

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Review of Commuter Parking</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 January 2015
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR</b>	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment

## **REVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW**

### **BRIEFING DOCUMENT**

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

**Background.** Councillor Lindsay Ferris requested that the issue of commuter parking at or near railway stations should be subject to a scrutiny review. While this request was initially suggested for Twyford, where the issue of commuter parking has been a major issue there for a number of years, the review should be widened to consider the issue in relation to all six railway stations in the Borough as well as Crowthorne railway station which lies just outside the Borough boundary but where parking issues are in Wokingham Borough.

#### **History.**

Because our railways predate the motor car, parking at railway stations was not initially provided and, with the exception of Winnersh Triangle station, no provision was made. A historical coincidence was that wagon load traffic and the need for goods yards ceased about the time when ownership of cars became widespread and station goods yards were converted for station parking. Unfortunately, goods yards only existed at Twyford, Wokingham and Crowthorne. Twyford had a very constrained yard with awkward access (the constraints and poor access are unchanged), the yard on the Oxford Road side of Wokingham Station was sold for use for light industrial units as was the station yard at Crowthorne. No goods yard ever existed at Earley, Winnersh or Wargrave although small railway car parks do exist at Earley, Wargrave and Crowthorne.

Winnersh Triangle station opened in May 1987 with a small car park on Council land. The car park is about to be expanded to 390 spots, primarily as a bus Park & Ride facility replacing the use of the Showcase Cinema site where parking is liable to flooding.

Stations in the Borough and Crowthorne together with their car park capacities are shown in the accompanying table.

### Railway Stations in Wokingham Borough and Crowthorne

Station	TOC	Usage	Interchange	Car Parking	Peak Cost	Cycle Storage
Crowthorne	FGW	292,840	n/a	42	£ 2.70	29
Earley	SWT	574,836	n/a	0	£ -	25
Twyford	FGW	1,347,178	611,011	324	£ 6.10	c100
Wargrave	FGW	91,298	n/a	30	NK	NK
Winnersh	SWT	469,250	n/a	0	£ 4.00	0
Winnersh Triangle	SWT	430,720	n/a	123	NK	5
Wokingham	SWT	2,204,046	161,198	414	£ 6.50	80

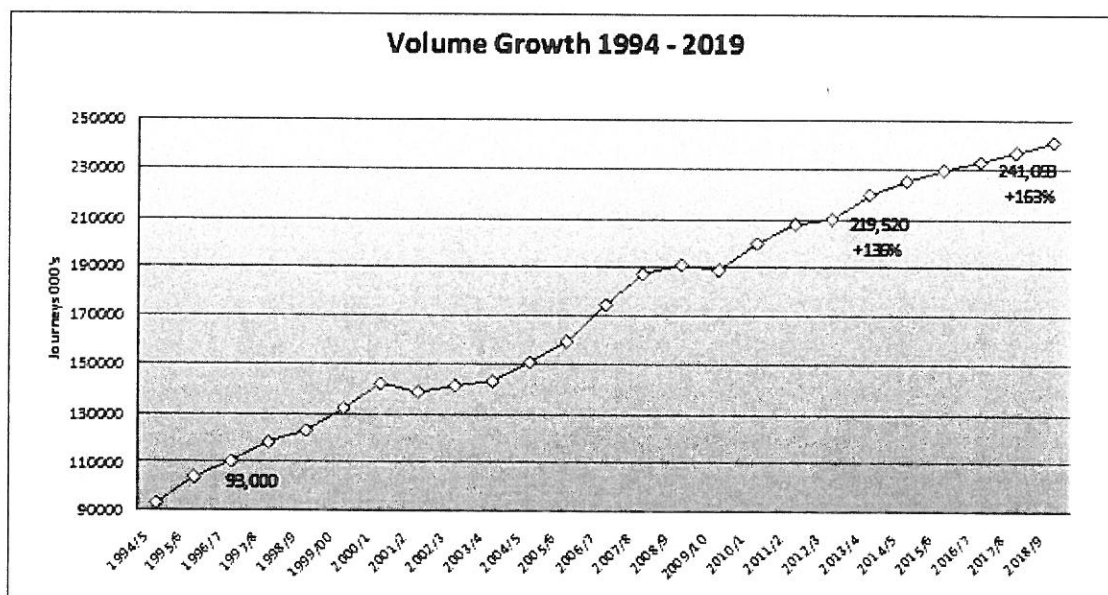
**Notes:**

1. Figures are entries and exits combined from 2012/13, the most recent data available.
2. As none of the stations are gated, there may be some fraudulent travel.
3. Capacity of the Winnersh Triangle car park will rise to a total of 390.

**Demand for Rail Services.** Demand for rail services has roughly doubled since privatisation in 1995 with the growth in demand showing no sign of abating, growing at about 3 to 4% per year. This is illustrated by the growth in passenger demand on the Wessex route, basically the lines into London Waterloo, which has seen exceptional growth as shown in the attached graph. Enhancements to rail services, primarily from Twyford, may well accelerate this increase in demand.



## Wessex Volume Growth



Volume growth expressed as number of journeys.

## **Planned Enhancements to Rail Services.**

Committed (ie funded) enhancements:

- Electric train services through Twyford by December 2016.
- Electric train services on the Henley-on-Thames branch by December 2017.
- Crossrail services to Reading by December 2019.
- Western Rail Access to Heathrow services from Twyford by December 2021.

Expected further enhancements:

- Infill electrification between Wokingham and Reigate by 2021 with electric services.
- A doubling of the frequency of the Gatwick Airport – Reading service to 2 trains per hour by 2021.

Possible future enhancements:

- HS2 opening in 2026.
- Frequency and journey time enhancements to Waterloo.
- Southern Rail Access to Heathrow.
- Business and housing development at the Old Oak Common station to the west of London.

**Network Rail/ Train Operating Company Interface.** Network Rail owns the railway infrastructure (the ‘railway land’) but, as part of the rail franchise process, grants a station lease to the train operating company (TOC) to manage the station including any station car parks. The TOC may develop parking capacity within their station lease boundaries subject to agreement by Network Rail. It is understood that TOCs must not reduce the number of car park spots that existed at the start of their franchise; for example improvements to a station forecourt as at Wokingham required SWT to restore the car park capacity lost to the Station Link Road.

**The Railway Industry View of Station Car Parks.** Network Rail is required to lead the rail industry’s Long Term Planning Process (LTPP) which estimates demand for rail services in 2043 and forecasts the changes needed to carry the necessary train services. As part of the LTPP, Network Rail is in the process of publishing Route Studies for consultation and the Western Route Study, published in November 2014, gives the following policy statement on station access.

*“Car parking 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 pedestrian and cyclists are equally important if rail travel is to achieve its maximum potential.”*

## **Wokingham Borough Council’s Policy on Modal Shift.**

The Borough’s various aims are listed in the Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 and include a Highways Goal of ‘We will encourage alternative modes of travel to the use of private vehicles ....and reduce the quantities of CO2 produced’, an Active Travel

Goal of 'We will increase opportunities to walk and cycle to work etc', a Public Transport Goal 'To work with bus and rail operators to improve public transport services to increase their overall use' and a Smarter Choices of 'Encouraging modal shift'.

The Committee may wish to enquire on the Borough's progress towards these goals.

**Car Parking near Railways Stations.** The Committee may wish 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 could that be provided.

**Feeder Bus Services.** The Wokingham Park and Ride Strategy was adopted in June 2013 which included recommendations to consider orbital bus services from the Arborfield SDL, via Wokingham, to Twyford Station and from the Shinfield SDL, via Winnersh Triangle, to Twyford Station. The Committee may wish to consider if, or indeed when, planning for these services should start as outline planning applications have been submitted for the Arborfield SDL and house building is proceeding in the Shinfield SDL. The Committee may also wish to consider whether a feeder bus service should run from Woodley to Twyford Station. The potential for smart or at least through ticketing might also be examined.

**Active Transport.** Active transport covers both cycling and walking. The Committee may wish to enquire what improvements, if any, have been achieved since the adoption of LTP3 and what further improvements are planned.

**On Street Parking Restrictions.** Some motorists will always seek to park on-street either to avoid parking charges or because any station parking facilities are full. Residents object to commuter parking outside their homes and press for something to be done. While Wokingham Borough Council may be reluctant to consider further parking restrictions, the result is often unsightly yellow lines with an adverse effect on the street scene. Where these are double yellow lines, then the residents are also affected as any visitors cannot park either. It is possible to have single yellow lines with an artificial restriction, say from 1100 to 1200 solely to deter commuters. The Committee may wish to consider the balance of parking restrictions as to whether motorists are being hounded rather than being encouraged to change their mode of travel.

**Parking Enforcement.** Any parking restrictions have to be enforced to be effective. The Committee will be aware of the considerations for Civil Parking Enforcement.

**Specific Questions that the Committee might address:**

- What progress has been made towards the goals in LTP3?
- Is further car parking near railway stations desirable and practical and, if so, where and how should that be provided?
- What planning should be initiated for the orbital bus services suggested in the adopted Park & Ride Strategy? What through ticketing might be possible?
- What improvements in active transport have been achieved since the adoption of LTP3 and what further improvements are planned?

- Is the current balance between having parking restrictions and encouraging modal shift correct?