

Report of	Assistant Director – Corporate and Improvement Services	Author	Richard Walker ☎ 282708
Title	Colchester Positive Parking Review: Parking Strategy Pre-Consultation Draft		
Wards affected	All wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Colchester Borough Council's off-street car parking provision was previously reviewed in April 2010, introducing a 10-year Development Plan. The resulting charging strategy was based on a mixture of short and long stay with protection of the historic town centre core as far as possible.
- 1.2 With the last Development Plan largely complete, it was deemed necessary to carry out a new review to determine the strategy for the next five years. Since the last review, the implementation of Park & Ride, and changes to several off-street parking areas has been completed.
- 1.3 This paper explains the background to the current Positive Parking Review, introduces the themes in the pre-consultation draft document and summarises the emerging recommendations, next steps, and a timescale for consultation and creation of the final version.
- 1.4 The Review document has been prepared as a Pre-Consultation Draft. Once the Scrutiny Panel have reviewed this it is intended to consult more widely using the amended version.
- 1.5 Implementation of the recommendations in this strategy will ensure the continued prosperity of the town and its shopping and business centres whilst mitigating the manageable factors that contribute towards environmental damage.
- 1.6 The document makes recommendations for the future of Colchester's car parks. This includes some adjustments to Tariffs, especially at peak times, and combines this with positive innovations that could offset increases for motorists who can adjust travel patterns when using the proposed MiPermit special offers.

2. Action Required

- 2.1 To consider the Pre-Consultation Draft Strategy and make recommendations to Cabinet as to the final strategy.
- 2.2 To consider the proposed timescale for consultation, including an implementation timetable for a new Development Plan.

3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 For purposes of openness and transparency in development of new strategy.

4. Background Information: The Positive Parking Review

- 4.1 Having adequate car parking facilities is particularly important in helping to deliver the Council's programme that supports regeneration of the town centre, helps manage air quality and reduce congestion, whilst seeking to improve the commercial vitality of the town, encourage greater footfall and to improve the public realm and streetscape enhancements. The supply and provision of adequate, accessible and good quality car parking is important to visitors and residents alike.
- 4.2 Following its Climate Emergency declaration, Colchester Borough Council must look at ways to influence motorist behaviour. A change on just one day a week could take a fifth of the traffic out of the peak, with consequent improvements in air quality, reductions in congestion and CO₂ emissions. Small changes can reap rewards in terms of congestion management.
- 4.3 The Council is also installing its first Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point in a shoppers and residential car park to encourage alternatives to internal combustion engine car travel, reducing air pollution at the point of use. On-Street EV points are being considered by the County Council.
- 4.4 The quality and availability of off-street car parking, including realistic charges compared with other travel modes has an impact on the number of people visiting our towns and using the facilities they have to offer.
- 4.5 The Draft Strategy sets out several recommendations which, if implemented, will assist in managing the issues above whilst continuing to support the economic vitality of the town centre.

5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 5.1 In revising any strategy there is a need to consider the impacts. The current EIA will be reviewed when results of the draft consultation are known.
- 5.2 The current EIA is set out here:
<https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/CBC%20-%20How%20The%20Council%20Works%20-%20Environmental%20Equality%20Impact%20Assessments%20-%20Car%20Parks%20Service.pdf>

6. Strategic Plan

- 6.1 An effective Parking Strategy underpins the entire Strategic Plan in that it should seek to support Economic Prosperity, influence car usage to reduce the impact on the Environment and make Colchester an attractive place to work and visit.

7. Consultation/Publicity Considerations

- 7.1 A proposed consultation timetable is included in the appendices. Once a final strategy has been adopted a communications plan will be developed to ensure it is effectively communicated.

8. Financial Considerations

- 8.1 Off street car parks currently generate £3.6 million income per annum which is used to support other services provided by the Council. Future pricing strategy could influence these income levels so needs to take account of the impact on income.

9. Community Safety/Health and Wellbeing Considerations

- 9.1 An effective car parking strategy needs to take account of the potential crime and antisocial behaviour issues that can arise in car parks. The proposed pre-consultation draft has considered this.

10. Health and Safety/Risk Management Implications

- 10.1 There are no implications at this stage.

11. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 11.1 The proposed strategy has recognised the environmental and climate change implications of car usage. However, there is a sensitive balance between unduly influencing car usage to impact negatively on the vibrancy of the Town Centre.
- 11.2 Considering petrol/diesel car usage is necessary for the period covered by this strategy, it proposes to use tariffs to influence behaviour to limit the environmental impact such as higher charges during peak travel times. If tariffs were adjusted, they could also be used to generate a revenue stream that could then be used for activity to offset the environmental impact of car usage.

Appendices

Appendix 1 An Easy-Read version of the Pre-Consultation Draft

Appendix 2 The Draft Recommendations arising from the Strategy Review

Appendix 3 The full version of the Pre-Consultation Draft Strategy