

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

8 February 2022

TITLE:	Car Parking Strategy
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Hart - Portfolio Holder for Property and Tourism
CONTACT OFFICER:	Katy Webster - Head of Assets
WARDS INVOLVED:	(All Wards);

Appendices Attached:

- Appendix 1: SMDC Summary Parking Strategy**
- Appendix 2: SMDC Parking Strategy full report – July 2021**
- Appendix 3: Base Case Findings Presentation Slides**
- Appendix 4: Pay by Phone Information**
- Appendix 5: Summarised Action Plan and Costs Spreadsheet**
- Appendix 6: Cheadle specific feedback**

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To present the newly drafted Staffordshire Moorlands Car Parking Strategy to members of the Cabinet following consideration by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 26 January 2022.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves the adoption of the Car Parking Strategy, subject to:
- The Strategy being reviewed 12 months after implementation to evaluate its impact.
 - That the proposed charge period (8:00 am to 6:00 pm) and the associated free half an hour / one hour concessions be deferred in Cheadle. The present charge period to be retained (9:30 am to 3:30 pm) subject to a further review later in the year when the outcomes from the High Streets Task Force / Masterplan Development are known.

- 2.2 To note the key findings, recommendations and action plan within the Strategy and that Cabinet approve the following actions:
- 2.2.1 Implementation of the tariffs set out in section 8.13 of this report for the new financial year.
 - 2.2.2 Creation of a tourist parking pass and a review of permits to ensure more flexibility for customers.
 - 2.2.3 Implementation of Pay by Phone across SMDC car parks to facilitate cashless and contactless payments as soon as possible.
 - 2.2.4 Replace on a phased bases, reducing where possible, the current ticket machines to include contactless and card payment options.
 - 2.2.5 Progress with developing a bespoke SMDC EV strategy working collaboratively with Staffordshire County Council and their consultants.
 - 2.2.6 Create short stay and long stay areas on Cheadle Tape Street car park and tariff changes, updating the SMDC parking order accordingly.
 - 2.2.7 Note the creation of a new officer position within the Assets Service to strategically manage car parking across the Alliance and implement the action plan and strategy over the course of the next 5 years.
 - 2.2.8 Note the recommendation to Cabinet that appropriate funds be allocated to improve signage and wayfinding on the car parks.

3. **Executive Summary**

- 3.1 A review of car parking was contained within Aim 4 of the Corporate Plan 2019-23. As part of the recovery from the first wave of Covid-19 in Autumn 2020 this work was escalated within the service plan, such is the important of parking within the recovery of town centres and to ensure a thriving local economy. Parking Matters were retained towards the end of 2020 to review the existing parking provision with SMDC and to develop a new strategy for the car parks for a 5 year period. The aim was to tackle a number of salient issues, including, condition, payment options and tariffs.
- 3.2 Critical to the success of the strategy has been to carry out a wide consultation with the residents, local businesses and visitors who use the car parks. Members Groups, Town and County Council, Peak Park and local business groups have all been included to ensure the widest spectrum of views has been heard. Balancing conflicting opinions and ideas and setting these against factual evidence is often challenging, and it is inevitable that the strategy will not fulfil the wishes of all, however its focus has been to deliver the vision and ensure that positive changes are made and the service invests for the future and meets the needs of residents businesses and visitors.
- 3.3 Following the consultation and review of the Council's service, Parking Matters produced their base case findings, which were presented to the Car Parking

Working Group for feedback. This was then developed into the main report setting out all the findings (Appendix 2). This was discussed by the Car Parking Working Group and Cheadle stakeholder group and further feedback was taken on board. Since then, work has centred around the financial modelling to determine the affordability of free periods and tariff changes in light of impact that Covid-19 is having on parking revenues along with the underlying trend of reduction in demand.

- 3.4 The Summary Strategy Report is attached as Appendix 1 and is a 19 page visual document that sets out the base case findings, reports the outcome of the consultations, makes recommendations and finishes with an action plan to ensure that the Council's plans are open and transparent for all to see. The intention is if the strategy is adopted this document will be published on the Council's website.
- 3.5 Section 8 of this report systematically goes through the strategy, developing the themes and actions of each element. Much of the detail of the rationale is contained within the main summary report within Appendix 2.
- 3.6 The actions have been consolidated into a workable spreadsheet contained in appendix 5 and costed where reasonable estimates can be made. Depending on the nature of each action, they will be delivered as business as usual or as a project under the oversight of the Council's Transformation Board depending on the size and value of the project. Key actions projects are:
 - 3.6.1 Implementation of contactless digital payment provider, such as Pay by Phone to offer an alternative to coin only payments. This can be delivered in the short term, ideally before the end of the financial year.
 - 3.6.2 Changes in charging hours and tariffs to be implemented for the new financial year, to include short free parking periods on certain car parks to support quick trips into town centres.
 - 3.6.3 Review of parking permits being offered including provision of a tourist pass.
 - 3.6.4 Development of a separate EV strategy which determines suitable locations, types of chargers and options for delivery partnerships funding and rollout, supporting in the objectives of a County lead strategy to ensure a consistent approach across highways and off-street parking.
 - 3.6.5 Implement new zones across Tape Street Car park to facilitate short stays, including free half hour options and also long stay parking section.
 - 3.6.6 Commence with the recruitment, (subject to final approvals of the Norse project and the restructure of the Assets team) of a new car parking post to implement the actions set out in the strategy and strategically manage the service.
 - 3.6.7 Deliver improvements to wayfinding and signage on car parks.
- 3.7 The strategy notes the importance of the car parks to regeneration initiatives, and the potential for new car parking and consolidation, but that each of these major decisions need to be reviewed and a business case determined before

any decisions can be made.

- 3.8 The Car Parking Strategy was considered in detail by the Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 26 January 2022. The Strategy and associated investment plans were generally supported by the Panel. Members did however recommend that the Cabinet should review the Strategy 12 months after implementation to evaluate its impact and that consideration be given to defer the changes relating to the revised charging period in Cheadle.

4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 Aim four of the Corporate Plan 2019-2023 includes the objective of undertaking a review of SMDC car parks with regards to implementing a revised strategy.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 Option 1: To approve the strategy and publish the summary strategy as set out in appendix 1. **Recommended.** Adoption of the strategy will allow for the implementation of the recommendations set out in section 2 above.
- 5.2 Option 2: Not to approve the strategy will prevent the investment required to improve the car parking service. Tariffs are set to rise as part of the medium term financial plan (MTFP) for the new financial year. If the tariffs are not implemented, other measures will be required to ensure the budget pressures of the MTFP are achieved, such as inflationary rises. Not Recommended.

6. **Implications**

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Car parks are a resource for the benefit of the whole community. Improving the look and feel of the car parks is important in ensuring the community feel safe. The car parks are "Park Mark" accredited by the BPA (British Parking Association) to ensure safety. The approval of the strategy will see investment into cashless payment options, reducing the potential for vandalism and theft against the council through the ticket machines.

6.2 Workforce

The strategy recommends the creation of an additional resource to ensure effective strategic management of car parking as well as the resource to implement the action plan.

Currently the operational resource in car parking across the

Alliance amounts to 1.4 FTE posts, excluding the time requirement from the Head of Service. This resource covers the operational side of parking. There is no trained resource to cover annual/sick leave and resilience within the service has been an issue raised by Internal Audit.

As part of the Norse proposals, the Assets service is to be restructured. The new structure contains the new post – Senior Parking Officer to be shared across the Alliance.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

An equalities and diversity impact assessment has been undertaken.

6.4 Financial Considerations

Revenue:

Car parking revenues play a vital part in delivering revenue income into the Council. The MTFP assumes a base income level of £770,000 in 2022/23.

Pressure to provide periods of free parking must be met with tariff increases in order to deliver the budget target of £770,000 for 2022/23. The approach to this work is set out in section 8.13 below. The budget has been increased to compensate for no increases to tariffs since 2018. Additionally the longer term trend indicating reduction in car parking revenues has been exacerbated by Covid, and the Council must prepare for income revenues not to return to pre-covid levels on a like for like basis.

There are both revenue and capital investment implications from the action plan. The estimated costs for each action are set out in appendix 5 where they can be estimated. These currently total a one off budget of approximately £73,000 with an annual impact on revenue of circa £34,000. These costs exclude any provisions made for capital investment already included within the capital programme. Many of the costs are unknown at this stage and will need to be factored into the future budget setting across the next 5 years, which is the time frame of the strategy. Other costs will inform decision making on a case by case basis.

Capital

Currently within the capital programme, there is allocated funds against car parks to cover costs of resurfacing, although most of this work has been completed over the course of the last 2 years, and the surface condition of many of the car parks has been much

improved.

Additional funds of £200,000 have been allocated against the replacement of pay and display ticket machines. This budget was identified previous to the strategy and was based on replacement of all 31 machines, however with the implementation of Pay by Phone, it is unlikely that all the machines will be required to be replaced. Reducing the number of replacements would free up funds to improve signage and wayfinding on car parks, however no firm costs have yet to be ascertained to complete this work.

6.5 Legal

There are no direct legal implications of authorizing the Strategy, however, some of the changes set out in the strategy may require the SMDC Parking Order to be amended or updated.

The procedures under the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 should be followed in a case where an off-street parking places order is proposed or amended.

Civil enforcement and notice processing contracts need to be reviewed and updated. These are procurement through the Council's membership of the Staffordshire Parking Group.

The projects and actions generated by the Strategy are likely to have an impact on procurement and the need for further contractual positions to be entered into by the Council. These will be included in the Council's Procurement Forward Plan which is presented to members in February as part of the budget cycle.

- Pay by Phone contract has already been undertaken by High Peak Borough Council on the basis that Staffordshire Moorlands District Council can be party to the contract by way of the Alliance. This will result in savings across the Alliance.
- Additional contracts with Amey may be procured by way of Staffordshire County Council through their partnership arrangement in order to develop the EV Strategy.
- A provider of new pay and display machines will need to be sought. This can be awarded by way of framework through a direct award or a further mini-competition.
- Any major works to the surface of the car parks, line marking or signage can potentially be managed by way of the Council's existing arrangements.

6.6 Climate Change

The base case findings identify the Council's aspirations regarding climate change and the importance of the move to net zero.

Supporting the transition to electronic vehicles (EVs) is an important part of this work. The strategy cites the importance of ensuring that the right type of chargers are rolled out in the right locations and that SMDC use their carparking assets to support the County Council to ensure a consistent approach across car parks and highways. EV Charging on car parks is discussed in section 8.10 below.

6.7 Consultation

Extensive consultation has been undertaken as part of the process, including the creation of the Car Parking Working Group to input and feedback on the findings. Workshops with stakeholders have been held and the public were invited to give their views by way of a survey that was hosted through the Council's website. Parking is an emotive subject and stimulates a diverse range of opinions. It is not possible to satisfy all stakeholders, but the strategy seeks to strike a balance between thoughts and feelings and the facts as evidenced through research by the expert consultants. Further detail on the consultation undertaken is given in section 7 below.

6.8 Risk Assessment

The strategy covers a wide range of actions with potential projects being delivered over a course of the next 5 years. Each project will be managed within the Council's risk management framework.

Holistically, the major risk to implementing the strategy is resource, both financial and human to undertake the work. This has been addressed but the request to implement a new post in the parking service, to support the existing operational staff, improve resilience in the service and carry out the strategy.

Neil Rodgers
Executive Director (Place)

Web Links and Background Papers

SMDC car parking – base case findings report

Contact details

Katy Webster
Head of Assets
katy.webster@highpeak.gov.uk

7. Introduction & Background

- 7.1 A commitment was given as part of the 2019 -2023 Corporate Plan, to review the Council's car parks and ensuring they remain current and relevant and to implement a new strategy document that sets out the future of the Council run off-street car parks. The Corporate Plan notes the importance of the car parks across the district contributing to maintaining attractive towns with a wide range of amenities.
- 7.2 More recently, the relevance of a refreshed car parking strategy has developed urgency due to the significance of the recovery of the local economy from the Covid-19. Parking is seen as an integral and important part of the resident and visitor experience in both town centres and rural locations. Parking is also a critical area for the future survival of businesses and continued town centre growth as part of the access and travel strategy. Therefore a specification for assistance of car parking consultants was developed in the autumn of 2020, requiring experts in parking to develop a new 5 year parking strategy. Parking Matters were appointed late in 2020 to undertake this work.
- 7.3 The interplay between car parks and town centres is complex. The needs of the many stakeholders, with sometimes differing objectives that can come into conflict needs to be finely balanced. Understanding the needs of the customers, but basing a strategy in facts and evidence is a critical success factor.
- 7.4 Other important factors for consideration within the parking strategy are;
- Modernisation of the car parking "experience". Potential investment into the infrastructure of the car parks, including signage, ticket machines and digital options.
 - Impact of the Council's climate change objectives relevant to parking, including the facilitation of electric vehicles and the ambition to increase their usage and provide charging provision.
 - Financial impact of changes in tariffs. Parking charges have not been reviewed since 2018. Income from parking revenues plays a critical part in balancing the Council's revenue budgets. Parking revenues have been hit by the acceleration in peoples habits brought about by Covid, and income levels are currently approximately 15% less than 2019/20 levels.
 - Review of the Council's provision for enforcement on the car parks.
 - Condition of the car parks.
 - Comments on the overall effectiveness of the service.

Methodology

7.5 The consultants (Parking Matters) were requested to utilise their expertise and knowledge of current best practice guidance, emerging trends to future proof the Council's investment strategy for the long term. They were given access to any and all relevant information regarding the service, including;

- Parking transaction reports
- Current running costs of the parking service
- Condition and inspection reports
- Any relevant information used for the Local Plan.
- Wider influencing documents such as the Council's Growth Strategy.
- SMDC officers and Stoke on Trent enforcement and notice processing teams.

7.6 The consultants were requested to ensure a wide consultation was undertaken to seek input from a range of stakeholders including but not limited to;

- SMDC Councillors
- Council Officers
- Town, Parish and County Councils, including Peak Park
- Customers
- Local business and business groups
- Residents

As this work was undertaken during the Covid pandemic and therefore much of the consultation work was undertaken remotely, although the car parks were physically inspected by the Consultants.

The Car Park Working Group

7.7 The non-executive member working group was set up at the end of January 2021 to act as the forum for SMDC member consultation and to review the findings of Parking Matters. The Working Group met again in July where it was presented with the consultants base case findings and feedback on these findings was given. The main report was then presented to the working group in August and Members gave their feedback before the finalised version of the strategy is presented to the Members of this committee. The feedback received at this meeting, particularly the feedback around Cheadle was further discussed at a meeting with the Leader of the Council with a number of Councillors and local stakeholders to determine whether there were further options for free periods in a number of car parks across the District. Notes from this session were taken and written representations were made by Cheadle Town Council and Team Cheadle. Appendix 6 summarises this

feedback into broad themes, details the actions that have been considered against each theme and states the outcome contained with the Strategy.

Public Consultation

- 7.8 A questionnaire was published on the Council's website in February 2021 and publicised by way of social media and other communications channels. The Council received a very strong response, numbering 770, which was in the experience of the consultants, was unusually high for District Council.

Town Workshops

- 7.9 It was acknowledge early in the process that each of the three main towns have their own idiosyncrasies and receiving input from the key stakeholders for each town was vital. Town specific workshops were undertaken with town councillors, key business owners and residents to ascertain their views.
- 7.10 Additional workshops were undertaken with Staffordshire County Council, the Peak District National Park and the Tourist Board. The additional work undertaken with Cheadle stakeholders is set out in 7.7 above.

Deliverables

- 7.11 Following the consultation between December and March last year, Parking Matters presented their base case findings to the Car Parking Working Group in July 2021. The summary presentation given to the group is attached as appendix 3.
- 7.12 The main strategy report was then presented to the Working Group in August 2021. Since then, the report has been refined and further work has been undertaken to model the tariff changes to balance the needs of the Council's approved Medium Term Financial Plan with the recommendations set out in the main report to provide local solutions to support the town centres. The main report is attached as appendix 2.
- 7.13 As the main report is lengthy, a summary strategy document has been developed setting out the vision, strategy and main actions to be taken over the next 5 years. This is attached as appendix 1. The Summary Strategy will be published on the Council website once approved.

8. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – Parking Strategy 2021-2026 (Summary Strategy)

Vision

- 8.1 The Strategy starts by setting out the strategic vision for the strategy. This has been taken directly from Aim 4 of the Corporate Plan – “Parking that meets the needs of residents, business and visitors”. This recognises the importance of these stakeholders.
- 8.2 The overview then sets out the parking offering in SMDC whilst recognising the geography of the district and the heavy reliance on the car as a mode of transport within the rural economy. The section also notes the risks associated with Covid in undertaking this work and the ongoing impact on of the virus.
- 8.3 The Strategy then summarises the base case findings as follows:
- Poor payment options and the need for capital renewal for some car parks
 - Poor and confusing way-finding signage, specifically in Leek
 - The importance of short stays of 1-hour or less to the revenue budget. 43% of overall parking transactions are in 1-hour band and produce 39% of revenue. In Cheadle, 1-hour stays account for 53% of revenue. This revenue needs to be protected to ensure the service operates efficiently and can invest in estate improvements
 - Only 7% of revenue is for longer stays, perhaps as a mix of few commuters and season ticket use
 - Transaction numbers were reducing year-on-year even prior to Covid. This is in line with national trends for declining high street footfall.
- 8.4 The findings for revenue and occupancy show the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also the longer term trends of reducing occupancy year on year. At the time of writing, income levels are anticipated to be between 10 and 15% lower in 2021/22 than of those in 2019/2020 before the pandemic. However much depends on any further restrictions that may be introduced due to the Omicron variant. Anecdotal evidence from the partners of the Staffordshire Parking Board suggest that revenues elsewhere in Staffordshire have fallen by as much as 30-40% for some councils which are therefore putting significant strain on budgets. Most partners report they are considering increases in tariffs, increasing charging hours and including Sunday charging to mitigate these shortfalls. Parking tariffs in Staffordshire Moorland have remained unchanged since 2018.
- 8.5 A summary of the consultation that was carried out is set out on page 6 of the Strategy, illustrating the strong response received, and with analysis of the types of people who responded. The key themes from the consultation are as follows:

- The Strategy must treat the three towns differently, with different recommendations for tariffs and policies
- Regeneration, growth and Covid-19 recovery must be a key priority
- Customers want better and more convenient payment options
- Customers and some other stakeholders feel that there should be a free period to support quick trips and convenience shopping
- There is general support for a parking pass for tourists
- 40% of respondents who did not have an electric vehicle stated that they would use EVCPs in car parks. Although 50% were not considering an EV at all at present
- Support to improve the look and feel of car parks.

8.6 Figure 1 below illustrates the approach Parking Matters and the Council have taken in developing the strategy based on the base case finding, consultations undertaken as well as national evidence to ensure a balanced approach can be taken. The focus of the strategy will be the action plan to ensure that the vision is achieved. A review should be undertaken at the end of the strategy period in 5 years.

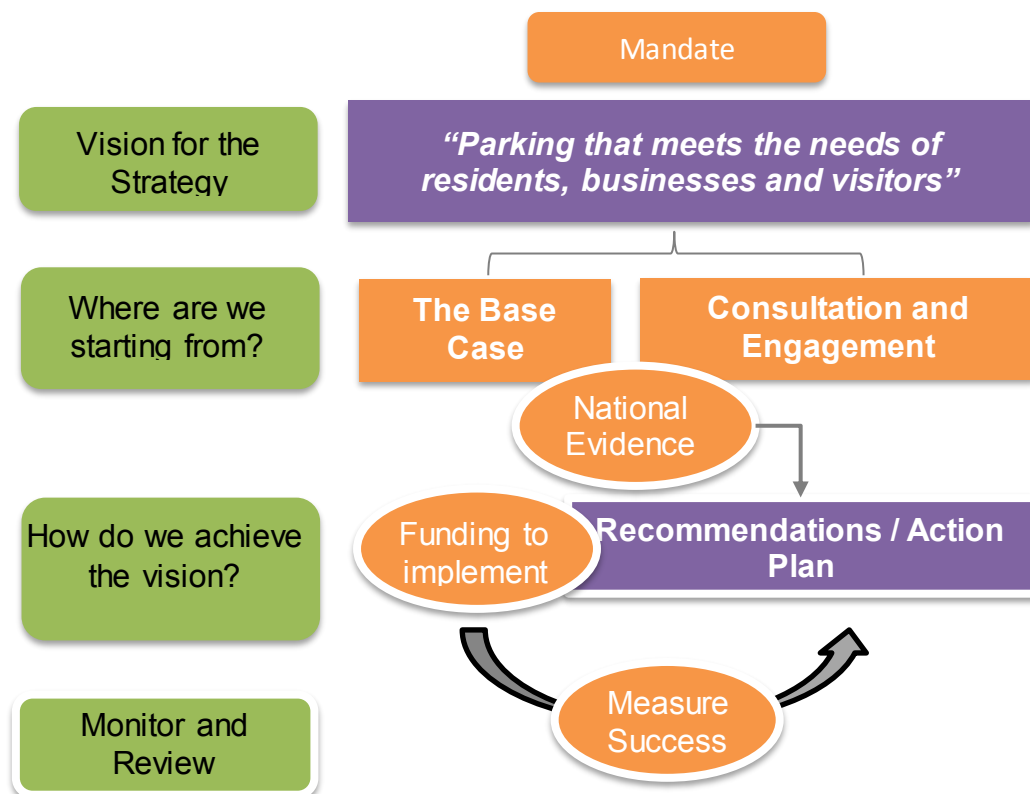


Figure 1: Excerpt SMDC Parking Strategy p7

Parking Operation

- 8.7 The consultants benchmarked the service against national levels. Generally they found that the operational side was working as well as can be expected, but does suffer from a lack of strategic resource. The following recommendations have been made;
- Investment is a strategic management resource dedicated to parking, for closer more proactive management and for the resource to implement the action plan set out within the recommendations. A new parking officer post has been included in the restructure of the Assets Team following the delivery of the Norse joint venture project later this year.
 - That the arrangements with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to deliver enforcement and notice processing remain in place by way of the Staffordshire Parking Board, albeit a refocus on compliance levels is required to improve the statistics against national benchmarking levels.
 - Review of the Service Level agreement and KPIs with Stock-on-Trent is needed to refocus the service based on quality and efficiency. Likewise a bespoke policy should be developed for appeals to ensure clarity.

Payment Systems

- 8.8 The existing pay and display ticket machines are over 15 years old and only accept coins and do not provide change. Covid-19 has exacerbated existing underlying trends to move away from cash with more adoption of digital contactless technology. A phased approach is recommended, starting with implementation of Pay by Phone allowing customers to pay for parking by way of the digital platform hosted on their mobile phone. This will be followed by a review of which parking machines are the most heavily used and should be targeting for upgrading to provide both card and cash payment options. The cost of upgrading all 31 payment machines would be considerable and also may not be necessary should the take up of Pay by Phone be successful as customers transition to cashless technologies.
- 8.9 Pay by Phone is a digital payment solution that has been rolled out by other districts and boroughs across Staffordshire, including Stock on Trent City Council as a payment option for customers. In December the service went live in High Peak and has also been adopted elsewhere in neighbouring Derbyshire and Cheshire East. High Peak have entered to a contract that can be simply widened to Staffordshire Moorlands for a roll out within 8-12 weeks following formal approvals. Further details of the Pay by Phone service and potential project implementation can be found in appendix 4.

Electronic Vehicle (EV) Charging

- 8.10 The strategy notes the importance of EV and the governments phasing out of petrol and diesel powered vehicles and the relevance to the climate change agenda. However, a careful approach to introducing new EV charging points is suggested in order to ensure the most appropriate type of chargers are installed in the right location, being mindful to the limitation in capacity of the national grid, the currently small but growing demand for electric cars, and the objectives of SCC as they are responsible for Highways and Transport. The recommendation is a separate SMDC EV strategy should be produced.
- 8.11 Consultation has already been undertaken with SCC regarding their strategy and action plan for EV charging roll out. Amey are undertaken the work to determine the demand analysis across Staffordshire to include details on national and regional policy and funding options, developing a vision for the whole county along with a review of the technology and options for delivery. They have invited all boroughs and districts to engage with this work. There are options for SMDC to undergo a bespoke piece of work with Amey to develop a strategy for delivery of EV charging points focused on the specific needs of Staffordshire Moorlands as a rural district.

Tariffs and Charging Periods

- 8.12 The strategy highlights the difficult job of balancing differing policy objectives when determining tariffs and charging hours. Tariffs haven't been reviewed since 2018 and are the lowest compared to others in the local area. The objectives of the strategy have been carefully considered when setting the tariffs as well as the feedback from the consultation but also the requirements of the medium term financial plan (MTFP).
- 8.13 Parking Matters reviewed a number of different approaches before making their recommendations.
- Approach 1: An inflationary based rise across the board. This was discounted as it did not pay specific attention to the needs of each town nor did it reflect the feedback from the consultation,
 - Approach 2: Comparable rises in line with other tariffs in the local area to reflect the "market price". This option would have led to the most significant revenue increase. Again this thought not to reflect the specific needs and requirements of each town.
 - Approach 3: A bespoke set of tariffs that reflects the consultation feedback to support quick trips for convenience shopping in town centres and also to facilitate school drop offs and pickups, to ease congestion. This option was the preferred approach, and the final detail is set out in Figure 2 below.

Recommended Tariffs (0800 to 1800 Monday to Saturday, excluding Bank Holidays)

Leek		1/2 Hour	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	10 hours
Prime Short Stay	Existing		£1.00	£1.50	£1.90	N/A
Market Place, Brook St, Queen St, Regent St, Silk St, Market St W and Market St East	Proposed		£1.20	£1.90	£2.80	N/A
Short Stay	Existing		£1.00	£1.50	£1.90	N/A
	Proposed	Free	£1.20	£1.90	£2.80	N/A
Long Stay Variable	Existing		£1.00	£1.50	£1.90	£2.40
	Proposed	Free	£1.20	£1.90	£2.80	£3.50
Cheadle						
Tape St (Standard area)	Existing		£0.90	£1.40	£1.80	N/A
	Proposed		£1.00	£1.70	£2.50	N/A
Tape St (New Short Stay Area)	Existing		£0.90	£1.40	£1.80	N/A
	Proposed	Free	£1.00	£1.70	£2.50	N/A
Tape St (New Long Stay Area)	Existing		£0.90	£1.40	£1.80	N/A
	Proposed		£0.90	£1.50	£2.20	£3.50
Well St	Existing		£0.90	£1.40	£1.80	£2.20
	Proposed	Free	Free	£1.50	£2.30	£3.00
Biddulph						
Wharf Rd	Existing		£0.60	£0.80	£1.00	£1.80
	Proposed	Free	Free	£1.20	£1.80	£2.50

Figure 2: Proposed Tariff Changes - SMDC Parking Strategy p12

A number of iterations of the third approach were modelled following the feedback from the car parking work group and the Cheadle specific workshop. These models looked at the affordability of the various suggestions put forward around changes in parking hours, free periods across different car parks and Sunday charging. Based on 19/20 levels the costs of some of these suggestions are as follows:

It should be noted that these figures have been modelled using the data available from the tickets issued by way of the pay and display machines and not by surveys. They are indicative figures and do not account for potential changes in human behaviour. The tariffs in figure 2 below are modelled to achieve the council's target budget of £770,000 and balance the competing demands, having considered the feedback and consultation responses.

- 8.14 To be able to offer free stays, charging hours will be required to return to 8am to 6pm Monday – Saturday. The introduction of Sunday charges is not

proposed at the current time given the uncertainty surrounding economic recovery from the impact of Covid 19 and in response to stakeholder feedback, although it should be recognised that Sunday is becoming a stronger day for retail and leisure uses and this will be a matter that should be kept under review in updating the Car Parking Strategy in the future. Charges for longer stays have been increased across the board, but do reflect the local distinctiveness of the towns.

- In Biddulph the location of Wharf Street car park is significantly impacted by short stay free parking of the adjacent Sainsburys supermarket. Therefore the impact on revenues of either a half or hour stay is negligible as the location is used more for longer stays. Therefore an hour free period is suggested.
- In Cheadle, Well Street is underused and therefore the impact of giving free parking for an hour in this location will be negligible. Short stays are important at Tape Street due to the convenience for the town centre. Tape Street is a large car park with the ability to be sectioned into short stay and long stay areas and was an improvement the Cheadle Stakeholders would like to see. The financial modelling suggests it is unaffordable to allow half an hour free across the whole of Tape Street car park as over 50% of the revenue is generated from short stays – (The cost is estimated at £105,000) Therefore a new short stay section is proposed with the capacity for 54 cars will facilitate half hour free stays (at a cost of £20,000).
- A half hour free period is to be introduced at car parks in Leek, except for those that are already operating close to capacity at peak times (which are identified as Prime Short Stay). This whilst supporting convenience trips and school pick-ups, will also help encourage peak demand to re-balance towards the other car parks in the town, thereby helping reduce congestions and ensuring that there is also more space availability at the most popular car parks. Prime short stay car parks in Leek are, Brook Street, Market Place, Market Street East, Market Street West, Queen Street and Regent Street.

8.15 Free stays will need to be managed through the display of a valid ticket, although customers will not be required to insert payment to generate a free ticket. The existing Metric ticket machines will be able to generate these tickets and Pay by Phone will be able to offer these virtual tickets once implemented. Pay by Phone will not allow a customer to continue to receive half hour free sessions, as these will be limited to one continuous parking session only. Should a customer wish to extend their parking session beyond the free half an hour, they will need to extend their parking session by purchasing a new ticket of a minimum of 1 hour, either through Pay by Phone or returning to their vehicle and displaying a ticket.

Town Specific Actions

- 8.16 As already stated within the report, it is evidence that the three towns are different and although a single strategy across Staffordshire Moorlands is required, a localised approach to the individual areas was required. The strategy reflects this by including recommendations and actions for each town.
- Biddulph: As there is only one car park in Biddulph opportunities should be sought to increase the provision of relevant car parking, depending on business case. On-street enforcement is an issue in Biddulph, which SMDC could seek to utilise its influencing powers with SCC Highways to tackle.
 - Cheadle: Cheadle was overrepresented in the consultation exercise, reflecting the strength of feeling in the town. The wider regeneration initiatives and master planning playing their part. However there was a lack of a broad consensus about how this should be tackled with regard to tariffs, however there was agreement around the need for short free periods to support quick shopping trips and walking to school, tackling congestion, as the need to improve payment systems and offer EV charging, which has been covered in previous sections of this report. Importantly consideration must be given to parking as part of any regeneration proposals that come forward.
 - Leek: Car parking in Leek is dominated by more, but smaller car parks which adds to the congestion in the town as drivers may visit multiple sites in search of adequate parking. Convenience and ease of paying and finding a space dominate feedback in Leek rather than request for free parking. Consideration should be given to consolidating car parks into larger more efficient car parks and disposing of smaller ones on a case by case basis. Wayfinding and confusing signage issues should be addressed.
 - Rural / Village Locations: The Council also operates 6 “free” car parks. As no ticket data is collected in these locations, surveys would need to be carried out to determine the users and whether charging would be a sensible approach in these locations.

Tourism

- 8.17 The strategy acknowledges the importance of tourism in the district and the impact parking plays. The Strategy will, ideally looking to support tourism, improving the visitor experience but at the same time reducing the negative impact of tourism. The actions set out in the action plan will not only improve the car parking for residents but also tourist alike. Tourist passes can be considered once digital payment options have been introduced to reduce the administrative burden. Camping/ car sites would have to be considered on

their merits to determine the revenue implications of management requirements. Coach parking can be encouraged however the Council have limited means within its existing estate and will need to seek additional land assets or partnerships to facilitate this.

Action Plans

8.18 The strategy concludes by setting out an action plan with timescales, for the council to manage its performance against. The action plans are focused into 3 main areas;

- Strategic and Service Management
- The Parking Estate
- Town & Village Parks

For ease of reference, these have been remodelled into a spreadsheet format to be prioritised with indicative costs. This is set out in Appendix 5 with an indicative costs against each action.