



REPORT TO:	Overview & Scrutiny –Environment and Performance
DATE:	5 September 2024
SUBJECT:	Member Working Group – Review of Car Parking in Boston
PURPOSE:	To present the outcomes of the review and enable consideration by members of the parent scrutiny committee
KEY DECISION:	No
REPORT OF:	Car Parking Member Working Group, supported by Karen Rist, Democratic Services Officer and Andy Fisher – Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Delivery and Assistant Director – General Fund Assets.
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY:

Boston Borough Council’s scrutiny function includes various forms of scrutiny to enable Members to undertake focussed, in-depth reviews, reporting back to a parent scrutiny committee accordingly.

This report is the product of a member working group set up to consider ‘car parking in Boston’.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Having reviewed all the evidence considered, the Group submit the following recommendations, seeking support of the Environment and Performance Committee in recommending their approval by Cabinet:

1. That the Council focus a green strategy on its car parks and continues to support the volunteer time being invested in its sites with refuse collection, planting, and maintenance.

2. That resources are set aside to reline the Cattle Market car park to offer larger parking spaces for the improved amenity of customers. That the trail be monitored to inform whether similar changes can and should be made to other Council car parks.
3. That the Council undertake a signage review with particular reference to routing visitors to its own car parks and pricing structures.
4. That the Council undertake a parking fees and charges review, including exploring the introduction of shopper and commuter passes that can all be purchased via the MiPermit app and the Council's new parking machines.
5. That the Portfolio Holder both support and actively promote the recommendations of the working group.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the access and use of the Council's car parking provision within the town and to secure greater take up of the sites by both residents and visitors.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following concerns in respect of ongoing decreases in car parking income, members agreed the convening of a Member Working Group (MWG). The group would consider the decline in income across the Council's 22 car parking sites, whilst also considering the condition of the sites and the provision and quality of the current signage to the sites, both within the town and also along the main arterial roads into the town centre.
- 1.2 The MWG was convened with Councillors Anton Dani, Stuart Evans, Mike Gilbert, Chris Mountain and Ralph Pryke., support to the group was provided by the Joint Deputy Chief Executive, Programme Deliver and Assistant Director for General Fund Assets.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 At its first meeting the MWG agreed the scope of the review (see appendix A) and identified the initial evidence required. Concern was also noted at the existing size of the standard car parking spaces provided, which members agreed are no longer comparable with the size of many modern vehicles on the road and do not provide easy access and egress from vehicles that have to park next to other vehicles in marked bays.
- 2.2 The following information formed the discussion and deliberation of the Group at the first meeting:

Appendices attached:

- C. Current tariff
- D. Analysis for Fees & Charges
- E. Variance to Budget
- F. Budget to Variance
- G. Appraisal of car parks
- H. Fine Income
- I. Penalty Notices issued.
- J. Suggestion by Councillor Stuart Evans.

- 2.3** In addition to information provided by officers, one member of the group provided photographic evidence (see Appendix B) of each site to stimulate discussion on the potential of improving the visual amenity of some areas by clearing poorly planted areas, sewing wildflowers and otherwise clearing and improving their appearance to users.
- 2.4** Significant discussions also focussed on selecting a pilot car park in which to change the current size of the spaces to better accommodate larger vehicles and to provide greater ease of access and egress into and out of parked vehicles by the public. Pursuant to this discourse, Councillor Stuart Evans produced a draft proposal (see appendix J) which was well received and taken into full account when formulating the groups final recommendations.
- 2.5** During deliberation it was agreed that car parks were simply viewed as utilitarian, functional spaces that are simply provisioned to be accessible and safe. However, it was noted by the Group that some of the Council's car parking assets within the borough were within highly prominent areas of the town centre and as such, relatively low cost enhancements could create much wider amenity, especially in supporting wildlife and nature enhancements.
- 2.6** Further areas considered included:

The provision of free parking throughout the sites or at specific sites:

Having considered the comprehensive financial modelling which had been undertaken by the Council's Transformation department on the benefits of free parking, based on the outcomes of the modelling, the group did not consider recommending any free parking outside of 'special periods' such as the lead up to Christmas.

The move to offer only one option of parking – i.e. all long term or all short term:

Again, having considered the potential behavioural and financial implications of a single structure, the group chose not to make any recommendation about developing a uniform charging model to cover all parking assets.

The installation of LED car park availability spaces signs:

Whilst noting the benefits of such signage in appropriate areas, the group felt such an investment would be disproportionate to any returns that such investment could generate.

The installation of seating / benches for recreational use within suitable sites:

Although the group were supportive of the idea of improving the 'physical' amenity in the Council's car parks through the provision of additional/new seating etc, they were agreed that such an installation could have unintended consequences, eg increasing littering, driving up cleaning and maintenance costs and potentially contributing to other forms of low level anti-social behaviour rather than creating significant addition value.

The installation of height barriers at all BBC car parks as a mechanism to deter any future unlawful encampments:

Based on the evidence to the point the Group drew its conclusions, members determined not to recommend such installations but to monitor the need for any future change. The cost of installing height restricting barriers at all sites in one go could be cost prohibitive, however, it was acknowledged that an incremental approach, based on any future incursions or intelligence led risks could be worthy of further consideration.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Having considered all the information received, the group agreed key areas that underpin its recommendations; of particular importance it wishes to see a change to the size of the current parking spaces at the Cattle Market site, with appropriate monitoring of any changes used to inform further roll out. It was further recommended that two reviews should be undertaken, one in respect of fees and charges to include the opportunities and benefits of shopper and commuter passes, and the second regarding the current provision of car parking signage across the town. Finally, the group agreed the need to present car parking sites in the best possible way, supporting ongoing volunteer work in helping deliver a green strategy approach and continuing to support them with the collection of refuse, enhanced planting of the sites and overall maintenance.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

None

STAFFING

None

WORKFORCE CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The impact on individuals Human Rights have been considered throughout the policy.

DATA PROTECTION

The provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (including UK GDPR) will be complied with at all times when dealing with people.

FINANCIAL

RISK MANAGEMENT

None

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

None

REPUTATION

None

CONTRACTS

CRIME AND DISORDER

None

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

There is a need to balance people's right to access information against their individual needs. The Policy makes it clear that considerations must be made in respect to each person's circumstances.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

None

ACRONYMS

MWG - Member working Group

APPENDICES	
Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -	
APPENDIX A	Scoping Paper
APPENDIX B	Photographic Evidence
APPENDIX C	Current Tariff

APPENDIX D	Analysis for Fees and Charges
APPENDIX E	Variance to Budget
APPENDIX F	Budget to Variance
APPENDIX G	Appraisal of Car Parks
APPENDIX H	Fine Income
APPENDIX I	Penalty Notices issued.
APPENDIX J	Councillor Evans suggestion.

BACKGROUND PAPERS No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

Name of body	Date
This report has not been taken through any other committee.	

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Andy Fisher – Deputy Chief Executive / A.D
Signed off by:	Andy Fisher – Deputy Chief Executive / A.D.