



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Report and recommendations arising from a
review by the
Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group**

Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

December 2015

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Executive Summary

The number of passenger using rail services has doubled over the last 20 years and this growth in demand shows no signs of abating with travel from Wokingham increasing by nearly 6% over the last 12 months with only some of the new housing stock occupied. Planned enhancements to rail services, most notably from Twyford, are likely to increase the demand for travel further.

Parking is limited at stations and, with the exception of Winnersh Triangle, the capacity of car parks has largely remained unchanged. Railway owned car parks exist only at Crowthorne, Wokingham, Twyford and Wargrave with the responsibility for their operation being with the train operating company. No railway owned car parks exist at Winnersh, Winnersh Triangle or Earley stations. The shortfall in station parking and the charges therein results in commuter parking in residential roads. While this has been a particular problem in Twyford, it is now replicated at other locations. Planned additional housing in Wokingham Borough and in Bracknell Forest is considered likely to increase pressures on parking near railway stations.

Policy direction including that in the Borough's Local Transport Plan encourages modal shift from cars to more sustainable transport including rail. A 3 pronged approach to the problems posed by commuter parking is suggested: alternative provision of access to stations by cycle, bus or parking provision; effective enforcement of restrictions by the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement; and, finally, to continue to be consistent in the application of parking restrictions. We suggest and recommend that some form of metered parking on public roads near railway stations should be considered.

There are no easy answers to providing more parking at or near railway stations but, where practical, car parking capacity should be enhanced. Recommendations are made for the 6 railway stations in the Borough plus Crowthorne as to how some additional parking could be achieved. Twyford is both the most difficult to identify solutions for and the most critical that solutions are implemented if that station is to fulfil its full potential. It is recommended that all parties meet to identify possible solutions.

The report accepts the important role of connecting buses if overall journey times can be competitive and connectional reliability achieved. We had no evidence that a "Park & Ride" solution was practical or operated successfully anywhere in the UK. Consequently it is recommended that professional consultancy advice is obtained on this concept. Finally, it is recommended that Wokingham Borough should be indifferent as to whether users of the expanded car park at Winnersh Triangle travel by bus or train and charges for car parking should be the same for both bus and train passengers.

List of recommendations.

<p>Recommendation on pricing of Council operated car parks (7.5)</p> <p>Council run car parks near railway stations primarily required to service local needs should have a time restriction or a pricing mechanism to discourage their use by commuters.</p>
<p>Recommendations on Parking Provision (8.6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support the decision to seek to implement CPE. • That the Council considers some form of metered parking in selected roads near railway stations which are used for commuter parking where road safety issues allow.
<p>Recommendations on Active Transport (9.5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council should continue to work with the TOCs to increase and improve cycle storage at all stations. • That the suggested cycle routes from Woodley and Charvil to Twyford Station should be progressed.
<p>Recommendation (10.7)</p> <p>The Council should maintain a watching brief on Smart Card development.</p>
<p>Recommendations at Crowthorne Station (11.9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council requests that Bracknell Forest Council considers removing the 2 hour time limit on 16 spaces in the car park on Dukes Ride at the entrance to Wellington Business Park. • That GWR explores with Wellington College the possible availability of a small part of Derby Field to expand the station car park at Crowthorne. • That Bracknell Forest Council is asked to work with GWR to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Crowthorne Station.
<p>Recommendations at Wokingham Station (11.13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That SWT is asked to ensure that the design for partial decking in the Wokingham station car park allows further expansion. • That the Council considers, in conjunction with the bus operators, the viability and reliability of through bus services from Arborfield to Twyford Station via Wokingham. • That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Wokingham Station.
<p>Recommendations at Winnersh Station (11.16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council explores the possibility of a joint use car park for Forest School and the station and, were that possible, how parking would be managed. • That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Winnersh Station.
<p>Recommendations at Winnersh Triangle Station (11.22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council equalises charges for the car park at Winnersh Triangle for both bus and train users.

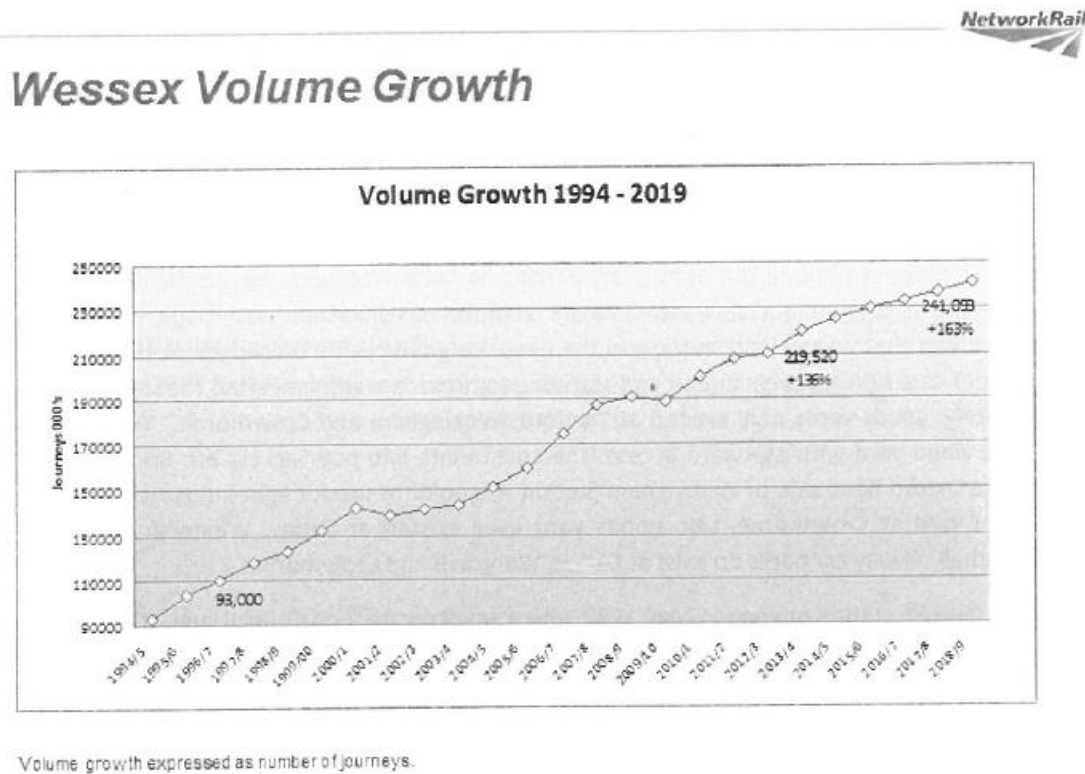
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Winnersh Triangle Station.
<p>Recommendations at Earley Station (11.27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council works with Earley and Woodley town councils to identify options to increase the availability of car parking near Earley Station including some form of metered parking on selected roads. • That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Earley Station.
<p>Recommendation at Wargrave Station (11.32)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the Council, with Wargrave Parish Council, examines the option of removing the double yellow lines on Station Road between the station parking area and the public parking.
<p>Recommendations at Twyford Station (11.41)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That all parties including the Council, GWR and Twyford Parish Council work together to ensure that residents of the Borough are able to access rail services at Twyford. • That the Council seeks professional consultancy advice on the practicality of Park & Ride services and connecting buses to serve Twyford. • That Bracknell Forest Council is asked what plans, if any, they have for connecting buses from their new housing in the Binfield area.

Introduction.

1.0 The suggestion for a scrutiny review was submitted by Cllr Lindsay Ferris primarily to consider the problems near Twyford Station where commuter parking has been an issue for a number of years. It was agreed that the scope of the review would be widened to consider commuter parking issues at all six railway stations within the Borough as well as Crowthorne Station which lies just outside the Borough boundary in Bracknell Forest but where the parking issues are in Wokingham Borough.

Background.

2.1 Demand for Rail Travel. Demand for rail travel has roughly doubled since privatisation in 1995 with the growth in demand showing no signs of abating, growing at about 3% to 4% per year. The growth in the demand for rail travel is illustrated by the graph below which shows Wessex Volume Growth, the Wessex Route being basically the lines into Waterloo Station.



2.2 Planned Enhancements of Train Services. As a result of the burgeoning demand for rail travel, plans exist for the enhancement of services. Better quality trains, journey time reductions, extra seating in trains, frequency enhancements and additional journey opportunities are all expected to further drive demand for rail travel and for access to railway stations. These enhancements are described in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1 Services through Twyford to Reading and Paddington. Services through Twyford will see significant change over the next 6 years. Twyford already enjoys a very popular peak service with fast services to Paddington that will remain in the timetable. There is also a 4 trains per hour (tph) off peak service between Reading and Paddington. Electric services should begin in May 2017 with a revised timetable, followed by the full Crossrail service through Twyford to Reading in December 2019 with another timetable recast. Although Crossrail will offer through services under London, as it is expected to be an all stations service the principal effect, as far as Twyford is concerned, will be to transform the eastern connections from Paddington. GWR expects to operate a 2 tph semi-fast residual service (to complement 2 tph Crossrail services) from December 2019.

2.2.2 The Western Rail Link to Heathrow. The Western Rail Link is expected to open in December 2021 to include 2 tph calling at Twyford. There is to be a further consultation on the Western Rail Link in February 2016.

2.2.3 The Henley-on-Thames Branch. GWR has announced that the branch will operate as a self-contained electrified shuttle service from December 2017 with the withdrawal of the through services from Henley to Paddington (2 up in the morning, 3 down in the evening). It is planned to increase the branch frequency to 2 tph (so allowing connections into the GWR semi-fast residual service) and retain stops on all trains at Wargrave and Shiplake if the timetable allows.

2.2.4 Reading to Gatwick Airport. GWR plans to double the frequency of the Reading to Gatwick Airport service to 2 tph from May 2017, to complement the current hourly stopping service from Reading to Redhill.

2.2.5 Reading to Waterloo.

2.2.5.1 Following work to upgrade the traction power and extend the London bound platform at Wokingham Station, 10 car trains are to be introduced on these services during 2017. Platforms will not be extended at Earley, Winnersh Triangle and Winnersh Stations with Selective Door Opening applying. These 10 car trains will have, in total, 18 more seats than the current 8 car trains as they have 2+2 seating rather than the current 2+3 seating. Consequently these trains will offer significantly more capacity, with train capacity defined as the number of standard class seats plus the room for standing where the allowance is 4 standing passengers per square metre.

2.2.5.2 The recently published (August 2015) Wessex Route Study which has now been 'adopted', meaning confirmed by the rail regulator - the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), states that the franchise specification process will determine the services providing best value in 2019 but suggests that Wokingham, during the off peak, will be served by 2 'fast' trains per hour via Richmond that "will be approximately 4 minutes faster than now" plus 2 'semi-fast' service per hour running via the Hounslow Loop which will form the services calling at Earley, Winnersh Triangle and Winnersh.

2.2.5.3 As currently planned, journey times will remain uncompetitive and slow compared with those from Twyford. This will be represented in Wokingham Borough Council's response to the Department of Transport's consultation, issued in November 2015, on the replacement South Western Franchise which is due to commence in mid-2017.

2.3 Housing Numbers.

2.3.1 The Council's current Local Plan concentrates new housing in 4 Strategic Development Locations, 2 of which are around Wokingham town adding some 4,000 homes or about 12,000 to its population. Although the rate of completion has been fairly slow so far, this rate will pick up significantly over the next few years with well over 1,000 completions expected annually. The SHMA allocation for the Borough for the period

beyond 2026 is 856 per year. Some of these new residents will wish to travel by train adding to the demand for rail travel and for parking at or near railway stations.

2.3.2 Our neighbouring authority, Bracknell Forest, will build about 1,200 homes in Crowthorne with the remaining 6,000 or so in an arc round the north of Bracknell adding some 18,000 residents. Again, this is expected to add demand at adjacent stations for travel and for parking. This new housing in the Binfield area is likely to add to the pressures on Twyford Station as services from that station will offer shorter journey times, better frequencies and greater connectivity compared with services from Bracknell.

2.4 Responsibility for Stations.

2.4.1 Ownership of railway land is vested in Network Rail as the infrastructure company. However, Network Rail only manages some of the largest stations such as Reading, Waterloo and Paddington. For other stations, the Train Operating Company (TOC) that runs most services at a station is normally appointed the Station Facilities Operator (SFO). For stations in Wokingham Borough, GWR is the SFO for Twyford, Wargrave and Crowthorne (in Bracknell Forest.) SWT is the SFO for Wokingham, Winnersh, Winnersh Triangle and Earley. The SFO is granted a station operating lease by Network Rail which includes station buildings, platforms, car parks and non-operational railway land.

2.4.2 The SFO has the responsibility for operating any station car parks and for developing the railway business. Significant changes have to be agreed with Network Rail. Where a SFO wishes to improve a station forecourt by, for example, pedestrianisation, any parking places lost have to be added back or permission sought from the ORR to allow a reduction in parking places.

2.4.3 Station car park income forms part of the financial projections when franchises are awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT).

2.4.4 The 'station' car parks at Winnersh Triangle and Earley are not on railway land and are therefore not operated by SWT but are Wokingham Borough Council run car parks.

2.5 Car Parking Capacity and Charges. A table showing the current capacities at station car parks, including those at Winnersh Triangle and Earley, across the Borough is as follows:

Stations in Wokingham Borough and Crowthorne

Station	TOC	Usage	Interchange	Car Parking	Peak Cost	Cycle Storage
Crowthorne	GWR	303,816	Nil	42	£2.70	29
Earley	SWT	639,888	Nil	46	£4.00	67
Twyford	GWR	1,369,126	638,123	324	£6.10	c100
Wargrave	GWR	95,910	Nil	30	Free	2
Winnersh	SWT	520,922	Nil	0	n/a	0
Winnersh Triangle	SWT	490,878	Nil	390	£4.00	5
Wokingham	SWT	2,344,598	164,264	414	£7.50	80

Notes:

1. Figures are entries and exits combined for 2014/15, the most recent data available from the ORR.
2. No station is gated so there may be an element of ticketless travel.
3. Station car parks at Earley and Winnersh Triangle are operated by Wokingham Borough Council.

Terms of Reference.

3.0 The Terms of Reference for the Review are at Annex A. In summary they are as follows:

- To consider the desirability of car parking keeping pace with the demand for rail travel and how that might be provided.
- To consider the balance of parking restrictions and their enforcement when weighed against encouraging modal shift from cars.
- To consider feeder buses to railways stations and, in particular, orbital bus services as suggested in Wokingham Borough Council's adopted Park & Ride Strategy.
- To enquire on progress towards the targets for active transport in LTP3.
- To consider and understand the effect of commuter parking on residents near railway stations.

Meetings.

4.0 The Task & Finish Group met 8 times to consider our work. One of these meetings comprised a tour of the 7 stations and their surrounding roads to be able to see and assess the problems of commuter parking for ourselves. This tour was on a Wednesday not at half term (as demand for parking is greatest from Mondays through to Thursdays) and, fortuitously, on a wet morning which minimises cycling and increases the demand for car parking.

4.1 The Group took evidence from relevant Council Officers and the Executive Member for Highways and Transport. The Group also met with Tom Pierpoint, the Regional Development Manager of GWR and Richard Tyndall, transport consultant to the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP. Evidence was also taken from a number of residents and the Henley Branch User Group and the Wargrave User Group. We are grateful to all who gave their time to discuss this issue with us.

4.3 Letters were also written to the MPs for Bracknell, Maidenhead and Wokingham advising them of the review, outlining changes affecting stations within their constituencies, acknowledging that the task of addressing the problems lay primarily with the local authority but, nevertheless, invited input and views. John Redwood MP responded with a considered and thought provoking reply and that is reproduced at Annex B. Theresa May MP also replied stating, inter alia, that "Improving car parking facilities at Twyford is vital.." A copy of this letter is at Annex C.

Policies.

5.0 We explored what Government, Department for Transport, Network Rail, Thames Valley Berkshire LEP and Wokingham Borough Council policies were in place to give guidance on the provision of commuter parking.

5.1 **John Redwood MP** informed us that the Government had amended parking policy and had abandoned the idea to restrict parking provision as a way of reducing car usage. The Government recognised that cars are generally not in use and when not in use, these cars should not be on the highway as road capacity is generally restricted and highway space should not be used for parking. The Government is also committed to encouraging modal shift to rail but parking at or near railway stations needs to be provided to help encourage this.

5.2 **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** states that *“plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people.”* and *“The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice of how they travel.”*

5.3 **Thames Valley Berkshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan** states that *“the transport and communications infrastructure...is therefore essential (and it is necessary) to invest in it and also to encourage local sustainable transport networks that promote active travel on foot, on bicycle and on public transport.”*

5.4 **Network Rail** in its work on the Western Route Study with the final report published in August 2015 specifically excluded car parking provision from that study (with much protest from local authority representatives attending Stakeholder briefings) merely giving the view that *“car parking provision at or close to stations will need to keep pace with growing rail demand, as will highway access to stations. Good integration and co-ordination with local transport such as...bus...services and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists are equally important if rail travel is to achieve its maximum potential.”*

5.5 **Wokingham Borough Council’s** policies are contained in our adopted Local Transport Plan 3 which covers the period to 2026 and states that *“We will encourage alternative modes of travel to the use of private vehicles....and reduce the quantities of CO2 produced”, “We will increase opportunities to walk or cycle to work”, “To work with bus and rail operators to improve public transport services to increase their overall use”* and quite simply *“Encouraging modal shift.”*

Addressing the Terms of Reference.

6.0 In addressing the terms of reference, we decided to address them in a slightly different order as follows:

- To consider and understand the effects of commuter parking on residents near railway stations.
- To consider the balance of parking restrictions and their enforcement when weighed against encouraging modal shift from cars.
- To enquire on progress towards the targets for active transport in LTP 3.
- To consider feeder buses to railway stations and, in particular, orbital bus services as suggested in Wokingham Borough's Park & Ride Strategy.
- To consider the desirability of the provision of car parking keeping pace with the demand for rail travel and how that might be provided.

6.1 Where we refer to specific stations these comments are, for the most part, concentrated under the last heading.

To consider and understand the effects of commuter parking on residents near railway stations.

7.0 We met with various residents on Wednesday 4th November who described the problems resulting from cars parked in residential roads that were not designed to have lines of cars along them. This appeared to be all day commuter parking, shopper parking, cars waiting to meet people from trains and, in the case of Crowthorne, it is suspected that roads are being used for some long term car parking for people using Gatwick Airport. Some cars obstruct pavements (which is addressed by our Parking on Verges and Pavements Policy). The problem is perhaps more apparent with open plan estates where parking in full view of residents' houses is considered a particular nuisance. But it is the road safety aspects that cause most concern and we realise that this perception of risk is subjective but, nevertheless, we accept that unconstrained parking adds to the risk in residential roads.

7.1 We also recognise that there is a temptation on behalf of motorists to opt for on-street parking to avoid parking charges but this is not universal, we have seen motorists touring the station car park in Twyford vainly seeking a spare parking place and many other car parks at stations are effectively full. In such circumstances, potential rail users have little choice other than to find on-street parking if they are using cars to reach railway stations and wish to continue their journeys by rail.

7.2 We were also advised of the situation in Wargrave, but this may apply elsewhere, where Station Road is used for commuter parking but is also the only road in lower Wargrave where all day parking is possible without paying parking charges. The parish church in Wargrave Church is also on Station Road and weekday weddings or funerals result in parking chaos.

7.3 We heard of the situation in Twyford, which may also apply elsewhere, where commuters are using car parks such as the Polehampton car park for all day parking because of the availability of spaces and it being cheaper than the station car park, to the detriment of other users. We recommend that Council car parks specifically designed to service local needs such as shopping should either have time restriction or a pricing mechanism to discourage their use by commuters.

7.4 The membership of this Task & Finish Group was drawn from members from across the Borough who brought their own knowledge and experiences of the issues.

7.5 **Recommendation on pricing of Council operated car parks.** Council run car parks near railway stations primarily required to service local needs should have a time restriction or a pricing mechanism to discourage their use by commuters.

To consider the balance of parking restrictions and their enforcement when weighed against encouraging modal shift.

8.0 The relevant policies quoted above all suggest that modal shift from car to more sustainable transport is to be encouraged. In this case, we are considering transfer to rail and we note that plans exist to have electric passenger services operating on all our rail routes with electric trains being pollution free at the point of use.

8.1 We do not interpret this wish to encourage modal shift as meaning a free for all when it comes to parking on residential roads. Instead we consider that there needs to be a 3 pronged approach: alternative provision of access to stations, a means of effective enforcement of parking and, finally, consistent application of parking restrictions where it is deemed necessary to impose them. These will be considered in more detail in general terms and, later, how these might be applied at individual stations.

8.2 **Alternative provision of access to stations.** The provision of access to stations covers all modes of travel including improved walking routes with enhanced lighting, improved and new cycle routes to station with secure storage facilities of cycles, feeder or connecting bus services and the provision of more car parking space where it is practical and cost effective to do so. All the railway stations, with the exception of Winnersh Triangle which opened in 1987, were constructed in the early to mid-19th century. Consequently they pre-date motor cars by some distance and urban development makes parking provision challenging. This is most acute at Winnersh Station which has no dedicated station parking. A Park & Ride facility remote from a station may have its place, particularly if providing additional parking at the station is difficult to achieve. However, we are unaware of any operational “Park & Ride & Ride” elsewhere in the UK but this concept is explored in greater detail later in this report. We also explored with the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP possible funding of parking schemes to be told that the essential question to be addressed is “how does it encourage economic growth?” For any proposal to be considered for funding by the LEP, this needs to be answered positively.

8.3 **Effective Enforcement of Parking.** The enforcement of parking in Wokingham Borough is currently the responsibility of Thames Valley Police who do not prioritise this task. We consider that a more effective means of parking enforcement is necessary and that the decision to apply for the authority to implement Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is both correct and inevitable. We understand that CPE will take at least 18 months to implement.

8.4 **Consistent application of Parking Restrictions.** Commuter parking on residential roads almost inevitably brings calls for parking restrictions to prevent or curtail that parking. As parking restrictions have an implementation cost, have to be enforced to be effective, urbanise the street scene and may penalise residents in their own roads we consider that any further parking restrictions need to continue to be implemented on a formal objective basis Borough-wide to ensure consistency of application. This objective basis should take account of all the factors including road width, traffic, demand for parking, the off road parking available to residents and the general street scene and be made against a

presumption that parking restriction should not be applied except where considered necessary.

8.5 Metered Parking near Railway Stations. We consider that it is inevitable that rail commuters using cars to access railway stations will seek to use free on road parking if that is available and convenient rather than pay sums ranging from £7.50 at Wokingham to £2.70 per day (peak charges) at Crowthorne to use station car parks. Any shortfall in parking capacity in station car parks will also drive motorists to then seek on road parking. We consider that it would not be unreasonable to introduce metered parking on certain roads where parking is prevalent and where road safety issues permit its continuance. Charges could reflect the distance from the station and the charges in the appropriate station car parks. Following the introduction of CPE, regular enforcement of parking restrictions will be introduced; complementary to that could be regulation of metered parking in certain roads. We consider that this would give added legitimacy to this parking provision as well as a funding stream for enhancing parking provision.

8.6 Recommendations on Parking Provision.

- We support the decision to seek to implement CPE.
- That the Council considers some form of metered parking in selected roads near railway stations which are used for commuter parking where road safety issues allow.

To enquire on progress towards the targets for active transport in LTP 3.

9.0 The Local Transport Plan is a statutory requirement and is the third such plan produced, hence LTP 3. This covers the same time period as the Borough's Local Plan that is 2011 – 2026 and include an active travel goal as follows: *"To work with partners to promote walking and cycling as a health-enhancing physical activity for all our residents through providing:*

- *Connected, convenient, safe and signed pedestrian networks across the Borough to enhance existing networks.*
- *New cycleways integrated with the existing cycle network.*
- *Improved cycle parking at stations, businesses and schools."*

9.1 We heard how Wokingham Borough had been successful with bids to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund which had helped fund the provision of cycle lanes on the A329 Reading – Bracknell corridor complementing other significant cycle lanes such as that along Lower Earley Way.

9.2 Provision of additional cycle storage, using double stack racks, has been achieved in conjunction with GWR and SWT at Twyford and at Wokingham Stations with match funding achieving early installation.

9.3 The Borough Council prepares Travel Plans for new homes in the SDLs to inform new residents of the availability of public transport as well as walking and cycling opportunities. Measuring cycle usage objectively is difficult but our modal share for cycle use, in a Borough with one of the highest ratios of car ownership, is about 7% compared to a 2% national average.

9.4 We accept that success in encouraging active transport is difficult to measure but note that the layout of the SDLs is designed to encourage this. We consider that the aim should be to further improve secure cycle storage facilities at railway stations and improve, where practical, the access routes to them. Twyford Village Partnership has suggested that the Borough's aspiration to have a cycle route from Woodley to Twyford Station should be progressed together with another route from Charvil to Twyford Station. We would, in principle, support these suggestions.

9.5 Recommendations on Active Transport.

- That the Council should continue to work with the TOCs to increase and improve cycle storage at all stations.
- That the suggested cycle routes from Woodley and Charvil to Twyford Station should be progressed.

To consider feeder buses to railway stations and, in particular, the orbital bus services suggested in Wokingham Borough's Park & Ride Strategy.

10.0 We note that events have moved on somewhat since the Terms of Reference were drafted and various strands of work are in progress seeking to introduce and improve bus services to stations, particularly Twyford. For example, a meeting took place with bus companies at Shute End towards the end of November to brief them on developments within the Borough and specifically on future train services from Twyford and to invite proposals for services.

10.1 The Borough's Park & Ride Strategy adopted in June 2013 stated that: *"Orbital bus services should be considered in the longer term, in order to connect destinations and interchange locations not linked by the main corridors. These services would provide better connections to interchange locations such as Twyford Station."* Two corridors were proposed for consideration:

- Reading Green Park Station (to open in 2018) through the south of the M4 SDL to Winnersh Triangle then to Twyford Station.
- Arborfield Garrison SDL through Wokingham to Twyford Station.

10.2 We consider that these were 'concept suggestions' with no details provided of routes, frequencies, hours of operation, stopping patterns, journey times or fares. That Park & Ride paper, we suggest, understated the problems of car parking at Twyford when it said *"The station already suffers from some car parking related problems"* suggesting *"a more immediate solution would be to increase the size of the existing car park."* As the challenge of significantly enhancing the capacity of the station car park seems to be intractable, the provision of some feeder bus service that could also serve as a Park & Ride service must be an urgent requirement to be addressed. We deal with possible services to stations in detail individually in the section following.

10.3 We were informed that the procedure to be followed by a private operator was that an application had to be made to operate a service to the Traffic Commissioners and, when approved, the operator had a legal requirement to provide that service with any variation needing approval by the Traffic Commissioners.

10.4 The Council can commission services and a tender process is used. Services can be part commercial, part supported with the Council 'buying' additional services, for example off peak services or to extend operating hours. Services can also be supported by developers' contribution (either S106 or CIL) and this may be used to introduce services to the SDLs.

10.5 We note that services have been introduced to the bus stops at Wokingham Station with the 121, 122, 128 and 145 calling (although the 145 has one return journey on Tuesdays only). We also note that the 126, 128 and 129 call at Winnersh and Twyford Stations but none of these services are specifically designed to meet trains and there is no element of through or smart ticketing. Were specific feeder buses to run to Twyford, GWR has indicated that some form of through ticketing should be possible.

10.6 **Smart Ticketing.** We consider that there should be no question of Wokingham Borough Council attempting to introduce its own smart ticketing system. We are aware of the significant expenditure by ITSO Ltd (and other organisations) with little tangible result. But the Council should keep abreast of developments in this field and seek to join a tried and tested system.

10.7 **Recommendation.** The Council should maintain a watching brief on Smart Card development.

To consider the desirability of car parking provision keeping pace with the demand for rail travel and how that might be provided.

11.0 We now turn to the fundamental question of car parking provision at or near railway stations and do not, for a moment, consider that this can be easily resolved. There are a host of factors making this difficult including the short term nature of TOC franchises, the availability of spare land in an urban environment, making a business case for any expansion of car parking and then finding the funding for it. Nevertheless solutions do need to be found, with Twyford Station being clearly the prime example of a station possibly failing “*to achieve its maximum potential*” – which is a mini-quotation from Network Rail’s Western Route Study.

11.1 We also note that parking provision is insufficient at all our railway stations now, with the possible exception of Winnersh Triangle, and that demand shortfall needs to be addressed first and only then should the further requirement for car parking keeping pace with the roughly 4% annual compound growth for rail travel apply. This really is a classic case of “predict and supply”, only here there is a reluctance to predict and an inability (in most cases) to supply.

11.2 We will now deal in turn with our railway stations in the following order – Crowthorne, Wokingham, Winnersh, Winnersh Triangle, Earley, Wargrave and last (but certainly not least) Twyford. We do not attempt to put forward exact solutions but merely indicate how we consider the problems at each station might be approached.

Crowthorne Station.

11.3 Crowthorne is a GWR operated station with an estimated usage figure for 2014/15 (the latest data available) of 303,816 Entries & Exits as published by the ORR. There is a small station car park on the west side of the station operated by GWR with 42 spaces with a peak charge of £2.70 with off peak charges from 11am. The train service is basically 1 tph provided by the Reading – Redhill stopping service with augmentation during the peak hours. Departures are about xx43 for Reading and xx19 for Guildford and Redhill.

11.4 The former station building with forecourt is on the east or Guildford side of the station but is leased by Network Rail to a beauty salon who have parking rights on the forecourt although they have to provide access to a car repair business which is also on leased Network Rail land. The beauty salon seems to have a relaxed attitude to ‘meeters and greeters’ using their car park to meet passengers from the Reading direction. We suggest that a watching brief is maintained on the future use of that land and the possibility, at some stage, that it could become available for station parking.

11.5 Bracknell Forest plans to add about 1,250 homes to Crowthorne all over a mile distant from the station. Wokingham Borough has approved a planning application for about 110 homes about the same distance from the station. As this is not within reasonable walking distance, this will add to the pressures on parking at Crowthorne Station. Surrey County Council commissioned Arup Ltd to carry out a North Downs Line Rail Study that identified that parking provision at Crowthorne needed to be enhanced and also

recommended that the stopping service from Guildford to Reading (including a Crowthorne stop) be increased to 2 tph. This remains an aspiration but may be delivered in future timetables.

11.6 The travel plan for the development of the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) site (with 1,000 homes) proposed increasing the frequency of the 122 bus service, that currently runs at irregular intervals between Wokingham via Finchampstead to Crowthorne, to an hourly service and extending it along Dukes Ride to Crowthorne Station although without any detail of where the bus might turn, sit and what trains it was meant to connect with. Therefore more work is required on this proposal by Bracknell Forest Council to make it a practical and useful connection.

11.7 One immediate relief lies in the hands of Bracknell Forest Council as there is currently a free to use car park with 27 spaces on Dukes Ride at the entrance to Wellington Business Park about 200m from the station which is primarily there to serve the Station Parade shops but has a 2 hour waiting limit (enforced by Bracknell Forest's CPE). There are rarely more than about 3 cars in that car park which suggests that it is underutilised. We suggest that the 'short side' with about 9 spaces plus 2 disabled bays could be maintained at the current 2 hour limit with the time restriction removed on the remaining 16 spaces. We recommend a formal request to Bracknell Forest Council for this change to be implemented.

11.8 Crowthorne Parish Council informed us that they understood that Wellington College may be minded to consider the transfer of part of what is known as Derby Field, adjacent to the existing station car park, to allow the possible expansion of capacity in the station car park. This could allow the access, currently close to the overbridge approach and at an awkward angle, could be resited but that is within Bracknell Forest. GWR indicated that they would be interested in negotiating directly with Wellington College on this and a contact has been forwarded to allow this to take place.

11.9 Recommendations at Crowthorne Station.

- That the Council requests that Bracknell Forest Council considers removing the 2 hour time limit on 16 spaces in the car park on Dukes Ride at the entrance to Wellington Business Park.
- That GWR explores with Wellington College the possible availability of a small part of Derby Field to expand the station car park at Crowthorne.
- That Bracknell Forest Council is asked to work with GWR to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Crowthorne Station.

Wokingham Station.

11.10 Wokingham is a SWT operated station with usage figures of 2,344,598 plus 164,264 interchangers and is thus the Borough's busiest station. Following the construction of the Station Link Road, the SWT run car park has a total capacity of 414 spaces with a £7.50 peak charge with off peak rates applying after 4pm. The train service is currently 2 tph to Waterloo, 1 tph to Gatwick Airport and 1 tph to Redhill combining to give a 4 tph service to and from Reading. There are additional services run during peak hours and GWR has

announced plans to run an extra service to Gatwick Airport per hour from May 2017 so raising the total to and from Reading to 5 tph. The car park at Wokingham is deemed to be at about capacity and SWT has announced that the car park will be decked in the latter half of 2016 to increase the capacity by about 100 spaces with the work being carried out under Permitted Development.

11.11 In his submission to us, John Redwood MP made some excellent points that parking at the station needs to keep pace with housing development around the town and, ideally, with the enhancement of the service to Gatwick Airport, secure long term parking should be available. We will make the point to SWT when we meet with their Stakeholder Manager that the planned decking should allow further expansion to be readily added on so allowing the capacity of the car park to be increased beyond the additional 100 places.

11.12 The possible 'orbital bus service' from the Arborfield SDL to Twyford Station could also serve Wokingham Station but this will need very careful scheduling to ensure reliability and reasonable connections at both Wokingham and Twyford Stations. Routeing of buses over the Barkham Road level crossing is likely to become more difficult with any frequency enhancement of the train service. Because of this we recommend consideration as to whether a through service is possible compared with decoupling the services to, say, an Arborfield to Wokingham service and a separate Wokingham – Twyford Station service.

11.13 Recommendations at Wokingham Station.

- That SWT is asked to ensure that the design for partial decking in the Wokingham station car park allows further expansion.
- That the Council considers, in conjunction with the bus operators, the viability and reliability of through bus services from Arborfield to Twyford Station via Wokingham.
- That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Wokingham Station.

Winnersh Station.

11.14 Winnersh is a SWT operated station, usage figures of 520,922, no station parking and a basic service of 2 tph provided by Waterloo – Reading trains.

11.15 Commuter parking on residential roads is prevalent around Winnersh Station, for example in Danywern and Bathurst Roads. Arguably alternative provision for parking has now been provided at Winnersh Triangle Station but we endorse John Redwood's proposal that the Council should explore a joint use car park for Forest School and the station. This could also incorporate secure cycle storage as cycle storage provision is poor at Winnersh when it should form a much higher proportion of travel to that station. As the greater use of cycling to Winnersh Station is likely to be the most practical solution of enhancing access, the provision of better quality and expanded cycle storage should be explored jointly with SWT.

11.16 Recommendations at Winnersh Station.

- That the Council explores the possibility of a joint use car park for Forest School and the station and, were that possible, how parking would be managed.
- That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Winnersh Station.

Winnersh Triangle Station.

11.17 Winnersh Triangle is a SWT operated station, usage figures are 490,878, there is a car park owned and operated by the Council and the basic service is 2 tph provided by Waterloo – Reading trains. The station was opened in 1987 by the then Network SouthEast and was built fairly cheaply with no disabled access. The station has seen remarkable growth in usage over the last 5 years of over 97% (roughly doubled) and this led to study funded by TVB LEP to identify options for enhancement including disabled access.

11.18 The opening of the enlarged car park at Winnersh Triangle took place on 19th October during the work of this Task & Finish Group. This enlarged the car parking provision from 123 spaces to 390 spaces, partly to serve the adjacent railway station but primarily to serve a bus Park & Ride facility, in conjunction with Reading Borough Council, to replace the facility at the Showcase Cinema that was prone to flooding. The bus operation is a commercial service with the operator taking the revenue risk. It is appreciated that the train service is only 2 trains per hour but we question the logic of charging rail passengers £4 per car to park but only charging £1 per car for passengers using the Park & Ride service and we suggest that car parking charges should be indifferent to the chosen mode of travel by users and therefore recommend that this differential be eliminated with charges for all users brought to the same level.

11.19 The Council has an aspiration for greater frequency of trains at Winnersh Triangle and to enhance the range of stations served to help reduce road congestion, increase the pool of potential employees available and to offer Borough residents improved travel opportunities. This will be taken forward in the Council's responses to various consultations on rail franchises and studies.

11.20 We consider that cycle storage facilities require expansion and improvement and that the Council should work with SWT to achieve this to encourage further use of the station.

11.21 We note that the position of the station car park lying as it does to the north side of the railway which runs on an embankment could be fairly unobtrusively decked as a way of further increasing capacity if demand warrants. The Executive Member for Planning and Highways has stated in Council that he would endorse such a proposal were demand to increase beyond the current capacity.

11.22 Recommendations at Winnersh Triangle Station.

- That the Council equalises charges for the car park at Winnersh Triangle for both bus and train users.

- That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Winnersh Triangle Station.

Earley Station.

11.23 Earley is a SWT operated station, usage figures are 639,888 which makes it our third busiest station, there is a small car park adjacent to the station owned and operated by the Council with 46 spaces with a daily charge of £4, and the basic service is 2 tph provided by Waterloo – Reading trains. As the car park fills to capacity there are significant on road parking issues on both sides of the A329 in the South Lake and the Maiden Erlegh wards.

11.24 Once again we agree with John Redwood when he says there is no easy answer. We note that there is significant commuter parking in Nightingale Road and Hazel Drive in South Lake. It looked to be possible to construct more parking at the east end of Nightingale Road which is a cul-de-sac and this is one area that seemed to us as being suited to metered parking.

11.25 This highlights the need for our Council to work with the town councils of Woodley and Earley to identify options that could be used for additional parking near Earley Station. As ever, funding will not be straightforward and we consider that the ‘user pays’ principle should be followed which, in our opinion, points to parking charges where it is practical and appropriate to apply them.

11.26 We note the well-used and fairly extensive cycle storage facility at Earley Station plus Reading’s cycle hire scheme stand outside the station. The Council should work with the South Western franchisee to expand cycle storage at the station.

11.27 Recommendations at Earley Station.

- That the Council works with Earley and Woodley town councils to identify options to increase the availability of car parking near Earley Station including some form of metered parking on selected roads.
- That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Earley Station.

Wargrave Station.

11.28 Wargrave is a GWR operated station, the usage figure is 95,910 which makes it our least busy station by some margin – the next lowest figure is Crowthorne with 303,816. There is a small station car park with 30 spaces, run by GWR, where no parking charges are applied. The station is served by the branch train to Henley-on-Thames which operates off peak at about 3 trains every 2 hours although there are 2 through trains to Paddington in the morning and 3 through trains from Paddington in the evening.

11.29 GWR has announced that the through trains will cease in 2017 with the branch then operated a self-contained shuttle. The aspiration is to have a 2 tph branch service, the constraint being to get a round trip from Twyford to Henley and back within 30 mins but

there is a suggestion that Wargrave could be served only by alternate trains in order to achieve a robust timetable. Connecting services depend on punctual services on the GWML. The point that we wish to make here is that there will be significant changes to the services over the next 2 years from Wargrave which could conceivably discourage and reduce use of that station.

11.30 It is against that background that we consider parking at Wargrave Station. The Henley Branch User Group suggested that Network Rail land to the south of the station could be used for additional car parking. We understand the Network Rail has suggested using this land for additional parking but making a business case for investment will be difficult as parking at the station is currently free. It is likely that some means of third party funding will be necessary for this to be taken forward.

11.31 It was explained that Station Road serves as overspill parking for the station and provides long term free parking in lower Wargrave but any weekday service in the parish church then results in a significant parking problems. There are double yellow lines between the station parking and the public parking in Station Road. It is not obvious why they were deemed to be necessary and a quick and cheap way to provide additional parking would be to remove them. This, we suggest, may be the least bad of the various options in seeking some quick and practical solution.

11.32 Recommendation at Wargrave Station.

- That the Council, with Wargrave Parish Council, examines the option of removing the double yellow lines on Station Road between the station parking area and the public parking.

Twyford Station.

11.33 Twyford, the junction station for the branch line to Henley-on-Thames, is a GWR operated station (and will remain so post the introduction of Crossrail services in 2019), the usage figures are 1,369,126 plus 638,123 interchanging passengers making it the Borough's second busiest station. Station parking has 324 spaces in two car parks, one for car park season ticket holders off Station Road known as Car Park 1 and the larger car park in the confined space bounded by the main line, the branch line and the River Loddon known as Car Park 2. This is accessed by Gas Lane which joins Station Road and there is a second entrance lane from Hurst Road joining Gas Lane at an awkward junction near the two under-bridges. Parking at Twyford costs £6.10 as a peak charge with off-peak charges starting at 11am – if spaces so allow.

11.34 The basic off peak service is 4 tph on the Relief Lines but there is significant enhancement in the peak hours services with calls on the Main Lines which are extremely popular as they offer some impressive journey times, for example the 6.47pm train from Paddington is an HST service with a first stop in Twyford at 7.10pm, 23 mins for a journey of 30.68 miles. It is therefore obvious why Twyford is a popular railhead and parking at Twyford has been a problem for the last 20 years or so.

11.35 The problems at Twyford are manifold. These include:

- The station forms the hub of the Twyford Station Conservation Area.
- The footbridge is a Public Right of Way (since 1839.)
- Station Road is a narrow road with residents' parking and has awkward junctions at either end onto Waltham Road.
- The station forecourt is an untidy shambles.
- The 'railway land' area on Station Road is not well defined into taxi ranks, waiting areas for those meeting trains, drop off areas, pedestrian flows and motor cycle parking.
- The access to Car Park 2 via Gas Lane and from Hurst road is poor - helped only by the 'tidal flow' nature of their use.
- The car parks are poorly laid out and Car Park 2 is for the most part unsurfaced, puddles, with cramped parking spaces (identified by the consultants Aedas Ltd, commissioned by GWR). The site is constrained by the main line, the branch line, the River Loddon and the access roads via Gas Lane. Car parks are full on Mondays through to Thursdays and fill up early.
- The ORR requirements on TOCs not to reduce station parking without their express permission.
- The station buildings need enhancement, for example there is no heated waiting area on the main departure platform, Platform 4.
- Neither coffee stall offers any seating, both are on Platform 4 (causing some obstruction that could become more critical with a greater number of interchanging passengers from the Henley Branch) and may need removing to de-clutter the platform.
- Platform 4 is short for the trains that will be introduced and cannot be extended, constrained at one end by the Waltham Road Bridge and by the Henley Branch junction at the other end. (Crossrail trains will have Selective Door Opening with the doors on the rear cars not opening as they will not be in the platform on Platform 4.) It is planned to extend Platforms 1, 2 and 3.
- Access from Car Park 2 to the station is via the 'barrow crossing' at the end of Platform 4/5 that will now remain in use.
- Land at the southern entrance is very restricted, is part Council land, part GWR (Network Rail) land through which runs the access road to Car Park 2. (Some motorists use the Council's grassed area for parking.)
- Parking for people meeting trains is limited on the Hurst Road side leading to most waiting to meet trains taking place on Station Road adding to congestion there.
- There is very limited cycle storage on the Hurst Road side of the station.
- GWR is thought unlikely to be successful in its bid for funding for a multi storey car park.
- The short term nature of GW franchises with the current one ending in April 2019.

11.36 All these factors are, to an extent, inter-related and suggests that unless some radical improvement is achieved rail travel from Twyford Station will not "*achieve its*

maximum potential". For example, any expansion of the station buildings into the forecourt, or pedestrianisation of the forecourt will remove parking places which then need adding to the existing car parks. These car parks already have sub-standard spacing which if addressed will again remove spaces. But it is essential that the problems and limitations are addressed to maximise rail travel to help address road congestion, reduce car use and to assist the business credentials of Wokingham Borough by helping to ensure the planned inclusion of stops on the Western Rail Link to Heathrow services.

11.37 GWR had convened a 'Twyford Workshop' in conjunction with Wokingham Borough Council to consider the problems and recommend solutions. This will have to be revisited if the multi storey car park bid is not successful and the membership should be widened to encompass all relevant parties including Twyford Parish Council.

11.38 It appears inevitable that some Park & Ride solution will have to be urgently considered, even in the short term, but this would appear to still require more land near the southern entrance. Feeder/connecting buses could also run and these could, potentially, serve various purposes, for example connect a Park & Ride site as well as feeding the railway station. However, we consider that regular commuters' primary requirements are overall journey times and reliability of their journey. Secondary considerations are cost, frequency, operating hours, comfort including the probability of a seat, wi-fi availability and connectional policy in the event of late running trains. In our opinion, the Park element should be as near to the station as possible to minimise the duration of the bus Ride element and allow a higher frequency of operation. Consequently we consider that the more remote the Park element, the greater the difficulty in offering an attractive package. We are unaware of any comparable 'Park & Ride & Ride' operating in the UK and consider the Achilles heel is likely to be the overall journey time. However, we do not feel qualified to comment on the viability of these potential services but recommend that formal professional consultancy advice is necessary and should be obtained.

11.39 We realise that we have listed many problems but few solutions on Twyford Station. It is a cliché to suggest that doing nothing is not an option. In the case of Twyford, this is basically what has occurred over the last 20 years – with the exception of a new 'Access for All' footbridge, some expansion of Car Park 2 some 15 years ago and, more recently, an extra exit gate added to Platform 1. We fully agree with the Home Secretary when she wrote *"Improving car parking facilities at Twyford is vital..."* a view incidentally fully supported by the Managing Director of GWR, Mark Hopwood. We consider that the onus for devising a solution on the Station Road side must lie with GWR with assistance as appropriate from the Council. However, on the Hurst Road side, we consider that the reverse should apply, the Council should lead with assistance as appropriate from GWR.

11.40 We are aware that Bracknell Forest Council will build the majority of its new housing on the north side of Bracknell. Compared with the extended journey times currently in place to Waterloo (about 60 minutes for 32 miles) a portion of these residents is likely to choose, access permitting, to travel from Twyford Station, particularly after eastern connections from Paddington have been transformed by Crossrail in 2018. This suggests 2 actions, one is to press yet again for journey time reductions on services on services to

Waterloo in the Council's response to DfT's current consultation on the South Western franchise (and to invite Bracknell Forest Council to make a complementary response) in order that the Wokingham- Waterloo services take a greater share of the demand. The second is to ask Bracknell Forest Council what plans, if any, they have for connecting bus services from the new developments in Binfield to Twyford.

11.41 Recommendations at Twyford Station.

- That all parties including the Council, GWR and Twyford Parish Council work together to ensure that residents of the Borough are able to access rail services at Twyford.
- That the Council seeks professional consultancy advice on the practicality of Park & Ride services and connecting buses to serve Twyford.
- That Bracknell Forest Council is asked what plans, if any, they have for connecting buses from their new housing in the Binfield area.

Recommendations.

12.0 In making our recommendations, we do not propose to reiterate the suggested actions on individual railway stations and on other sections of this report. We consider that we have offered an outline strategy to follow to enhance access to stations within the Borough plus Crowthorne with the notable exception of Twyford. The numerous problems at Twyford make it challenging in extreme yet the potential rewards to the Borough from maximising its potential mean that satisfactory solutions must be found.

12.1 However, we realise that certain of our recommendations made for individual stations have a wider application and highlight these here:

- There should be a three pronged approach to applying parking restrictions on residential roads: alternative provision of access to stations, an effective means of enforcement, and to continue with the consistent application of parking restrictions. (Paragraphs 8.1 to 8.4)
- There appears to be a case for some metered parking on public roads near railway stations. (Paragraph 8.5)
- Professional consultancy advice should be obtained on Park & Ride schemes where the Park element is remote from the station as the overall journey time and journey reliability will be key to their success or, indeed, failure. (Paragraph 11.39)

Conclusions.

13.0 While demand for rail travel has doubled in the last 20 years, the provision for parking at stations, with the exception of Winnersh Triangle, has basically remained unchanged, far less than 'keeping pace with demand'. The result is the increased prevalence of on street parking that has given rise to complaints from householders leading to this review.

13.1 All policy direction, including that in our Local Transport Plan, encourages modal shift from cars to more sustainable transport. To help to fulfil these policies, access to railways stations, including the provision of additional car parking, requires enhancement where possible.

13.2 The Borough's efforts to establish Park and Ride services are commendable but largely ignore the fact that provision of parking for rail services takes cars off roads, is greener and serves an established demand for customers who have a track record of being prepared to pay tidy sums to park. We consider that commuters' primary requirements are overall journey time and reliability of service and that this may not be provided by a remote Park and Ride facility.

13.3 Twyford will be the Borough's gateway station to London, Crossrail and the planned development and interchange at Old Oak Common, to Heathrow via the Western Rail Link and to the west. Access, and particularly car parking, needs significant enhancement, although this is a challenge. We are aware that efforts are ongoing to achieve this but co-operation from all will be necessary to be successful. But they are essential for the generation of economic growth.

13.4 As the increased demand for rail travel will, in future, be at least partly proportional to our increasing housing numbers and population, the various infrastructure funds, such as CIL, should help fund improvements in access to railway stations and the provision of parking. This also applies at Crowthorne where it is likely that the majority of the increased demand will come from housing in Bracknell Forest.

Acknowledgements.

14.0 The Task & Finish Group are grateful to all those who contributed to the study and to Colm Ó Caomhánaigh of Democratic Services who served as our secretariat.

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Purpose of Review: To consider the problems of commuter and other parking at, or near, railway stations.

1. To consider the desirability of car parking near railway stations keeping pace with the rising demand for rail travel and if such additional car parking is deemed to be necessary, where and how it could that be provided.
2. To consider whether feeder bus services to stations are desirable and, if so, to recommend what services should be considered and when planning for these services should commence.
3. To consider in the longer term orbital bus services running to Twyford Station serving the SDLs, as suggested in the Borough's adopted Park & Ride Strategy given that house building is under way in all the SDLs except Arborfield Garrison where outline approvals have been given. The potential for smart or through ticketing might also be examined.
4. To enquire what improvements, if any, have been achieved since the adoption of LTP3 and what further improvements are planned.
5. To consider the balance of parking restrictions and enforcement as to whether motorists are being discouraged rather than being encouraged to change their mode of travel.
6. To consider and understand the effect on residents living in the area.

Key Objectives:

1. To determine what progress has been made towards the goals in LTP3
2. Is further car parking near railway stations desirable and practical and, if so, where and how should that be provided?
3. What planning should be initiated for the orbital and for other bus feeder services suggested in the adopted Park & Ride Strategy? What through ticketing might be possible?
4. What improvements in active transport have been achieved since the adoption of LTP3 and what further improvements are planned and what further improvements are needed?
5. Is the current balance between having parking restrictions and encouraging modal shift correct and how should it be changed?

Scope of the work:

1. To gain an understanding of the current commuter parking situation in the Borough and immediately adjoining areas.
2. To gain an understanding of the impact of alternative modes of travel as possible solutions.
3. To gain an understanding of how the Vision priority to tackle congestion and improve journeys across the Borough is being impacted by the problems of commuter parking.
4. To gain an understanding of how Commuter parking impacts on economic growth and business and links to ensuring strong sustainable communities both of which form part of the Vision.
5. To gain an understanding of appropriate local and national policies relating to commuter parking.
6. To consider what constraints exist whether legal, physical or resource-related.
7. To consider the impact of service changes to trains or buses.

BACKGROUND:

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, at its meeting held on 23 June 2014, considered a number of suggestions from Members for possible Scrutiny reviews.

Councillor Lindsay Ferris had put forward a suggestion relating to the impact of commuter parking on Wokingham Borough Council residents across the Borough.

Commuter parking in residential roads can be seen across the Borough and this has a negative impact on residents for example, in Winnersh, Twyford and Wokingham. This links to the Vision priority to tackle congestion and improve journeys across the Borough. Commuter parking is also linked to economic growth and business and links to ensuring strong sustainable communities both of which form part of the Vision. Tackling this issue and improving the situation would have a direct benefit to residents. Planned development in the Borough will increase the number of residents and will exacerbate this issue.

Commuter parking has caused particular concerns with access to residential roads e.g. waste collection and emergency vehicles. For example, in Cavendish Gardens, Winnersh a petition for double yellow lines. In Wessex Gardens, Twyford a petition in 2010 and further request in 2012. In Jan 2014 waste collection could not be made due to parking blocking the road.

SPECIFIC AREAS FOR THE PANEL TO ADDRESS:

- 1) Consultation with residents in all areas surrounding railway stations in the Borough.
- 2) A report assessing exactly when and where commuter parking creates problems and establishing the full extent of the problem.
- 3) The Committee to look at and make recommendations on a Commuter Parking Policy.
- 4) Development of a fair, even handed and consistent policy that can be applied across the Borough.

INFORMATION GATHERING:

Witnesses to be invited

Name	Organisation/Position	Reason for Inviting
Rail companies;	First Great Western South West Trains	To obtain their views
Various Groups/Officers/MP/ Councillors	Matt Davey, Head of Transport and Planning Matt Gould, Service Manager Transport and Road Safety Rail user groups; Executive Members for Planning and Highways; Other Councillors; Local MPs; South West Trains LSTP Officers; Representative from the LEP.	To find out what they have done to tackle the problem of commuter parking.
Residents who commute		To obtain their views

Information to be obtained from

Organisation	Information to be Requested
Various Local Authorities	Benchmarking exercise.

Key Documents / Background Data / Research:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | A benchmarking exercise be carried out with other local authorities to see if (and if they have, how) they have reviewed the problems of commuter parking at or near railway stations. |
|----|--|

TIMESCALE:

Starting: June 2015

Ending: January 2016

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS:

Body	Date
Executive	18 February 2016

Referred by the Management Committee to: Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Terms of Reference agreed by: Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Committee Members involved in the review: To be confirmed but to include Councillors Lindsay Ferris and David Sleight

Committee Lead Member: Councillor Norman Jorgensen
Executive Member: Councillor John Kaiser

Appendix B: Letter from the Rt Hon John Redwood MP

THE RT HON JOHN REDWOOD MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor David Sleight
114 Ellis Road
Crowthorne
Berkshire RG45 6PH

27 October 2015

Dear David

Thank you for your letter consulting on the provision of parking at stations. This issue is part of a wider question of making sufficient parking provision generally.

The new Conservative government has altered parking policy. It has altered the idea that parking provision has to be restricted to try to reduce car use. The government recognises that cars are usually not in use. When not in use they need to be off the highway, as we are short of road capacity generally and cannot spare much limited highway space for parking.

The government remains happy to encourage more use of trains as a substitute for cars. To do so my constituents need to be able to drive to a station and park easily. If it takes too long or is too expensive people will complete their total journey by car and not change to a train. Many of my constituents live too far from a station to be able to walk there.

I support the actions the Council are taking to expand parking facilities at Winnersh Triangle and Wokingham stations. In view of the growth of housing in the area and the wish to develop Wokingham town centre to the south, I would urge a large enough expansion at Wokingham station to allow for growth. It is also important to provide some longer term parking at stations, allowing people to be away for more than a day when using trains. There needs to be sufficient drop off and pick up spaces close to a station. This is currently cramped at Wokingham.

Earley and Winnersh are more problematic, as both are on constrained sites in built up areas. At Winnersh the Council should explore a joint use car park for the school and station, offering more spaces for both users. Residents in Earley and Winnersh rightly object to people parking all day outside their homes in narrow residential roads, sometimes blocking their drives. There is no easy answer on parking for Earley, where a study of options should be made. There is land on the other side of the railway track to Station Road adjacent to the A329M which could be considered.

Yours sincerely

Email: john.redwood.mp@parliament.uk Tel: 020 7219 4205

Appendix C: Letter from the Rt Hon Theresa May MP



THE RT HON THERESA MAY MP
Member of Parliament for Maidenhead

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Cllr David Sleight
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN

28 October 2015

Thank you for your letter regarding commuter parking at or near railways stations.

I am pleased to read about your Working Group, which is addressing an extremely important issue. As you mentioned, this is of relevance to Wargrave in my constituency, and particularly to Twyford where there is a clear need for increased capacity – and this is only likely to be exacerbated once Crossrail comes into operation.

I am supportive of GWR's efforts to find a solution to this problem. Indeed, I wrote a letter of support for the funding bid and discussed the plans with their Managing Director, Mark Hopwood. I have also discussed this matter with Cllr John Halsall.

Improving car parking facilities at Twyford is vital and I am pleased to support your efforts to make progress. Please do let me know what conclusions your Working Group reaches.

Many thanks again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP

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Appendix D: Glossary of Abbreviations.

AfA	Access for All – step free access either through ramps or lifts
CPE	Civil Parking Enforcement
DfT	Department for Transport
GW	Great Western – not specific to the current GWR
GWML	Great Western Main Line – the route from Paddington to the west.
GWR	Great Western Railway – formerly First Great Western
LEP	Local Enterprise Partnership
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ORR	The Office of Rail and Road – the railway (and Highways England) regulator
P & R	Park & Ride
SDL	Strategic Development Location
SDO	Selective Door Opening – where carriage doors do not open when not in a short platform.
SHMA	Strategic Housing Market Assessment
SFO	Station Facilities Operator (The train operating company managing a station)
SWT	South West Trains
TOC	Train operating company
Tph	Trains per hour
TRL	Transport Research Laboratory in Crowthorne
TVB LEP	Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership