

Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee

Report title:	Norfolk County Council – Better Parking Strategy Project Update
Date of meeting:	14 February 2019
Responsible Officer:	Nick Tupper – Assistant Director, Highways and Waste

Strategic impact

At the 15 March 2018 Chief Executive's Meeting it was decided to undertake a review of the current principles of parking management in Norfolk, as current arrangements were not sustainable, coupled with forecast increases in traffic congestion and the need to support economic growth, new EV and parking technology and improve air quality and the overall 'parking experience'.

To assist this review, the post of Better Parking Strategy Manager was created and funded by Norfolk County Council (NCC), to manage a 'Better Parking Project', and this report summarises progress to date with the Project.

Executive summary

The NCC Better Parking Strategy Project is a 2-year project which commenced on 1 November 2018, aimed at improving the management of parking in Norfolk, including a review of the 'Parking Principles', the document which currently sets out the County Council's general parking strategy.

The Project will help shape the over-arching and future parking strategy for Norfolk, ensuring that the Norfolk Parking Partnership (NPP) and the County-wide Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) arrangements remain fit for purpose and financially sustainable. The project will also seek to provide local solutions whilst adopting a more consistent, county-wide approach to CPE and the management of both on and off-street parking and providing a more positive future parking 'experience', with improved information and data available to all relevant users and stakeholders.

The initial phase of the project has been to formulate a project plan, undertake a fact find and review of current NPP council member operations and benchmark these against other established and well-run UK parking partnerships, in order to benefit from their experience and industry best practice.

Recommendations:

That the Joint Committee:

- 1. Notes the progress of the Better Parking Strategy Project to date, given that this commenced on 1 November 2018 and is at a very early stage.**
- 2. Is given the opportunity to comment on the progress of the Better Parking Strategy Project to date and provide input for future consideration.**
- 3. Is invited to comment on suggested revisions to the current Parking Principles, in support of the Better Parking Strategy Project, and provide feedback and suggestions by the June Committee Meeting.**

1. Proposal

1.1. Project Delivery

1.1.1 The Better Parking Strategy Project has been designed to deliver outcomes over a 2-year period in accordance with a clear steer from Council Leaders, and provide updates and reports in a timely manner - to meet both project milestones and relevant committee deadlines.

1.1.2 The project has been sub-divided into 5 key phases to represent the main areas of work that need to be undertaken. Phase 1 involves researching and collating baseline information regarding current CPE operations and practices. To date, good cooperation has been received from NPP partner councils in Great Yarmouth and Kings Lynn, who have hosted visits to look at how their CPE and other parking operations are run and managed. To complete the exercise, similar operational visits are scheduled to be made to Norwich City and South Norfolk councils during February 2019.

1.1.3 The operational visits will allow working methods, costs, income, initiatives and use of new technology to be benchmarked internally and compared with similar parking partnerships nationally; ultimately, with the goal of sharing industry best practice and improving the efficiency of the NPP, its financial sustainability and the ability to create a consistent annual surplus to be reinvested in agreed forward projects.

1.2 Review of Parking Principles

1.2.1 The first formal review of the Parking Principles document is scheduled for February 2019 with a view to presenting a first draft of a revised document to the Joint Committee at its June 2019 meeting, and a final draft for the August 2019 Joint Committee meeting. The Officer Working Group is invited to help shape the content and structure of an updated version of the Parking Principles document, followed by the opportunity to comment by the Joint Committee. All input and comments will be considered as part of the overall review.

1.2.2 The Better Parking Strategy Manager will provide further updates on the review of the Parking Principles at each Joint Committee meeting, to both track progress and to ensure a good level of stakeholder engagement and input. For information and reference, a copy of the Parking Principles is shown attached as Appendix A.

1.3 Withdrawal of the Norfolk County Council Agency Agreement with Norwich City Council

1.3.1 At its meeting on 18 January 2019, the EDT Committee decided not to extend the current Agency Agreement with Norwich City Council, in favour of its withdrawal and cessation from 1 April 2020. Whilst the impact on the NPP working arrangements is currently being considered, the decision represents a unique opportunity for the Better Parking Strategy Project and the Joint Committee to explore increased cross-border working, operational and financial resilience, greater economies of scale and more consistent, efficient and effective parking-related working practices across Norfolk.

1.3.2 In the interim period, and as transitional arrangements are considered and agreed, these will be reported to the Joint Committee, together with any proposals arising from this and how this feeds into the Better Parking Strategy

Project.

1.4 DfT Bid – Funding for Innovation: Opening Local Authority Transport Data

- 1.4.1 One element of the Better Parking Strategy Project involves communications and data sharing, and, as part of a joint East Anglian bid for DfT funding to open up parking Data, the Better Parking Strategy Manager has provided input to the bid.
- 1.4.2 On behalf of the East Anglian Parking Forum, the bid is being led, drafted and submitted by its Chair, working to a very tight submission deadline of 8 February 2019.
- 1.4.3 If successful, the bid will secure £100k of DfT funding, supported by a further £5k from the North Essex Parking Partnership. The funding will be used to finance a public parking portal for East Anglia in order to join and open up a number of datasets that the authorities hold and encourage more close working together. The portal would provide a single and common point of access for motorists, the public and other stakeholders, to enquire about parking services and the location and availability of their destination parking. Ultimately it is hoped this will in turn help reduce congestion and air pollution through better route planning prior to setting out, based on real-time information about the route, destination and available (pre-bookable) parking.
- 1.4.4 No financial contribution from either NCC or the NPP is required in connection with this bid and the considerable benefits it could subsequently provide to the County and enabling a more consistent and positive cross-county parking experience for East Anglia.

2. Evidence

- 2.1.1 The Better Parking Strategy Project and the appointment of Better Parking Strategy Manager were approved by DMT as a direct result of a call to action by Norfolk Chief Executives; to review and improve the principles of parking management across Norfolk, support economic growth and vitality, reduce environmental impacts and traffic congestion and embrace the latest technology.
- 2.1.2 It was recognised that an additional full-time resource would be required to undertake such a large, stand-alone project, as this would not otherwise be deliverable given present staff numbers, available time and current workload. The appointment of Better Parking Strategy Manager was deemed to be the most efficient and cost-effective solution given the work and outcomes required over the forecast 2-year duration of the Project.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 In approving the review of the Parking Principles, the initiation of the Better Parking Strategy Project and appointment of the Better Parking Strategy Manager. Full Council approved a budget of £200k to cover the cost of these over the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- 3.1.1 There are no additional costs associated with the delivery of the above. Going forward, and as a result of the Better Parking Strategy Project, it is anticipated that the NPP will make further efficiencies to assist in generating an ongoing annual surplus, which can be reinvested into an agreed forward programme of works and initiatives to support the NPP and Joint Committee and a more positive parking experience for motorists.

4. Issues, risks and innovation

- 4.1. Whilst there are no issues or risks associated with reviewing the Parking Principles or delivery of the Better Parking Strategy Project, non-delivery of either presents a number of risks to the County Council and the NPP:
- Uncertain financial sustainability and future for the NPP;
 - Unsatisfactory support for positively assisting in addressing forecast increases in traffic congestion, supporting economic growth and vitality and reducing air pollution;
 - Unsatisfactory support for strategic transport and town and city infrastructure projects;
 - Unsatisfactory and tardy responses to areas in Norfolk seeking to tackle invasion and other parking issues and the roll out of further controlled parking and on-street pay and display zones;
 - Failure to maximise opportunities to foster and develop cross-border working and sharing operational best practice and the utilisation of new and smart parking technologies;
 - Potential reputational damage to NCC and the NPP resulting from either not addressing or responding positively to any of the above risks.

5. Background

- 5.1. Since November 2011 Norfolk County Council has been legally responsible for the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) throughout Norfolk. Whilst the operational functions of this delivery were delegated to the District and Borough Councils in 2012, ultimate responsibility and overall management still rests with the County Council.
- 5.1.1 The Norfolk Parking Partnership and Joint Committee were formed in 2012 to provide a joined up operational delivery and management of the delegated CPE operational functions.
- 5.1.2 Both operational and financial performance of the NPP since 2011 has fluctuated and has been inconsistent. Whilst cross border working and efficiency has improved in some areas, as well as savings and efficiencies from the creation of a single back-office function at Kings Lynn, there still remains much work to do in improving the NPP's operational and financial performance, stability and providing a consistent and flexible approach to parking, that addresses both local and county-wide needs and meets future and emerging demands.
- 5.1.3 The Better Parking Strategy Project will assist in improving the operational and financial performance of the NPP as well as delivering the agreed Project outcomes and producing a revised set of Parking Principles which are fit for future purpose.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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