

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 19 JULY 2006

JOINT REPORT OF THE FORWARD PLAN MANAGER AND THE PARKING AND CIVIL CONTINGENCIES MANAGER

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Bishop)

TAUNTON PARKING STRATEGY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the draft Taunton Parking Strategy.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Parking is an important issue for the future prosperity of business in Taunton. The parking strategy is a key component of the land use and transport planning of the town. The majority of the land identified for regeneration in the Vision is owned by the Borough Council and is mostly surface parking. Clearly multi storey car parks must be provided to enable the Vision to happen. This presents a considerable challenge for the Borough Council. This study confirms the principles of the UDF and identifies a number of priorities for future action.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Taunton Vision partnership commissioned Atkins to prepare a Parking Study for Taunton in mid 2005. The Transport and Parking Vision officer sub-group is steering this work. A Parking Survey Report, Policy Review, Development Review and Case Studies were completed in December 2005. A Parking Model was designed to reflect the existing demand and supply situation and enable forecasts of future demand, supply and tariff structure. Several specific local issues, such as park and ride, the blue badge scheme, variable message signing (VMS) and residential parking permits were also examined. Procurement options were also studied.

3.2 The draft Parking Strategy was completed in May. It was the subject of a workshop for both Borough and County Councillors on 23 May 2006 in the PCR. A stakeholder workshop was held on 30 May in the Luttrell Room at County Hall.

3.3 SPTED Review Panel considered and unanimously agreed this report on 29 June 2006. The County Council took the strategy to the Environment Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 4 July, and will take it to Somerset Strategic Planning Conference on 17 July and Executive Board on 26 July 2006.

4.0 TAUNTON PARKING STRATEGY

- 4.1 The draft Parking Strategy is appended to this report. It has an important role in helping to deliver the regeneration of Taunton town centre, as set out in the Vision for Taunton and the Urban Design Framework (UDF). It sets out objectives and guiding principles that fit with the Local Transport Plan (LTP2) and inform the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP). These principles will be included in the TCAAP preferred option consultation in October and November.
- 4.2 The Parking Strategy confirms that the UDF was correct in terms of the total amount of parking to be provided and the strategy to provide a ring of multi storey car parks (MSCPs) on radial routes within easy walking distance of the town centre. The strategy has not recommended specific locations for the MSCPs, but the officer sub-group considers that the optimal sites for the four main car parks serving Firepool, Tangier, High Street West and High Street East are as shown in the UDF. All the MSCP proposals have potential for skinning prominent frontages, such as to roads or waterways, with single aspect residential flats. This will improve the visual appearance and help to provide a return on investment in construction.
- 4.3 The UDF strategy also put forward a MSCP at Sainsbury's Hurdle Way site, but delivery of this is unlikely since this land is not under Council control. The UDF proposal of a MSCP next to Station Road swimming pool is not directly related to the major regeneration sites. The existing First Great Western car park south of the railway station may well be turned into a MSCP by First. Our car park at Kilkenny was not included in the UDF proposals, but does have potential to become a MSCP skinned with flats, possibly in connection with a public transport interchange.
- 4.4 An outcome from the workshops on 23 and 30 May, was a recognition that there were different priorities for parking provision in different parts of the town centre. For example, there needs to be a distinction between priorities in shopping areas and residential areas. The objectives and guiding principles were generally agreed. Whilst the adequate supply of parking spaces is a prerequisite for a successful town, management of parking supply is an essential element of the transport strategy, which relies on a demand management process.
- 4.5 The strategy identifies key outcomes and relates these to 13 Action Plans. These identify a significant amount of work to be done. It is important for the partners to prioritise this work and agree who will be responsible for delivering each of the agreed priority Action Plans. The officer sub-group has considered this matter and concluded as follows:

Action Plan	Lead	Support	Priority	Comment
1. Demand management plan	TDBC	SCC	High	Bullets 7&8 – existing member working group
2. Town Centre Parking Standards Review	TDBC	SCC	High	TCAAP will take this forward
3. Taunton Access Plan	SCC	TDBC	High	Bullets 1-5 TDBC; 6,7,8&10 SCC; 9 done
4. Contributions policy	TDBC	SCC	High	TCAAP will take this forward
5. Development Review Model	Taunton Vision	TDBC & SCC	High	Ongoing – combine with action plan 11
6. Major events access plan	SCC	TDBC	Medium	Liaison with Somerset County Cricket Club
7. Customer Charter	Lucy Ball	SCC & TDBC	Medium	
8. Joint Working Arrangements	Taunton Vision Partners			Already happening through Vision Transport and Parking sub-group
9. Disability Access Plan	TDBC	SCC	High	Already being done
10. Procurement Strategy	TDBC	Vision & SCC	High	
11. Financial Forecasting Model	TDBC	SCC	High	Combine with action plan 5
12. Parking Management Information Model	TDBC	SCC	Medium	Will assume greater importance with commencement of development
13. Parking Marketing Plan	SCC	TDBC	High	Part of wider transport strategy – Smarter Choices campaign

4.6 Delivery and phasing

Firepool is the key strategic employment site in the Taunton Vision. The Vision Delivery Team is working on an implementation programme for Firepool. It is anticipated that marketing for a development partner will commence this autumn and take until the end of this year. The flood alleviation scheme for Firepool involves the construction of replacement flood storage within the valley of the Tone, which is programmed for completion in January 2008. Enabling construction works on site are due to commence in January 2008 and development commencing later in 2008.

4.7 The procurement of a MSCP at Firepool should be our first priority, related to the completion of the early phases of development. Firepool is our strategic

employment site with potential for 50,000 sq.m. of offices next to the mainline railway station. It is important that this opportunity for major office development is viable and deliverable. In this context it appears likely that the master developer would accept strict operational parking standards, such as 1 space per 200 sq.m. under each office building, provided that there were sufficient dedicated spaces for other workers during office hours in the Firepool MSCP. The developer could provide the MSCP and in return would expect no income to the Borough Council from the dedicated office spaces during the week, only at weekends. In this scenario a 650 space Firepool MSCP would therefore be likely to have about 200 car parking spaces available for public use during weekdays. The Atkins report puts forward parking standards on page 25. Whilst the principles of the parking standards are accepted, the precise figures for parking standards will need to be set in the context of the viability of the development as a whole.

- 4.8 Flood alleviation for Tangier involves the construction of one or two upstream dams on the tributary streams that pass through the site. The process of land acquisition, design and construction for this is more complex and is therefore unlikely to be completed before mid 2009. In this context it is clear that the provision of a MSCP at Tangier will be later and a lower priority for the Vision delivery.
- 4.9 The proposals East and West of High Street are not affected by flooding. It is anticipated that the developers of these retail developments will provide MSCPs as an integral part of the scheme, although the details of the design have yet to be agreed. Phasing of these schemes has not yet been considered, but it is clearly essential that the continuity of shopper parking during construction will be an important issue to be resolved. It is accepted that the UDF proposals for the bus station to be relocated to the Crescent car park are unrealistic for a variety of reasons although a central bus interchange within the town centre will be required. It is anticipated that the retail schemes will increase the total amount of car parking east and west of High Street by about 100 spaces.
- 4.10 Procurement
The Strategy recognises that the Vision ambitions can be achieved only by provision of alternative parking stock in the form of multi-storey car parks. Background work done on possible procurement routes has identified that the private sector would be interested only if the various new car parks were to be constructed in a relatively short timescale and only if they could have control of the income stream. The timescale for replacement of much of the surface car parking stock is inextricably linked with the overall Vision delivery programme, but is unlikely to occur within a short period. The income stream is vital to the delivery of many general Borough Council services. At the recent workshop session for Members there was no appetite expressed for going down the private sector route in any of the possible forms of partnership or management contracts.

4.11 This leaves procurement to be funded by the Borough Council itself. Latest estimates from other projects indicate a cost in the region of £12,500 per space for a modern multi-storey properly equipped with CCTV and Pay on Foot in a customer-friendly environment. The cost of a 500 space multi-storey would therefore be in the region of £6.25m. The options for funding such a high level of capital investment are being investigated now, as are possibilities for alleviating the costs such as including either retail or residential development within the design. The options include

- capital receipts from sale of assets;
- joint procurement with the RDA;
- developer contributions;
- capital grants;
- prudential borrowing
- use of reserves; and
- redirecting the existing Capital Programme.

4.12 Resources

The Action Plans all identify further work to be carried out over the coming months and years to review existing policies and practices, gather additional information about usage and customer habits, trends and preferences. These together with the provision of more information to the customer base, either electronically or in more traditional forms and the statement that, over time, an even more robust approach to DPE enforcement is taken will require resources that do not exist within the Parking Services Unit, and possibly not within either the Borough or County Councils at all. It is important that when future actions are prioritised the provision of appropriate resources is addressed.

4.13 Residents Parking

The background survey work Atkins carried out on this important part of the parking provision identified capacity problems in some areas. Continual redevelopment of brownfield sites within existing residential areas together with conversion of traditional houses into flats brings additional pressure on the available road space. The Panel's Working Group on Residents' Parking has also recently identified this. The Strategy recommends that the number of resident and visitor permits issued per household be reviewed along with the method and rates of charging. The Members also came to this conclusion and were concerned specifically about the operation of the Visitor Permit scheme. Given that any changes would need to be applied across existing schemes as well as new ones, and the interest shown by the public in extending the areas involved, it is considered this piece of work should be seen as a priority and would be subject to full consultation.

5.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 Parking is an important issue for the future prosperity of business in Taunton. The parking strategy is a key component of the land use and transport

planning of the town. The majority of the land identified for regeneration in the Vision is owned by the Borough Council and is mostly surface parking. Clearly MSCPs must be provided to enable the Vision to happen. This presents a considerable challenge for the Borough Council. This study confirms the principles of the UDF and identifies a number of priorities for future action.

6.0 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6.1 The Vision for Taunton is one of the Council's top priorities and it bears on all the other corporate priorities. The Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan will take forward the policy principles of the Parking Strategy to assist the delivery of the Vision for Taunton.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 It is recommended that the Taunton Parking Strategy and principles and priority actions set out above be agreed.

Background Papers

The following documents have informed the content of this report:

- Taunton Parking Strategy
- Somerset Local Transport Plan 2
- Taunton Urban Design Framework

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