**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**6 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**PART I - DELEGATED**

**8. TRDC PARKING MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2016/17**

(DCES)

1. **Summary**

1.1 This report reviews the success of the parking management for the 2015/16 financial year (Appendix A) and proposes a programme for the 2016/17 financial year (Appendix B).

2. **Details**

 **General Approach**

* 1. On-street and off-street parking controls apply within the main settlements in Three Rivers District and on other roads where they are needed to balance parking demand, ensure highway safety and prevent obstruction for service and emergency vehicles. Three Rivers is designated as a Civil Enforcement Area for parking controls and the District Council provides an on-street and off-street parking enforcement service through a contract with Indigo shared with Watford Council
	2. The District Councilacts as agent for the Highway and Traffic Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, to promote and introduce schemes (called “Controlled Parking Zones”) to manage the many competing demands for parking on public roads in the District. The County Council also introduces parking controls through its own programmes to develop and improve the road network and these controls are also enforced by the District Council.
	3. These powers are set out in a Parking Agency Agreement between the two Local Authorities which enables the District to introduce “*Controlled Parking Zones and Ancillary Measures.*” The basis for the agreement is that the District is best placed to address competing local demands for on-street parking. It does not confer powers to specifically address traffic flow or road safety, although both are often improved by District Council parking schemes.
	4. This committee resolved on the 18 November 2014 to introduce a procedure for prioritising new parking schemes. All requests are now assessed against a set of criteria agreed by that committee meeting.
	5. A programme of proposed investigations is brought annually to the Sustainable Development, Planning and Transport Committee, comprising:
* Any work arising from or required by Council decisions (e.g. changes to parking charges).
* The completion of projects that are already under way.
* A selection, agreed by Councillors, from highest scoring requests for new, altered or removed parking restrictions, such that a balanced programme is produced with due regard for available resources. This may be supplemented by the inclusion minor lower priority items in the interests of efficiency (e.g. small and simple adjacent requests, legalisation of nearby disabled bays).
* Work recommended by officers and agreed by councillors for business reasons (e.g. Consolidation Orders, updates to reflect changes in legislation, coordination with other projects).

**‘Wider’ schemes and ‘Various’ schemes**

* 1. To make best use of officer time, a balance has been sought between smaller projects and those covering a wider area or involving more complex issues. It is also intended that multiple smaller items should be grouped together into a “various items” project, rather than being pursued separately.
	2. It is recommended that this programme is agreed, and that once the programme has been set it shall be adhered to as the Traffic Engineer’s core scheme of work, with significant additions being limited to urgent risk reduction measures and subject to the Lead Member’s approval.
	3. In the interests of efficiency and responsiveness, the consideration of objections relating to Traffic Regulation Orders brought forward in this programme of works and to any items remaining from earlier programmes of works, was delegated by the meeting of this committee on 10 March 2015 to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member and relevant Ward Councillors.

**Review of the 2015/16 Programme**

* 1. At its meeting on 10 March 2015, this committee agreed an annual Parking Management Programme for the 2015/16 financial year, consisting of:
* existing commitments and projects that were already underway;
* items that appeared of particular merit or urgency due to the extent or severity of the reported or observed problem(s);
* those items that appeared to be most frequently requested or to have been longest outstanding.
	1. This programme was set out as a year’s work. Members will be aware that the Council has been unable to recruit a permanent Traffic Engineer since the departure of the former Traffic Engineer in October 2015.
	2. The 2015/16 programme included (by April 2016) three wider schemes, sixteen minor schemes and three studies as detailed in Appendix A.
	3. This included two minor schemes that were added to the programme after the original programme was set, as ‘exceptions’ approved by the Lead Member on urgency due to circumstances.
	4. Each of the nineteen schemes programmed in 2015/16 has been investigated. Of these:
* Four minor schemes investigated have been implemented
* Six minor schemes are shortly to be implemented (three of which are to be reduced in scope as a result of objections to the traffic order).
* Investigation into four minor schemes concluded that (as a result of looking more closely into the issues and requests, or due to changing circumstances) no further action should be proposed in respect of the issues at those locations as part of this programme.
* Two minor schemes were advertised and following objections require a significant re-design, so are proposed to be carried into the 2016/17 programme.
* Each of the three wider schemes that were investigated in 2015/16 (Elm Way, Heronsgate Road and High Elms Lane) requires some degree of re-design due, respectively, to objections and lack of internal agreement on proposals. Further, the Heronsgate Road scheme can only be implemented following physical works as part of a separate ‘Retail Parade Improvement scheme’ also funded by the District Council, but which must be separately approved by the County Council.
	1. The three studies included:
* The development of a Parking Management Strategy which has been substantially completed;
* A study reviewing parking issues across the whole of the Croxley Green area, which was started but not yet progressed (although this delay is now considered beneficial, given the medium- and long-term impact on parking pressure that the Metropolitan Line Extension will have, details of which are soon to become available); and
* The Consolidation of the many traffic orders made by the Council. This regular consolidation is a legal requirement, to simplify the body of traffic orders for various areas and restrictions, but this has not been regularly performed and must be prioritised in 2016/17.

**Schemes proposed to be carried into the 2016/17 programme**

* 1. It is therefore proposed that the following are carried into the 2016/17 programme with the intention that they will be concluded during this financial year:
	2. The three wider schemes, each of which has been subject to long investigation (Elm Way, Heronsgate Road and High Elms Lane).
	3. Two minor schemes where objections or programme delays did not allow a consensus to be reached (Arundel Road and The Crescent).
	4. The three studies (Croxley Green area-wide study, the Parking Management Strategy and the Consolidation of traffic orders).

**New schemes proposed in the 2016/17 programme**

* 1. it is considered that the target nineteen schemes attempted as part of the 2015/16 programme (as set out in section 2.18 below), was overly ambitious, considering that this programme is expected to be carried out not by a team but by a single Traffic Engineer, in a part-time post without the support of technical administrative personnel in producing designs or carrying out public consultation.
	2. Over the twelve months during which an officer has managed this programme since April 2015:
* Ten minor schemes have been progressed to the final stage of implementation.
* Three minor schemes are still in progress.
* Three schemes were effectively halted during the process because they are not feasible.
* The three wider schemes were not completed in this year due to difficulties with decision making.
	1. It has taken twelve months for 10 minor schemes to be successfully progressed. On that basis it is proposed that a reduced number of new minor scheme investigations are programmed in 2016/17, with the same resourcing arrangements and that there are 3 wider schemes (2 from 2014/15) to implement as well as 3 studies to complete. As 10 minor schemes were successfully progressed, and in consideration that 3 minor schemes are to be carried over, the top 8 have been selected as set out below.
	2. The top-scoring 8 new minor scheme requests that have not yet been investigated (with each weighted score, as determined by applying the weighted criteria that were approved for use in prioritising parking management schemes by this committee on the 18 November 2014) are, as detailed in Appendix B:
* Parsonage Close, Abbots Langley (20.8)
* South Way, Leavesden (13.5)
* Church Lane, Rickmansworth (13.5)
* Shepherds Way, Rickmansworth (10.4)
* Garden Road and Breakspeare Road, Abbots Langley (7.5)
* Uxbridge Road service road , Rickmansworth (6.75)
* Chorleywood Bottom, Chorleywood (6)
* Silk Mill Road, Oxhey (5.2)

**Effectiveness of scheme delivery**

* 1. A brief assessment has been carried out into the effectiveness of the District Council’s use of resources in delivering the programme agreed for 2015/16.
	2. It is considered that this programme was overly ambitious considering that this programme is expected to be carried out not by a team but by one Traffic Engineer, in a part-time post.
	3. While the resource implications were clearly projected, unexpected factors have appeared that challenge the assumptions on which that work programme was based. These include, for example, an expectation that the proposals should be investigated and implemented in one financial year (compared with the Highway Authority programme which works over a 2/3 year period of investigation, consultation and implementation). Another assumption was that, should serious public objections be received, the proposals would be withdrawn, rather than that this should lead to a reassessment of the situation with possible scheme re-design.
	4. While this latter assumption allows for a more efficient programme, with any schemes that attract significant types or numbers of objections being withdrawn (and with the approved criteria for prioritisation then causing these locations to be de-prioritised compared with others that had not been recently investigated), this practice also causes a significant threat to the reputation of the District Council, as it can be seen to have investigated and walked away from an area where there are serious and urgent issues with parking demand, solely on the basis that public opinion was divided or opposed to the proposals.

* 1. A similar effect would arise if the District Council determined to overrule serious types or numbers of objections, as while this could be the most effective way to solve the problem, it would likely cause a significant threat to the reputation of the Council.
	2. While it is acknowledged that the current practice and criteria were established to overcome the limited resources that the District Council has determined to allocate to this work area, the outcome is that difficult schemes (such as those in Elm Way, carried over from 2014/15 or in The Crescent, in Heronsgate Road or in Arundel Road in 2015/16) should technically be no longer progressed because they each require amendments to their respective traffic orders. In practice, it would be very difficult for the District Council to walk away from any of these, and it is therefore necessary for these schemes (as with other before and likely others in future) to be carried into future work programmes, reducing the capacity of the programme to address new work.
	3. It is also noted that the ‘exception’ option, while a necessary mechanism to allow non-programmed schemes to be added to the programme (from experience, at the request of the County Council), further strains resources in a way that cannot be predicted nor controlled.

3. **Options/Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 The proposals set out above will enable the effective control and progression of the Parking Management Programme.

4. **Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets and the relevant policies are entitled:

* + - **Three Rivers Community Strategy 2012 – 2018**
		- **Three Rivers District Council Strategic Plan 2015 to 2018**

5. **Financial Implications**

5.1The 2016/17 budget includes an allocation specifically for these types of schemes and the programme will be managed within the currently agreed allocation.

6. **Legal Implications**

6.1 All schemes will be progressed in line with the District Council’s powers under its relevant Agency Agreement with Hertfordshire County Council. In some cases, where any physical changes to the layout of highway are proposed, it may be necessary for the District Council to enter into a Section 278 Agreement with the County Council, to enable works on the highway to proceed.

7. **Equal Opportunities Implications**

7.1 **Relevance Test**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact? | No – there is no change to service provision |
| Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required? | No – matter will be reviewed through on-going consultation. |

8. **Staffing Implications**

8.1 The Parking Management Programme sets out the core annual work of the Traffic Engineer, overseen by the Head of Regulatory Services.

9. **Environmental Implications**

9.1 The impact of schemes on the local built environment and street scheme will be considered as part of individual schemes, but the design and use of any proposed parking control measures are controlled by legislation and Government guidance as well as by local policy set out in the Hertfordshire County Council policy documents forming part of the Local Transport Plan and specifically in the local design guide, Roads in Hertfordshire (2011).

10. **Community Safety Implications**

10.1 All schemes are designed to take account of safety implications. Where appropriate the police will be consulted and safety audits are where necessary carried out as part of the scheme design.

11. **Customer Services Centre Implications**

11.1 Where required, the Customer Services Manager will be briefed as appropriate.

12. **Communications and** **Website Implications**

12.1 Information about individual schemes, and the Council’s general approach to parking schemes, will be made available online and at key locations such as libraries and parish offices as appropriate.

13. **Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

13.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at http://www.threerivers.gov.uk. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council’s duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

13.2 The subject of this report is covered by the DCES Regulatory Service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

13.3 The following table gives the risks if the recommendations are agreed, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Risk | Impact | Likelihood |
| 1 | The programme may not be completed in full, due to the consultative and iterative nature of the legal process for introducing parking restrictions, and limited resources within the council. | II | D |

13.4 The following table gives the risks that would exist if the recommendations are rejected, together with a scored assessment of their impact and likelihood:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Description of Risk | Impact | Likelihood |
| 2 | Lack of clear and consistent approaches and procedures will lead to limited resources being unable to provide an adequate level of service in addressing parking management issues within the district. | III | B |

13.5 The risks detailed above are already managed within a service plan.

13.6 The above risks are plotted on the matrix below depending on the scored assessments of impact and likelihood, detailed definitions of which are included in the risk management strategy. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood are plotted in the shaded area of the matrix. The remaining risks require a treatment plan.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Likelihood** | A |  |  |  |  |  | Impact | Likelihood |
| B |  |  | 2 |  |  | V = Catastrophic | A = >98% |
| C |  |  |  |  |  | IV = Critical | B = 75% - 97% |
| D |  | 1 |  |  |  | III = Significant | C = 50% - 74% |
| E |  |  |  |  |  | II = Marginal | D = 25% - 49% |
| F |  |  |  |  |  | I = Negligible | E = 3% - 24% |
|  | I | II | III | IV | V |  | F = <2% |
| **Impact** |  |  |

13.7 In the officers’ opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

14. **Recommendations**

* 1. That the draft programme appended to this report is agreed, and that once the programme has been set it shall be adhered to as the Traffic Engineer’s core scheme of work, with significant additions being limited to urgent risk reduction measures and subject to the Lead Member’s approval.
	2. That the consideration of objections relating to Traffic Regulation Orders brought forward in this programme of works and to any items remaining from earlier programmes of works, be delegated to the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member and relevant Ward Councillors.

Report prepared by: Peter Simons, Traffic Engineer (Interim)

 **Background Papers**

 Minutes and reports: Sustainable Development, Planning and Transport Committee, 18 November 2014

 **APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

 Appendix A – Parking Management Programme 2014-5

 Appendix B - Proposed Parking Management Programme 2016/17