

REPORT TO EVENTS AND TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CAR PARKING SURVEY



Report Reference E-20-08
Meeting Date 11th January 2021
Agenda Item 10
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

Cheshire East Council is currently undertaking a survey for its car parking service; it seeks feedback on “the future role of parking, and on how the council can harmonise and improve parking services over the next five years”.

Using the data gathered the council will prepare proposals for formal consultation in March.

The survey was circulated to all members in December and the Town Clerk asked members to send their responses to him to enable a draft council response to be prepared. Four members submitted responses and the survey has also been reviewed by the Town Centre and Marketing Officer. The Town Clerk has reviewed the survey in relation to the output from the *From Top to Bottom Street* proposals, the Environment Committee’s work to introduce additional cycle parking and the committee’s objective to establish a *Coach Friendly Town* scheme to ensure the council’s response to this consultation aligns with these.

The draft response has not been prepared as though the Town Council itself is answering the survey but provides a more general (and in some cases specific) input designed to be read alongside responses the borough council receives. For this reason, the response does not answer every point where there has not been a consensus from the members answering or where Cheshire East will gain more useful data from individual user responses (e.g. parking charges).

2.0 DRAFT RESPONSE

In 2020 the Town Council prepared and consulted on the first stage of a Town Centre Masterplan and published the *From Top to Bottom Street* report which outlines a series of proposals for changes to parking and traffic flow in Knutsford. The Town Council has previously formally requested that this be given thorough consideration as part of any reviews into parking and a copy is enclosed for ease of reference.

79% of respondents to the consultation on the report indicated support for increased parking provision within the town centre. It should be noted that parking provision is generally insufficient at peak times i.e. weekends and event days but that otherwise turnover of parking spaces is acceptable. However, it must be noted that like other towns Knutsford is set to grow considerably over the coming years and therefore the Town Council considers that additional parking spaces should be provided in the town centre. Specific proposals are detailed in the *From Top to Bottom Street* report and include providing additional on-street parking, the development of at least one

multi-storey car park, the introduction of long-stay parking spaces at the Booths supermarket car park and, in the short-term, a redesign of Tatton Street car park.

The Town Council's views on the specifics of the survey are:

- Cheshire East Council should provide a combination of both short and long stay car parking in Knutsford
- Access by all forms of transport should be promoted equally but that there is currently an inequality due to poor access/facilities/services for non-car users.
- Cheshire East Council should be consistent in parking charges across the borough, that the council should charge for parking on car parks and tariffs should be the same
- On street parking charges should not be introduced on streets nor at business parks as this will displace vehicles to surrounding residential areas
- Park and stride drop off facilities (or other similar measures designed to reduce congestion around schools) should be developed
- Cheshire East Council should introduce emissions based charges to discourage these vehicles from town centres and reduce air pollution
- Parking charges should not be introduced on Sundays
- Night-time charges should only be introduced with the consent of the Town Council for the area concerned
- Pay-by-phone only systems should not be introduced

The Town Council's top priority from the provided list of improvements is for better enforcement of illegal/inconsiderate parking as the current enforcement is severely inadequate and under resourced. Cheshire East Council should reintroduce the abandoned scheme introduced a few years ago where Town Councils provide local direction to priority areas for parking enforcement officers, including targeting specific places at specific times. Dedicated enforcement officers for each town would provide the best informed locally responsive service.

The Town Council wishes to see cash-free payment options at all car parks including the provision of contactless payment options on pay and display machines. The Town Council also wishes to see suitable provision for covered cycle parking at all car parks and will work with Cheshire East Council to deliver this.

The Town Council urges Cheshire East Council to remove the coach parking bays at Tatton Street car park which are inaccessible and would be better used as car parking spaces. In its place, the parking spaces at the Bus Station on Bexton Road should be reserved for coach parking to enable the Town Council to promote Knutsford as a Coach Friendly Town and promote greater tourism by this means.

The Town Council wishes to have further detailed dialogue with Cheshire East Council to assist in the development of proposals for public consultation and we will be writing to the Portfolio Holder to specifically request this takes place.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider the draft response to the consultation.