

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Economy and Transport
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STEVENAGE PARKING STRATEGY 2021-2031: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an explanation of the reasons for reviewing the adopted Stevenage Parking Strategy (adopted in 2004)
- 1.2 To provide Members with an overview of the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 (Appendix A).
- 1.3 To seek Members' approval to carry out public consultation on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the content of the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 be noted.
- 2.2 That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Strategy prior to its consultation.

- 2.3 That the Executive approve publishing the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 for consultation early in 2021.

3 BACKGROUND

Stevenage Parking Strategy (2004)

- 3.1 Councils that operate Civil Parking Enforcement, such as SBC, are expected to have a Parking Strategy. This is a document that sets out how they will work to manage parking in line with local objectives and circumstances, taking into account planning policies and transport powers and considering the needs of different road users. It guides the creation, amendment and enforcement of parking controls and should be consistent with the area's Transport Strategy.
- 3.2 The Council's current Parking Strategy dates back to 2004. Since it was adopted many of the problems it set out to deal with have been resolved, whilst the Agency Agreement powers delegated from HCC that SBC uses to pursue it have changed with many functions returning to the County Council.
- 3.3 The 2004 Strategy sets out at length the parking issues that were faced when it was adopted and the approaches then required to deal with them. Given the changes that have taken place since its relevance has decreased, it is out of step with relevant policy developments and many new considerations such as provision for electric vehicles are not included at all.

Policy Background

- 3.4 There have been significant changes since 2004, including the adoption in 2019 of both the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 and Future Town, Future Transport, SBC's new Transport Strategy. Future Town, Future Transport set out that a new Parking Strategy should be produced (see box overleaf).
- 3.5 In addition, the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019 and approved the new Climate Change Strategy in September 2020. These policy documents all support more sustainable forms of transport and aim to achieve a modal shift in transportation away from privately-owned vehicles.
- 3.6 During the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031's preparation, the Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the benefits of non-car modes of transport for public health in terms of both physical fitness and air quality. This seen widespread public support, with YouGov reporting that four out of five people they surveyed in the UK support action "to curb air pollution by reserving more public space for walking, cycling and public transport" .
- 3.7 Stevenage aspires to be a Sustainable Travel Town, and to embrace the principles championed by Living Streets to create spaces for people. A Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan has been developed to help guide and drive improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, and a Parking Strategy that is more supportive of non-car modes will positively contribute to this aspiration.
- 3.8 With all these in mind, the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 proposes approaches that would support modal shift away from the private motor car to

more active and sustainable modes of transport, while recognising that for some users/trips it will still be the most logical/appropriate way to travel and seeking to provide for this too (in particular for blue badge holders). It also seeks to ensure that Co-operative Council approaches will help to shape SBC's management of parking.

Parking Strategy, SBC

9.60 An update to the 2004 Parking Strategy will be produced, setting out how public parking will be managed across Stevenage. This will be a key tool in managing overall demand for the private car in Stevenage and should tie in with the other projects set out in this strategy to seek a modal shift in transportation habits. This could involve reducing the dominance of on-street car parking in Stevenage, thereby creating space for 'Liveable Streets' (*sic*), or setting reduced levels and increased charges for public car parking to promote alternative forms of travel. It should also consider the implementation of EV charging points and whether there are other ways to future proof the infrastructure.

9.61 Car sharing, car-pooling, and car clubs are methods which promote the use of the car as a communal vehicle rather than a private vehicle. Incentives to encourage this should be considered, for example, designated car parking spaces at places of work for those who are car sharing.

Future Town, Future Transport: A Transport Strategy for Stevenage

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4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That the content of the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 be noted.

- 4.1 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 is included in Appendix A. A broad overview of the key amendments and additions from the adopted version are presented below.

Objectives

- 4.2 Four broad objectives are set for managing parking in Stevenage, based on existing policy positions and known concerns. These are:
- To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking;
 - To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift;
 - To manage necessary or desirable parking; and
 - To support the town's Zero Carbon ambitions.

4.3 Approaches to pursuing these objectives are set out, in that:

- Work will be managed through a planned programme of projects;
- A “user hierarchy” will be adopted, guiding priority in managing parking in different contexts – consistently putting more sustainable modes and parking for disabled car users ahead of others, who are prioritised based on the character of the location (e.g. residents in a street; short stay for customers at shops);
- Will make decisions based on quantitative data and taking into account the views of residents and community stakeholders;
- Will use “soft approaches” such as publicity/educational campaigns alongside or instead of regulatory options;
- While pursuing transport objectives and not seeking to make money as a revenue raising exercise, the parking account should continue to be self-funding; and
- Some measures will be subject to funding bids for capital budgets within SBC, from the County Council, or from national funds.

4.4 A number of specific issues are then covered:

- Parking for disabled car users – that they will be prioritised and SBC will seek to ensure they can park where they need to;
- Support for sustainable transport – that parking may be prevented where needed to support other modes e.g. dealing with known obstructive parking blocking footways/cycleways, providing cycle parking at destinations, prohibiting parking at a previously unenforceable bus stop, providing for electric cars and car clubs, deterring excess car ownership;
- Parking in residential areas – clear criteria that must be exceeded for parking permits to be put in place, alternative ways to deal with commuter parking, approaches to managing parking of “white vans” to be kept under review, parking construction in existing streets to be based on the Parking Standards SPD for new developments, parking construction to contribute to funding tree planting and sustainable travel;
- Destination parking – “hospital parking” to normally prioritise outpatients & visitors (caveated for flexibility e.g. repurposing to support NHS workers as now during a pandemic), impact of parking proposals on school travel to be considered, short stay parking to support customers, servicing activity to be provided for, options for local workers to be considered especially where there isn’t an off-street option, low priority for railway commuters and football match parking;
- Placemaking and living streets – to be supported, led by Co-operative Neighbourhoods placemaking/living street projects;
- Regeneration – to be supported as required;

- New developments – aspiration to ensure Parking Standards SPD is effective by limiting parking to that intended by the application; and
- Discretionary services – such as bar markings at driveways will be kept under review to ensure they offer value the resident and SBC, and may be added to e.g. private contributions accepted to providing cycle parking or electric car charging.

Recommendation 2.2: That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Strategy prior to its consultation.

- 4.5 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 is appended to this report. However, it may be necessary to make minor changes prior to the consultation start date. This might include cosmetic adjustments, the correction of typographical errors and any minor factual changes.
- 4.6 It is recommended that any such amendments be approved via delegated powers.

Recommendation 2.3: That the Executive approve publishing the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy for consultation in early 2021.

- 4.7 The draft Parking Strategy was circulated electronically to the Portfolio Holders' Advisory Group, which includes the Environment and Economy Select Committee, to ensure it met their expectations.
- 4.8 Whilst there are no clear external requirements for the adoption of a new Parking Strategy, it has similarities with planning policy documents such as the Parking Standards SPD setting parking expectations for new developments, which are introduced following The Town & Country Planning Regulations 2012. The proposed approach is based on this, as supplemented by the requirements of the Council's Constitution and Statement of Community Involvement (May 2019).
- 4.9 In line with these principles, the Council should undertake a consultation for a minimum four week period. Following this, the Council should consider the consultation responses, produce a document stating the main issues raised by respondents, and summarise how the issues have been addressed by the Council.
- 4.10 Consultation will be promoted through a number of channels, including:
- direct engagement with known interest groups such as the Stevenage branch of Cycling UK;
 - online approaches including social media and the SBC website;
 - the local press.

4.11 The timetable for consultation and adoptions is currently as follows:

Stage	Date
Public Consultation	January-February 2021
Consider and address responses	Spring 2021
Adopt Strategy through Exec/Council	Summer 2021

4.12 As with any consultation exercise, it is not known how many responses will be received so the post-consultation stages will not be known for definite until a later date.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 will be met from the agreed departmental budget.

5.2 If adopted, the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 sets out that operational management of on-street parking should seek to continue to be self-funding, and any surplus will be prioritised for spending on transport and parking measures as required by the Traffic Management Act 2004.

5.3 Larger projects and ongoing measures arising from the Strategy will require funding. In the main third party external funding will be sought to further the Strategy's aims, however some external funding does requires an element of match funding for example the government's electric car point grants cover a maximum of 75% of the project costs. Any SBC funding will need to be subject to the availability of limited capital resources and subject to capital bids on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Implications

5.4 Consultation on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy will be undertaken in accordance with best practice as set out in paragraphs 4.7-4.12. Responses to the consultation will be considered and where appropriate taken into account in preparing a final draft for adoption.

5.5 There are no direct legal implications associated with consulting on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Risk Implications

5.6 There are no significant risks associated with producing the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Policy Implications

- 5.7 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 accords with, and has been produced to supplement policies in Future Town, Future Transport the adopted Stevenage Transport Strategy (2019). It also accords with the policy aims of the SBC Mobility Strategy and the Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4.
- 5.8 The document is also aligned with other corporate Council documents such as the Healthy Stevenage Strategy, the SBC Parking Standards SPD, the recently-declared Climate Emergency and the Climate Change Strategy, Action Plan and Charter.

Planning Implications

- 5.9 There are no direct planning implications associated with the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.10 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 has the potential to have a positive impact on climate change through the multiple benefits that prioritising sustainable and active modes of transport, and minimising car use, can bring. Active forms of transport, walking and cycling, can replace the need to use private cars, cutting the emissions associated with journeys within the town. The support provided by the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 for promotion of public transport services and active modes of transport will help to reduce reliance on private car journeys, replacing them with more energy-efficient options. The Strategy will also have benefits in terms of air quality more generally.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.11 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 prioritises the parking needs of those with mobility disabilities. Otherwise, Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 itself does not have any direct equality or diversity implications. When undertaking any work under the direction of the Stevenage Parking Strategy the delivery body will need to consider the potential impacts on different community groups, in particular those who are less mobile or disabled.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.12 Whilst the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 does not have any direct community safety implications itself, when undertaking any work under the direction of the Stevenage Parking Strategy the delivery body will need to consider the potential impacts on community safety.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 [Stevenage Parking Strategy 2004, SBC](#)
- BD2 [Future Town, Future Transport, SBC](#)
- BD3 [Local Transport Plan 4, HCC](#)

APPENDICES

- A [Draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031](#)