

1. STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. The Council's existing parking objectives set out to be consistent with and contribute to the overall aims of the National and Regional transport strategies (refer Appendix 1) which seek to:
 - 1.1.1. Achieve a reduction in overall traffic
 - 1.1.2. To increase use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel
 - 1.1.3. To achieve a more effective and efficient transport system,
whilst taking into account:
 - 1.1.4. The economic vitality of the town centre
 - 1.1.5. The parking needs of people with disabilities
 - 1.1.6. The parking needs of local residents, shops and businesses

2. PARKING POLICY BENEFITS

- 2.1. An effective parking policy will help to further a wide range of urban policy objectives such as:
 - 2.1.1. Economic vitality of the town centre
 - 2.1.2. Social (accessibility)
 - 2.1.3. Environmental (negative impact of traffic congestion)
 - 2.1.4. Pricing and availability of parking in the town centre is one of the few ways of managing or restraining car use
 - 2.1.5. Compared to major infrastructure changes, parking policies are relatively easy to introduce and cost effective methods of managing demand, which can be easily modified to reflect changing situations.

3. PARKING POLICY LIMITATIONS

- 3.1. Incomplete control of the parking stock can limit the ability to achieve desired objectives
- 3.2. Conflict between the objectives that parking policies are trying to serve e.g. regeneration, traffic restraint and revenue generation.
- 3.3. Parking policies are not a total solution in that other supporting measures will be required to achieve urban policy objectives.
- 3.4. Parking policy interventions can be ineffective without adequate enforcement.

4. LOCAL PARKING POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that the parking strategies aims and objectives are consistent with national, regional and local policies (refer Appendix1).
- Prioritise the parking needs of disabled people, local residents, suppliers of goods and services, businesses and their customers.
- Promote more sustainable travel choices through availability and pricing of town centre car parking
- Discourage the use of town centre parking spaces for long stay parking and seek to maximise the availability of short stay spaces in prime, central locations for use by shoppers and other short stay users.
- Ensure that parking restrictions both on and off- street are effectively enforced and minimise the impact of town centre parking controls on surrounding residential areas.

5. LOCAL PARKING POLICY

Charging Policy

This Authority will in principle impose charges for parking at levels reflecting local pressures and needs. These may vary :

- as between the different towns and smaller centres
- as between zones within the larger towns

However the scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across the stay periods in all towns. These should follow national guidelines. Thus the percentage increase in charge from one time period to the next should be consistent throughout all locations.

Imposition of charges in selected town centre car parks in Congleton will be designed to regulate use and improve availability in central locations requiring short stay. Income earned should cover operating and maintenance costs and allow necessary improvements to the useability, environment and security of a number of these sites.

The new authority has inherited a number of off street car parks for which there is no charge. It is intended that parking charges will be considered only on those sites for which a good case can be made.

Short stay parking

Policy: To give priority to and manage the provision of short stay parking in the town centre

- Short stay visitors to the town centre are less likely to travel at peak periods i.e. reduce congestion, improve efficiency of the road network.
- Short stay parking generates a high turnover of spaces allowing more visitors to be accommodated per space.
- Availability of short stay spaces is essential to maintaining the commercial viability of the town centres.

5.2 Long stay parking

Policy: To manage the provision of long stay parking in the town centres through pricing to encourage the use of more sustainable transport and by a system of differential charging to promote the use of peripheral car parks where such parking is to be accommodated.

- Commuters travel at peak periods and are a major contribution to congestion of the road network.
- Commuter parking monopolises parking spaces for the entire working day
- Transport objectives may be achieved more easily through parking policy interventions aimed at the commuter. It is more practicable for example for the commuter to change their travel patterns than it is to continually expand the road network and parking stock.
- Long stay parking provision in connection with bus or rail commuter travel is supported in order to reduce the level of dependency on the motorcar as a means of commuting to work.

5.3 Disabled Parking Provision

Policy: To prioritise where appropriate the needs of those people who have no choice but to use the car to access essential services

- Continue support of the shopmobility scheme within the town centres
- Improve the quality and provision of disabled parking in off street car parks in accordance with DDA requirements. Local conditions and demand are also considered in determining the number and location of spaces to be provided.

5.4 Parking Enforcement

Policy: To ensure parking policy interventions are implemented effectively and contribute to the wider objectives of transport planning and economic development; within the provisions of the relevant legislation:

- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
 - Provides powers under which Councils are able to provide and manage off street car parks. The use of the Council's car parks is regulated by orders permissible under the Act. It also provides powers for the Highway Authority to make traffic regulation orders for the control and regulation of traffic and parking on the highway.
- Road Traffic Act 1991 (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement)
 - Introduced to address the increase in illegal parking (growing car ownership and use) and fears that police resources would not be able to match the demand for enforcement.
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- Traffic Management Act 2004 (Civil Parking Enforcement)
 - Statutory duty on Local Authorities to reduce the cause of congestion and disruption by controlling parking and the road network as a whole
 - Part 6 of the TMA provides a single framework to make regulations for the civil enforcement of parking and waiting restrictions, bus lanes and some moving traffic offences. An application has been made to the Department for Transport to adopt powers under this Act.
 - Automatic transition arrangements are in place for Authorities operating under RTA 1991.

5.5 On street parking

Policy: To provide on street, limited waiting parking facilities where it is considered safe to do so without undue interference with moving traffic, residents, businesses and other urban objectives.

Cheshire East Council as local highway authority is responsible for the control and regulation of on street parking.

5.6 Residents' Parking

Policy: To prioritise the parking needs of residents in areas which are affected by non-residential parking, or are likely to be affected as a result of policy interventions in relation to long stay parking in the town centres

The Authority will operate residents' on -street parking schemes which

- aim to balance the conflicting demands for kerb space
- manage the displacement of parking

The Authority will develop robust, fair policies as the available kerb space in many areas will not be sufficient to cater for all demands from residents and other legitimate users.

Appendix 1 - Cross Reference to Planning and Transport Strategies

General

In producing a parking strategy for the Authority, consideration needs to be given to national, regional, county and local policies and guidance which could materially affect parking provision. This section therefore reviews the relevant sections of key documents which could influence any future strategy.

Planning Policy Guidance

In relation to the derivation of a parking strategy, two Planning Policy documents are of particular importance; PPS6: Planning for Town Centres and PPG13: Transport.

One of the Government's objectives for town centres is to improve accessibility, by ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport (PPS6 – Para 1.4). The Government's wider policy objectives seek to promote sustainable transport choices, including reducing the need to travel and providing alternatives to car use (PPS6 – Para 1.5).

Para 3.26 of PPS6 states that local planning authorities should assess the extent to which retail, leisure and office developers have tailored their approach to meet the Government's objectives as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13). For example through the preparation of accessibility analyses, transport assessments, travel plans and the promotion of opportunities to reduce car journeys through home delivery services, and contributions to improve access, traffic management and parking.

Para 4.4 of PPS6 encourages Councils to collect information on a range of indicators in order to assess the vitality and viability of their town centres. One of the indicators deals with accessibility and this seeks to measure the following: ease and convenience of access by a choice of means of travel, including – the quality, quantity and type of car parking; the frequency and quality of public transport services and the range of customer origins served; and, the quality of provision for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people and the ease of access from main arrival points to the main attractions.

PPG13:Transport sets out a number of issues which local authorities should consider when developing and implementing parking policies, including:

- Ensuring the levels of parking associated with development will promote sustainable transport;
- Not requiring developers to provide more spaces than they wish;
- Encouraging the shared use of parking;
- Avoiding the application of different levels of parking between town centre and peripheral areas which may provide incentives for developers to locate away from the town centre;
- Requiring the provision of designated disabled parking bays;
- The introduction of on street parking controls;

These issues need to be taken on board as part of any parking strategy for the Borough.

Regional Planning Guidance/ Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (January 2006)

Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13) states that:

“Local authorities should develop a co-ordinated approach to the use of parking charges, enforcement and provision as a demand management tool in support of wider planning and transport objectives”.

RPG13 then goes on to suggest that:

“The provision and promotion of secure car parks can encourage the use of Park and Ride facilities and public transport. Local highway authorities should also make use of on-street parking controls as a way of encouraging greater use of alternative modes”.

Policy RT6 of the Submitted Draft Regional Spatial Strategy states that:

“Local authorities should develop a co-ordinated approach to the use of parking charges, enforcement (especially in areas where parking has been decriminalised) and provision as part of an all embracing strategy to manage travel demand”.

The policy goes on to state that plans and strategies should:

- Incorporate maximum parking standards that do not exceed the regional ceilings set out in Table 10.1, and define standards for additional land use categories and areas where more restrictive standards should be applied. Parking for disabled people is the only situation where minimum standards will be applicable;
- Manage car use by implementing workplace, education and personal travel plans which should be developed alongside public transport, cycling and pedestrian network improvements;
- Make greater use of on-street parking controls and enforcement where priority or road space is to be provided for specified road users;
- Provide dedicated and secure parking facilities for cycles and two wheel motorised vehicles;
- Identify strategic Park and Ride locations to serve the City Regions and areas attracting large numbers of commuters or visitors to be linked by frequent rail and/or bus services that will reduce car trips within those areas. The location and operation of Park and Ride sites should be safe and accessible to all potential users but should not introduce incentives that encourage car use.

As with the issues raised in PPS6 and PPG13, these guidelines also need to be accommodated within any future parking strategy.

Cheshire 2016: Structure Plan Alteration

Policy T7 deals with car parking. It states that:

“The management of car parking and its provision will be used as part of managing the demand for car travel. Maximum requirements for car parking provision in new development have been defined. Provision which is below the maximum requirement may be acceptable where the site has, or can be provided with, good access by alternative means of transport; in such cases, the developer will be required to make a commuted payment towards the provision of alternative means of transport.

Management of on-street car parking in the surrounding area may also be necessary.

All development should provide sufficient and secure cycle parking”.

The policy goes on to state that within the Primary Town Centres of Crewe, Macclesfield and Northwich, existing car parking spaces will be managed to favour short stay parking.

Due cognisance needs to be given to these policies in any future parking strategy.