programme of introducing VMS signs on the primary routes into the city centre should also be underway. These signs will provide parking information by zone within the city centre rather than specific car parks. The 2007/08 capital budget provides for this.
10. The ORC study has also demonstrated the need to continue to displace long-stay parking either to park and ride or other alternative modes. For the opening of Cabot Circus, Portway is to be expanded by 550 spaces in line with the agreed transport strategy in the Joint Local Transport Plan. With appropriate motorway signage this site has the ability to intercept both M5 and M4 (west) traffic. Further pressure on park and ride will also develop from the implementation of residents' parking schemes. Long Ashton retains several hundred spare spaces, but the site at Brislington is often close to capacity and an expansion of this site would be the next logical step. In tandem with the expansion plans there is a programme of promotions such as the introduction of the employees season ticket.

- 11.** In the medium-longer term a large scale park and ride site is required to the north of the city. The Joint Local Transport Plan states that park and ride should be investigated on main routes into congested areas (such as Bristol City Centre). A site assessment exercise is therefore underway within the M32 corridor to enable an appropriate site to be brought forward for development and implementation as soon as feasible.
- 12.** To ensure an adequate supply of short stay spaces is available and to encourage commuters to use alternative modes of transport, in line with the Council's transport strategy it is recommended that long-stay tariffs are increased from £4 to £5 for over 4 hours, and £8 to £10 a day in the City Council's off-street car parks. All other tariffs, which were last increased in June 2006 will be frozen, along with park and ride charges. It is proposed to introduce these new charges as soon as possible in the new year and complete by March 2008 at the latest. The Appendix sets out the expected financial impact of the increase in long-stay charges taking into account elasticities of demand. Any additional revenue raised (budget assumes inflation increases anyway) will be small, if the expected behavioural changes materialise, as the increased tariff from long stay customers will be significantly offset by reducing patronage, the extra spaces being taken up by cheaper short stay parking. Any extra income will be directed to improving the environmental condition of car parks (lifts, safety, security etc) and to support the park and ride and UTMC improvements highlighted above.
- 13.** The proposed implementation of Residents Parking schemes, which is being considered separately by this Cabinet, will also have an impact on long-stay parking. This adds to the need to expeditiously complete the review of district centre car parks to ensure they are fit for purpose in supporting district centres achieve their retail aspirations in the face of competition from a strengthened city centre whilst potentially providing overspill for residents. The outcome of the review will include: a priced schedule of works to bring the car parks up to an improved standard and to improve safety, an assessment of the future viability of some district and surface car parks for redevelopment (with public parking retained), the potential introduction of residents' parking as part of future and existing residents' parking schemes, and the possible introduction of pay and display in car parks that are currently over subscribed. We will also be looking to create additional parking where needed to help promote retailing activity in district centres wherever possible.
- 14.** Finally, it is recognised that the quality of car parking can be as important as other factors such as price and location. The procurement process is currently underway to replace existing pay-and-display and pay -on-foot machines with state of the art machines by the end of 2008 subject to funding. It is also proposed to trial a "pay-by-phone" facility

(and possibly smartcard technology) to provide an additional method of paying for parking to enhance customer flexibility whilst still offering the pay by cash or credit/debit card option. If the pay-by-phone trial is successful, it could be used for all pay and display parking. Central to this work will be ongoing customer surveys to ensure this service meets the expectations of its users.

Other Options Considered

Not adopting the options laid out in this report will lead to a potential shortfall in short stay parking and increased congestion once Cabot Circus is operations.

Risk Assessment

The City Council's effectiveness as a Transport Authority is at risk in the absence of a comprehensive and coherent Parking Strategy. This report seeks to address this risk by updating and improving existing policy and other matters in the context of a clear transport rationale. The Council's principal duties in this regard are contained within the Traffic Management Act 2004, and our intentions are made very clear in the Local Transport Plan which is geared towards improving air quality, road safety and accessibility, whilst reducing congestion.

Equalities Impact Assessment

This report is not considered to contain any proposals which have potential negative equalities impacts. In practice the reverse is potentially likely, in that the Parking Policy seeks to promote public transport usage as an alternative to commuting by car.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

The proposed long stay off street parking increases can be levied pursuant to Orders or simply by Notices made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Whilst the Act is not a revenue raising Act, tariff increases are permissible where the dominant purpose is to secure legitimate traffic related objectives. The report sets out the rationale offered by officers .

It will be necessary to ensure that any statutory formalities are complied with.

Legal Advice given by Peter Malarby

Senior Solicitor for Highways and Transport, Legal Services

Financial

(a) Revenue

Variable Message Signs (VMS) - additional provision is being made within the Medium Term Financial Plan of £50,000, which together with existing provision, will support the ongoing maintenance of the network infrastructure.

Park & Ride - expansion of Portway and the M32 development will be the subject of a detailed business plan.

Improving the standard of district car parks, the replacement of pay and display and pay on foot machines and the provision of the 'pay by phone' facility will all need to have a full business case developed.

(b) Capital

Variable Message Signs (VMS) - provision for these is included within the £1.2 million allocation for UTMC within the 2007/08 capital programme.

Park & Ride - expansion of Portway - provision included within the Joint Local Transport Plan. Alternative sources of funding for the M32 Park & Ride are being investigated.

Long Stay Parking Tariff - a sensitivity analysis has been undertaken in arriving at three separate projection forecasts dependent on the level of assumed customer resistance which for MSCP varies from 5% to 25% and for surface parking 10% to 25%. Assuming implementation from 1st January 2008, current year end forecasts and MTFP provide for a full year effect of £490,000.

Improving the standard of district car parks, the replacement of pay and display and pay on foot machines and the provision of the 'pay by phone' facility will all need to have a full business case developed.

Financial Advice given by Mike Harding

Head of Finance, CLS and PT&SD

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not applicable.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Proposed Tariff Revisions for Long Stay Parking - Income Projections

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
Background Papers:

Parking Strategy Report of 13th October 2005

ORC report 2007

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Proposed Tariff Revisions for Long-Stay Parking – Income Projections

The strategy is to discourage long stay parking and to encourage the use of park and ride and other forms of transport. Therefore, three projections have been made for possible income levels for a 25% increase in the long-stay parking tariffs (from £4 to £5 for 4 to 8 hours and £8 to £10 for over 8 hours) based on differing levels of reduced demand. An analysis of previous tariff increase. Low reduction, Mid-case and High reduction projections are detailed in Tables 1 to 3;

- Low Reduction – Based on previous experience it is projected that there will be a drop in patronage of 5% in MSCP and 10% in surface parking. This projection would see total parking income increase by £743,253 to £4,421,579 (an increase of 20.2% - see table 1).
- Mid-Case – This projection forecasts that there will be a drop in patronage of 10% in MSCP and 15% in surface parking. The Mid-Case projection would see total parking income increase by £492,404 to £4,170,730, (an increase of 13.4% - see table 2).
- High Reduction - This projection forecasts that there will be a drop in patronage of 25% in MSCP and 25% in surface parking. This projection forecasts the point where the possible loss of patronage equates with no increase in parking income. The Pessimistic projection would see total parking income remain static at £3,678,326 (see table 3).

The mid case projection is recommended as robust in that it allows for a greater fall off in patronage than experienced when charges have been raised previously given that the tariff differential between city council car parks and those of other operators will become much less (see table 4). However, at £10 for 8 hours, the long-stay tariff is still below that charged by NCP in their centrally located car parks in Bristol (£10.40 to £15.00). Recent surveys have shown that the option of finding free parking on-street is only available to those willing to walk a considerable distance and therefore will not be viewed as an option by many. Bristol will also remain competitive within the region (eg. Bath £11.00, Gloucester £12, Cheltenham £12, Camden £19, Reading £20); table B5 4 includes further examples of long stay charges from across the country.

Price is not the only determining factor in the choice of car park; location (proximity to destination), access and egress (by car and on foot), safety (lighting, CCTV and lifts) and overall environment will influence car park choice. Clearly, the central car parks are going to remain attractive to many people for these reasons. However, it is anticipated that a number of customers will transfer to park and ride or a non-car mode in response to the price increase; this is essential in terms of implementing the council's transport policy and for controlling congestion.