

Thanet District Parking Strategy

Overview & Scrutiny Panel 10 December 2024

By Penny Button Head of Neighbourhoods

Cabinet Portfolio Cllr K Bright, Parking Portfolio Holder

Key Decision Yes

Decision classification unrestricted

Ward: All

Purpose of the Report

To introduce a parking strategy for the Thanet District. The strategy sets out how Thanet District Council will approach parking over the next 20 years.

Recommendation(s):

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is being asked to note the following decision being sought from Cabinet and to make any recommendations in relation to the decision. The recommended decision is to adopt the Thanet District Parking Strategy and agree to the initial implementation plan.

1. Summary of Reasons

- 1.1 The Thanet District parking strategy sets out the future of parking requirements for the whole district, balancing the needs of residents and visitors. It provides a strategic approach to parking whilst integrating it with active and sustainable transport.

2. Background

- 2.1 Councillors tabled a motion at Council in January 2022 to undertake a District wide impact assessment of increased pressures on on and off street parking in our town centres arising from the expansion of town centre residential development and developing solutions.

Thanet District Council has no corporate strategy or parking policy to guide provision and development. This does not provide an easy to understand or evidenced basis for decision making.

A review gave the opportunity to engage with all those affected by parking to inform a corporate strategy.

The review and drafting of the strategy began at the end of January 2024.

Initial engagement events began in February 2024 which included sessions with councillors, a public drop in and a survey available both electronically and in paper. Over 2000 people responded and provided feedback on where they thought the areas of improvement were and what they'd like to see in a parking strategy for Thanet.

This engagement feedback was then used to establish what Thanet wanted to be included in a parking strategy. A vision, objectives, draft strategy and actions were developed.

Further engagement was carried out with key stakeholders and a consultation roadshow was held across the district which fielded as many responses as the first stage of engagement.

3. Relevant Issues

- 3.1 Adoption of this strategy will provide a framework for how parking progresses in Thanet over the next 20 years. It provides consistency of approach and sets a framework for developing and improving parking in the district.

The strategy is not a document to sit on a shelf it contains 52 actions across off street and on street parking which when implemented will make improvements. These actions have been categorised as quick wins, short, medium and long term with regard to implementation. Focus will initially be on implementing the quick wins with the short, medium and long term actions being programmed over the duration of the strategy. This will be revisited during the life of the strategy to ensure that the actions remain achievable and required.

The initial works to be undertaken include developing car park zones and reviewing the names of car parks, creation of a car park signage strategy to include variable message signage, redevelopment of parking webpages, feasibility of delivering coach parking bays in key car parks across Thanet, development of an electric vehicle strategy, review and update resident permit scheme and prepare a bike hanger policy.

These actions will provide users of our service with consistent and easy to access information and will have a clear policy on resident permit schemes.

The life span of the Strategy is 20 years, the quick wins will be fully implemented within 12 months with other actions taking place over later years. Short term actions will be implemented within 1-2 years, medium term actions within 2-5 years with long term actions implemented in 5 years or more. 20 years is a long time and inevitably there will be changes in requirements over time and the strategy & implementation

plan will be reviewed throughout that time with the first being undertaken at the end of 2 years.

The proposed strategy is ambitious and has significant cost implications, the actions identified in the quick wins will be able to be carried out within our existing budgets. As the strategy progresses across the years some of the actions will be implemented using the yearly budget, some external funding and requests will be made for capital funding and revenue budget growth bids will be submitted as required through the usual annual budget setting process. The money raised from parking charges after all costs are taken into account is placed in a fund (Special Parking Area) to be used for projects as laid out in legislation, applications will also be made to this fund for delivery of some actions.

All surplus parking income is governed by The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Section 55 governs how a local authority can use this surplus income and states that it has to be stored in a ring fenced account called the Special Parking Area.

It also states what these funds can be used for which includes:

- Improving transport, highways, or roads
- Improving the environment, such as reducing pollution
- Providing free outdoor recreational facilities for the public
- Meeting the cost of providing and maintaining off-street parking
- Contributing to the cost of providing and maintaining off-street parking for other local authorities or people.

Applications will be made to this fund for larger more costly projects which are not achievable through the yearly department budget.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Not approve the strategy & implementation plan - this is not recommended due to improvements that the strategy and associated implementation plan will bring to Thanet leaving an inconsistent approach to parking across the district.
- 4.2 Approve the strategy but not the implementation plan - this is not recommended as it will leave an adopted strategy without a designated timeframe for delivery and will delay implementation of the identified improvements.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 In developing the strategy two consultations have been undertaken. The first carried out between 29 January and 3 March 2024 enabled stakeholders to have their say on a variety of parking matters. This resulted in 2,310 responses either via the online form, in person or via a paper document.

The information collected at this stage enabled the strategy to be developed taking into account the matters raised locally.

Stage two of the consultation enabled people to have their say on the proposed objectives and actions. This consultation was open from 15 July to 8 September 2024 and 12 roadshows were held across Thanet and 2,556 responses were received.

As a whole the proposed strategy has been well received with a majority of responders, 86% supporting the vision and objectives.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Finance and Resources

6.1.1 As set out at section 3, the proposed strategy is ambitious and has significant cost implications, the actions identified in the quick wins will be able to be carried out within our existing budgets. As the strategy progresses across the years some of the actions will be implemented using the yearly budget, some external funding and requests will be made for capital funding and revenue budget growth bids will be submitted as required through the usual annual budget setting process.

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6.2 Legal and Constitutional

6.2.1 There are no significant legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report. By engaging with key stakeholders and undertaking consultation will mean the adoption of this strategy will be within the Council's legal powers.

6.3 Council Policies and Priorities

6.3.1 This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- To keep our district safe and clean
- To protect our environment
- To create a thriving place
- To work efficiently for you

6.4 Risk

6.4.1 Failure to deliver such an ambitious strategy is the highest risk which has been mitigated by allocating funding of the initial implementation plan and then reviewing the Strategy after this period to ensure that the identified actions are still relevant and establish the next stage of the implementation plan.

6.5 Climate Change and Biodiversity

6.5.1 The use of vehicles impacts heavily on the environment and does create climate implications which is why this strategy and implementation plan looks at active travel as well as development of an electric vehicle strategy so that we are able to influence a reduction in the use of fossil fuel vehicles and increase more sustainable travel.

7. Equality, Equity and Diversity Implications

7.1 The meeting is to have due regard to their public sector equality duty, which is the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and consider the potential impact decisions and actions on each of the protected characteristics.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications and Community impact

8.1 The meeting is under a duty to consider crime and disorder implications. This is to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent (a) crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), (b) the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area, and (c) re-offending in its area. The adoption of this strategy and implementation plan will help to reduce crime and disorder by improving parking areas and taking into account designing out crime.

9.0 Subject History

9.1 This is the first meeting that this paper is being considered.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Thanet District Parking Strategy

Annex 2 - Table of quick wins

Annex 3 - Table of longer term actions.

Background Papers

Thanet Parking Strategy Consultation Feedback Report

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Report Sign Off

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