

## **Cabinet – 20 June 2007**

### **Draft Parking Strategy**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Anthony Harris - Transport

**Service Area:** Neighbourhood Services

**Wards:** All

**Forward Plan:** Yes

#### **Summary of Report**

The Parking Strategy outlines proposals to change parking policies, provision and management to meet the future needs of the Borough. As well as focusing on car parking, the strategy also covers parking by other modes, including cycles, powered two wheelers and lorry parking, together with special parking requirements for groups such as the mobility impaired. The scope is wide ranging and has been developed following a comprehensive review of the following key drivers:

- Provision and need for parking facilities in Walsall town and district centres;
- National, regional and local policy context;
- The role of park and ride facilities;
- How regeneration objectives and development proposals impact upon future parking provision and management;
- Accessibility and congestion issues;
- Parking management and enforcement;
- The council's role in providing and managing parking facilities;
- Special parking requirements (disabled, cyclists powered two wheelers, lorries and park and ride facilities)
- Standards to which parking should be provided in new developments

The draft parking strategy and standards reports have already been developed with input from key stakeholders, however to ensure successful implementation of the strategy wider consultation is now necessary.

Given the wide ranging remit of the parking strategy and standards report, copies will be available in the member's library to enable full consideration. However in summary the documents address the impact and implications of the



key drivers identified above. The key points of the draft strategy are attached as an appendix.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the draft parking strategy be approved for progression to the formal consultation stage;
2. That the draft parking standards report be approved for progression to the formal consultation stage.

### **Resource and Legal Considerations**

Fundamental to any parking strategy is the need for efficient parking enforcement to ensure that on and off street parking supply is managed effectively. All Highway Authorities must adopt Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) as a requirement of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and will be implemented in Walsall during 2008. The parking strategy will assist with forming the enforcement priorities necessary for the delivery of DPE objectives.

Clearly there will be financial implications arising from implementation of the parking strategy particularly in relation to DPE, investment priorities for the parking service, park and ride, and regeneration opportunities. The financial impact will be managed within existing budgets for DPE and parking service investment priorities. Other high profile schemes such as park and ride and regeneration opportunities will need to be considered on a case by case basis with full cost benefit analysis forming an integral element of the decision making process. The strategy will provide the framework for future provision and management of parking facilities within the borough but recognises the financial implications, opportunities and constraints.

### **Citizen Impact**

The Traffic Management Act 2004 requires the Council to manage congestion both within the borough and the wider West Midlands region. An integral element of managing congestion is the long term sustainable management of parking.

Future parking provision and management within Walsall must take into account national and regional planning and transport policies but should also complement local land use and regeneration policies. The availability of parking affects the level of car use and therefore the level of traffic congestion on our streets. High levels of traffic result in pollution and other adverse effects on the environment and economy. Since it is not possible to provide enough road space to accommodate all the private cars that seek to use the Borough's roads ways have to be found to increase usage of alternatives to the car, including public transport, cycling and walking. This is particularly important with regard to commuter trips where the level of provision for park and ride and normal long stay parking will have an impact on the level of car commuting. The strategy recommends that park and ride facilities be developed through collaboration



with neighbouring authorities in order to meet the regional aims for congestion management.

National guidance requires local authorities to ensure that levels of parking provided in association with developments will promote sustainable transport choices and not require developers to provide more spaces than they themselves wish, other than in exceptional circumstances. Some areas of the Borough have good access by public transport and potential for this to be enhanced further.

In such areas, the level of car parking provision required should be lower than in areas where public transport access is much more limited. A proposed approach to engaging developers in a dialogue regarding the provision of parking in new developments and a mechanism for determining the level of parking to be permitted is set out in the parking standards report.

The strategy recognises the need to review and rationalise existing parking facilities in order to meet the needs of the community. Existing parking facilities are poorly located and have deteriorated over many years due to the low levels of investment. The strategy outlines the need for investment and strategic relocation of parking facilities possibly through the development of public / private sector partnerships.

The future viability and promotion of main centres is vital to the economic regeneration of the West Midlands. Over the next decade, ambitious proposals will be delivered that will see the town centre revitalised, canal-side areas reborn and acres of derelict land rejuvenated. An appropriate parking strategy will help support regeneration of Walsall town and district centres while also assisting in reducing the level of car use, encouraging sustainable transport choices and improving highway safety.

Parking provision should reflect wider community objectives; facilities should be safe and secure with appropriate provision for people with disabilities. The development of this Parking Strategy has been based on a comprehensive understanding of the parking supply and demand within Walsall.

Stakeholder input was invaluable in the preparation of the draft strategy, however to ensure the successful adoption and implementation of the strategy wider consultation is now necessary.

It is proposed that a formal 12 week period of consultation is entered into followed by a 4 week evaluation and consolidation period. The final draft will then be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

## **Community Safety**

Community safety and the perception of community safety can be influenced through the provision and operation of parking facilities. The role of parking attendants employed to undertake both enforcement and security roles can be seen as a reassuring presence in the community. This role will evolve through the Council's development and subsequent operation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement leading to a highly visible presence across the borough.



Safe, secure and accessible parking is vital to the attractiveness and viability of town centres. The council will continue to work with private sector operators and its partners across the West Midlands to encourage a consistent approach to the supply and management of parking within centres.

The parking strategy details key areas for investment specifically designed to improve safety and security of parking facilities.

### **Environmental Impact**

The parking strategy is aimed at contributing to reductions in traffic congestion. This will deliver environmental improvements both in terms of reduced air pollution and improvement to the visual street scene.

### **Performance and Risk Management Issues**

Failure to demonstrate the development and implementation of parking policies that contribute to the management of traffic congestion could lead to an intervention order by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act.

The strategy makes recommendations for the development of benchmarking indicators in order to measure and drive improvement in the Council's parking service.

### **Equality Implications**

Specific elements of the strategy deal with improving access to services and facilities for mobility impaired users of parking facilities. The strategy recommends improvements to the ratio and location of disabled parking bays in both on and off street facilities.

### **Vision 2008**

A key priority in the Council's Vision for 2008 is to make it easier for people to get around. The application of a comprehensive parking strategy will assist with delivering this aim.

Reductions in air and noise pollution can be realised through the strategic management of parking. This will be achieved through the reduction in traffic congestion currently experienced as a result of inappropriate parking and parking policies. This will help to ensure a clean and green borough.

The priority to strengthen the local economy will be delivered through the strategic implementation of parking policies that consider the local economy and its needs.



## **Background Papers**

1. Draft Parking Strategy 2006
2. Draft Parking Standards Report 2006

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20 June 2007

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20 June 2007



## **PARKING STRATEGY KEY POINTS**

The development of a comprehensive parking strategy has been necessary in order to shape the framework for the future provision, management and maintenance of parking facilities. At present many aspects of parking are considered in isolation, the strategy will ensure a more considered approach is adopted. Whilst the strategy is wide ranging there are a few key elements that will be at the forefront of change and clearly evident to all.

### Revised parking standards

This will see a new approach to parking provision for new developments. The future level of parking provision will be more closely reviewed in light of accessibility to public transport but retain the flexibility to assist with regeneration development where appropriate for the benefit of the borough as a whole.

### Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE)

A parking strategy is a key requirement of our application for DPE powers. The strategy details how and why our enforcement priorities will be set and delivered in order to minimise traffic congestion.

### Strategic location of town centre parking facilities

The strategy will be used as the framework for how we manage the provision of future parking facilities. This will ensure we maximise the benefit of parking facilities whilst actively contributing to the delivery of the network management duty.

### District centre parking

The strategy recommends changes to the management of parking within the district centres. This will benefit and support ongoing development and regeneration.

### Formal policy for dealing with disabled parking

Currently the provision of disabled parking is poor and uncoordinated. The strategy formalises our proposals for the delivery of significant improvement.

### Park and Ride

The strategy recognises the benefit park and ride can deliver and outlines how we intend to evaluate further where and how this could be delivered for the benefit of both Walsall and the wider West Midlands Region.



## ACTION PLAN AND TARGETS

### Delivering the Parking Strategy

This proposed Parking Strategy sets out objectives that the strategy should deliver and includes a number of recommended actions. This section summarises the recommended actions that should be undertaken to deliver the parking strategy and suggests a broad time frame for their completion.

It is proposed that the Parking Strategy should be reviewed annually in conjunction with a yearly report of the Parking Management Service. The review should report on the extent to which targets are being achieved, problems are being overcome, new problems are emerging and new actions required. These annual reviews will provide the context for the next main review of the strategy. This is expected to be undertaken in 2010 as part of the preparation of LTP3. However, if formal guidance on parking is incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy (PSS11) before that date, or new parking policies are introduced through the WMLTP APR process, it will be necessary to consider the implications which could include the need for an earlier review of the strategy, particularly in relation to parking standards for new development.

The objectives and targets for the Parking Strategy are listed in **Table 12.1** on the following pages.



## TABLE 12 1: PARKING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Recommended Action
<b>Short Term Actions 0–2 Years</b>
Continue to encourage the provision of high quality short stay parking facilities in conjunction with the proposed Tesco superstore and Waterfront developments
Develop a comprehensive Travel Plan for council staff as a leading example to other businesses in the town, including a prioritisation framework for staff permits, permit charges based on need, improved management to maximise utilisation, better Travel Plan services and partnership working to improve public transport
Improve car park direction signage on all radial routes into the town centre
Introduce a Parking Guidance System (PGS) for Walsall town centre using a Variable Message System (VMS) on main radial routes to provide information on the availability of spaces on main town centre car parks
Provide up to date information on the council's website, at car parks and on town centre display maps regarding the location of publicly available car parks, number of spaces, permitted length of stay and parking charges
Ensure new publicly available car parks are available for use by visitors to the centre as a whole and have a charging regime that is consistent with other car parks in the district centre
Investigate establishing a holiday coach facility on Wolverhampton Street or Stafford Street
Investigate the introduction of small pilot park and ride facilities as part of bus showcase schemes

<b>Short Term Actions 0–2 Years</b>
Investigate the possibility of providing a park and ride facility in partnership with Centro and in association with major public transport projects such as Midland Metro and Bus Rapid Transit
Provide appropriate enforcement of limited waiting restrictions in district centres
Work with landowners and operators of private car parks to bring about shared use parking, particularly in Bloxwich and Darlaston
Develop an Asset Management Plan for council operated car parks
Consider identifying some town centre long stay car parks as staff only whilst ensuring that sufficient publicly available parking is provided
Increase long stay charges by approximately 20%, to encourage a more even usage profile between the public and private sectors whilst supporting wider transport objectives
Introduce restrictions on length of stay on all council operated car parks close to the main shopping area of district centres and review charging for car parks in district centres once the costs of operating an appropriate parking enforcement regime in the district centres is known



**Short Term Actions 0–2 Years**

Identify priorities for improving car park security and access (for all users) and develop a properly funded investment programme to improve the quality of car parks:

- Investigate the need to improve safety and security at all of the council owned car parks with regard to boundary treatment, lighting, cleanliness, usage, surveillance, and pedestrian and vehicular access and signage
- Undertake a detailed lighting survey to determine which car parks needs improving in order to achieve a standard of 40 lux or better

Provide improved information on the location and charging regime of car parks on the council website, at car parks and within main centres

Provide information on the car park service standards and contacts at car parks

Regularly assess whether alternative payment systems offer value for money in relation to car park security and management

Formally adopt a series of indicators to enable benchmarking of the parking service

Consult with groups with special parking requirements (mobility impaired, cyclists, motor-cyclists, etc.) to identify measures to meet those needs

Establish a programme to ensure that an appropriate number of disabled parking spaces are provided at suitable locations in Walsall town centre, district centres and local centres

Identify accessible on-street parking spaces for blue badge holders outside their residence where there is no other suitable parking available

Provide secure parking for powered two wheelers in Walsall town centre and the district centres

Work with its partners to have the issue of lorry parking addressed at a regional level, with a view to establishing a strategic lorry parking network

Examine the prospect of implementing a small scale park and ride pilot project that utilises shared parking facilities close to high frequency bus routes to the town centre

Continue to work with partners to investigate the development of park and ride schemes in association with potential major public transport proposals, such as Midland Metro and Bus Rapid Transit



<b>Short Term Actions 0–2 Years</b>
Investigate funding streams for regeneration and enhancement to identify possible opportunities to improve parking facilities in residential and commercial areas
Review maximum parking standards and approach to the application of parking standards for new developments in relation to recommendation set out in the Walsall Parking Standards Report
Parking for the mobility impaired, parents with young children, bicycles and motorcycles should be provided for at or above the recommended standards to provide accessibility for all
Transport Appraisals and Travel Plans should be used in a consistent manner in determining the maximum level of car parking appropriate at larger sites and scope of planning agreements.
Ensure resources are available to effectively apply updated parking standards and promotion of Travel Plans in new developments.
Maintain and make accessible information on parking standards and design specifications for car parking, cycle parking and parking for powered two wheelers, including access, security and charging mechanisms

<b>Medium Term Actions 2-5 Years</b>
Work with the private sector to deliver new high quality short stay parking facilities in the Upper Bridge Street area where there is an existing deficiency
Continue to encourage car sharing and provide priority spaces for car sharers at discount rates
Allocate at least 3% of publicly available on street car park spaces in Walsall town centre as disabled spaces and undertake consultation to better allocate an increased number of disabled parking spaces at a range of locations close to the core shopping area and other appropriate locations across the town centre
Where, visitors and commuters to district centres park in residential streets, introduce residents parking schemes where necessary to safeguard the amenities of local residents
Continue working with partners to improve public transport services serving the town centre, particularly gaps in service provision that may be identified through the Staff Travel Plan



<b>Medium Term Actions 2-5 Years</b>
Review impact of new limited waiting restrictions and costs of enforcement twelve months after introduction and consider the need to introduce charging on council car parks
Allocate at least 3% of publicly available spaces in district centres as disabled spaces and undertake consultation to better allocate disabled parking spaces at a range of locations close to the core shopping areas
Where, visitors and commuters to district centres park in residential streets, introduce residents parking schemes where necessary to safeguard the amenities of local residents
Adopt a comprehensive Travel Plan for council staff as a leading example to other businesses in the town, including a prioritisation framework for staff permits, permit charges based on need, improved management to maximise utilisation, better Travel Plan services and partnership working to improve public transport
Adopt a properly funded car park maintenance regime that reflects the whole life care of the assets and ensures a high level of serviceability on an on-going basis with regard to lining, signing, lighting and cleanliness
Review parking levels on all council car parks and consider the need to retain car parks if their size is out of proportion to usage
Investigate the possibility of the council contributing to the cost of existing businesses providing cycle parking and associated facilities, using the LTP and other funding sources