

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 29 May 2019  
**Report of:** Transition Director  
**Title of Report:** City & County Park & Ride Agency Agreement

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	Park & Ride Management
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Planning and Transport
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	A Vibrant and Sustainable Economy.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	None
<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Authorise</b> the Council's entry into an Agency Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council under which the City Council would be appointed to provide management services for Oxfordshire County Council's two Oxford Park &amp; Ride sites – Thornhill and Oxford Parkway (Water Eaton).</li> <li>2. <b>Authorise</b> the Council's entry into an agreement with Oxford Direct Services Limited ("ODSL") under which the management responsibilities taken on by the Council under the Agency Agreement with the County Council referred to in Recommendation 1 above would be carried out by ODSL; and</li> <li>3. <b>Delegate authority</b> to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Council's Monitoring Officer and s151 Officer to agree the terms of the Council's entry into the two agreements referred to in Recommendations 1 and 2 above.</li> </ol>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

## **Introduction and background**

1. Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council have committed to explore what benefits could be achieved if their parking policies and services were closer aligned.
2. One element of the project was to explore whether the Park & Ride (P&R) operation could be delivered differently. This included the management of the sites, permits and the tariffs charged.
3. It was quickly identified that the different level of charges adopted across the City and County sites created a degree of confusion for customers and did not promote a cohesive scheme. It was therefore recommended that the City Council align their charges and conditions with Oxfordshire County Council.
4. The tariffs and conditions were then aligned on April 2018.
5. As part of this exercise, the P&R operation of each authority was examined. The officer group concluded that efficiencies and service improvements could be made if Oxfordshire County Council adopted the City Council's model of operation.

## **Current operation**

6. The Park and Ride sites are an important part of both Councils' sustainable transport strategy, reducing the need to drive into the city centre and allowing city centre car parking to be utilised mainly for shorter, non-commuting trips.
7. Oxfordshire County Council operates two Park & Ride sites, Thornhill and Water Eaton. The combined capacity of these two sites is 2093 parking bays.
8. Oxford City Council operates three Park & Ride car parks, Redbridge, Seacourt and Peartree, providing 3241 car parking bays. However, the City Council also currently provides a parking facility for coaches and lorries at Redbridge Park & Ride, which has reduced capacity there by approximately 260 spaces.
9. Oxfordshire County Council currently has 7 staff located across its two Park & Ride sites. Working between 07:00-19:30 Monday to Saturday at Oxford Parkway (Water Eaton), and between 05:30 –23:30 Monday to Saturday and 08:30-19:30 on Sundays at Thornhill.
10. The officers are responsible for maintaining security, parking enforcement, and customer care, in addition to managing the buildings facilities. Staff enforcement is aided by static Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras

11. Oxford City Council removed staff from its Park & Ride sites in 2011 and has not encountered any operational difficulties as a result of this.
12. Oxford City Council undertakes parking enforcement with a mobile ANPR vehicle. Oxfordshire County Council utilises a static system, although as the Deregulation Act currently prevents local authorities from servicing penalty notices by post this device is not able to be used to its full potential.

### **Proposal**

13. The most efficient option would be to utilise technology where possible. However, it is recognised that current legislation restricts the use of certain equipment, as mentioned in paragraph 12.
14. As Local Authorities are currently not permitted to send penalty notices retrospectively through the post for parking offences, a mobile ANPR system is recognised as a suitable alternative.
15. These ANPR devices are used for detection purposes only and will alert the Enforcement Officer to any parking contravention. The officer is then required to check the vehicle and if payment cannot be established or a contravention has occurred, a penalty notice is issued.
16. Oxford City Council has operated this model since 2013. This has proven to be an effective tool for parking enforcement. This device has significantly improved efficiency as officers are able to patrol more car parks within their shift.
17. Oxfordshire County Council would like to replicate this model, although it would not be cost effective for the County Council to procure a separate system for its P&R operation.
18. It is therefore recommended that the County Council's out-sourced P&R contract is transferred to the City Council on an agency basis, and then immediately sub-contracted by the City Council to ODSL to perform the required car park management services.
19. Oxford City Council would therefore enter into an Agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council to provide management services for the County's Park & Ride sites at Oxford Parkway (Water Eaton) and Thornhill. These duties would then be subcontracted to ODSL.
20. The agreement will include parking enforcement, the processing of parking appeals, ticket machine maintenance and the general day-to-day management of the sites.
21. This proposal will build on the success of other agency agreements that have been entered into by Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council and

underline the commitment of both authorities to work closely to benefit the residents and visitors of Oxfordshire.

22. This proposal ensures that all P&R sites are managed by a single entity, which facilitates rationalisation of the parking services and promotes a closer working relationship with between Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council.
23. It is envisaged that this agreement will facilitate future working agreements between the parking services, which ensures that a cohesive approach is adopted when dealing with the transport & parking challenges Oxford encounters.

### **Financial implications**

24. The payments received by the Council for undertaking the management of the Park & Ride sites will be passed on to ODSL. Staff costs will remain neutral and officers do not expect this to adversely impact the parking operation. On the contrary, the proposal ensures that the entire Park & Ride portfolio in Oxfordshire operates as a cohesive scheme.
25. TUPE conditions may apply to the 7 staff currently engaged by the County's contractor at the two County P&R Sites and as a result there may be some additional costs associated with the process of transferring management of the sites to ODSL.
26. It is expected that Oxfordshire County Council will be able to make some efficiency savings as a result of this proposal and will see an enhanced level of service provided.
27. This Agreement is proposed to operate on and from 1st September 2019 and expire on 30th August 2024 subject to a right to extend a further two years (in one year instalments) by mutual agreement to [30th August 2026].
28. Oxford City Council through its wholly owned Local Authority Trading Company, Oxford Direct Services (ODS) will receive £299,800 per annum for the initial contract term 1 September 2019 to 30 August 2024.
29. As ODS intends to assimilate the two County car parks into their current service and will utilise existing technology and personnel, it is not envisaged that there will be any additional costs of note to ODS as a result of this proposal.
30. The P&R proposal is one facet of a number of parking projects that the City/ODS and County Council are collaborating on. Within the ODS business plan parking services provide the foundation to extend and grow managed services for strategic partners. Specifically the growth of Park & Ride as part of managed services form part of the other growth target within the MTFP. If ODS

overachieves the MTFP growth target, there will be the potential of an increased dividend payment in accordance with the dividend policy.

## **Legal**

31. Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 permits the County Council to delegate powers to the City Council to discharge certain functions, and this will be the authority relied upon in the agreement between the two Councils. The two P&R Sites involved in the delegation will be subject to the Oxfordshire County Council (Park and Ride Parking Places – Thornhill and Water Eaton) Order 2012 as amended. The City Council may make a direct award of this work to its “Teckal” subsidiary ODSL without undertaking a competitive selection process.
32. The City Council is currently considering the most appropriate and effective way to ensure that the County Council’s enforcement powers are properly delegated to enable Excess Charge Notices to be issued to defaulting car park users.
33. There is a possibility that during the course of any staff transfer to which the TUPE provisions apply, the City Council/ODSL will seek to apply measures, to ensure the efficiency of the P&R operation.

## **Level of risk**

34. The City Council has a significant and successful track record in providing Park & Ride car parks in Oxford. This experience has helped formulate a successful policy which encourages visitors whilst reducing congestion.
35. ODSL will look to enhance the County’s service and will introduce pay by phone provided by RingGo once the contract commences.
36. Failure to implement a cohesive parking policy across all Park & Ride sites could result in customer confusion and dissatisfaction.

## **Conclusion**

37. This proposal will ensure that the Park & Ride service is managed as a single entity that should further enhance the service offered to customers.

<b>Report author</b>	Jason Munro
Job title	Parking Manager
Service area or department	Oxford Direct Services Limited
Telephone	01865 252489
e-mail	<a href="mailto:jmunro@oxford.gov.uk">jmunro@oxford.gov.uk</a>

<b>Background Papers:</b> None
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