

TITLE	Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group – Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 March 2017
WARD	None specific
REPORT BY	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services Councillor David Sleight, Chairman of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Tackling the problem of commuter parking on residential roads; improving the accessibility of railway stations and encouraging sustainable and active travel modes in accordance with the current Local Transport Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1) notes progress relating to the implementation of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group's recommendations;
- 2) considers the priority order of the outstanding recommendations;
- 3) considers recent developments which will impact on the provision of commuter parking across the Borough;
- 4) agrees any further recommendations based on the evidence included in the report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

In 2015 the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a Task and Finish Group to examine the problem of commuter parking on residential streets.

The recommendations from the Task and Finish Group were subsequently considered by the Executive at its meeting on 31 March 2016. The recommendations and the Officer responses submitted to the Executive are set out in Annex A.

Since the publication of the Task and Finish Group report a number of developments have taken place which impact on the provision of commuter parking and/or open new opportunities for consideration by Members. These include significant progress relating to the implementation of the Crossrail project.

The report outlines recent developments and asks Members to prioritise any outstanding Task and Finish Group recommendations and consider further recommendations as necessary.

Background

At its meeting in December 2015 the Committee received the report of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group had been set up to examine the problems caused by commuter parking on residential streets, with the following Terms of Reference:

- 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 and 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.

The original suggestion for the scrutiny review was submitted by Councillor 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 at all six railways stations in the Borough as well as Crowthorne Station, which lies just outside the Borough boundary, but where the parking issues occur within Wokingham Borough.

The Task and Finish Group's report was submitted to the Executive at its meeting on 31 March 2016. A linked report to the Executive contained the 22 recommendations with comments on each recommendation from Highways Officers. The Task and Finish Group recommendations and Officer comments are set out at Annex A.

The Executive accepted the Task and Finish Group's recommendations but requested that the Committee prioritise the recommendations as any plans for future work would need to concentrate on the high priority items first.

Progress

This report outlines progress over the past year and highlights new issues which will impact on commuter parking, including the implementation of Crossrail. These issues are summarised below:

- Wokingham Station had a second storey added to the main car park adding 170 spaces and bringing the capacity up to 584 spaces.
- The Reading Buses Lion service (No 4 and No X4) now diverts to serve Wokingham Station in both directions.
- Wokingham Station now has 12 car platforms in preparation for the operation of 10 car trains during 2017.
- The Office of Rail and Road published its annual estimates of station usage for 2015/16 showing a continuing rise in demand for rail travel from Borough stations. Twyford recorded only a small increase indicating a suppressed demand.
- Greater clarity of the Great Western electrification with electrification of the Henley branch deferred but with electric trains expected to operate to serve Twyford (Reading – Paddington) in December 2017.
- Twyford Parish Council has established a sub-committee to examine car parking near Twyford Station but their conclusions to date are not known.

- A meeting has been held with Bracknell Forest Borough Council to discuss, inter alia, the car park at the entrance to the Wellington Business Park in Crowthorne and connecting buses from Binfield to Twyford.
- Wellington College has submitted Derby Field as part of Bracknell Forest Council's call for sites exercise. This is the sports field to the west of the railway station which, potentially, could offer additional car parking for the station.

As outlined above, the Task and Finish Group report made 22 recommendations. However, there was degree of repetition as a set of recommendations was made for all seven railway stations and, consequently, the recommendation to provide more cycle storage at all stations except Wargrave formed six of the recommendations.

There were two potentially contentious recommendations. One was that the Council considers some form of metered parking on selected roads which are used for commuter parking. The other was that charges in the Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride car park (which is alongside the station) should be equalised for bus and train passengers. Subsequent investigation highlighted that the parking charges for bus Park and Ride passengers form part of an agreement with Reading Borough Council.

Prioritisation of Recommendations

Whilst it would be possible to arrange the 22 recommendations in a batting order for prioritisation, another option is to suggest which railway station or stations need priority measures and to prioritise those measures that could be achieved fairly quickly and where funding appears possible. Taking the latter approach would suggest that Twyford (see below in the section on Crossrail) should be the station requiring priority measures with Earley as the second priority with the remaining five stations on a par.

The measures that could be introduced reasonably quickly relate to cycle storage provision. Two recommendations are, perhaps, uncontentious. These are support for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) which is expected to be introduced in late 2017 and that only a watching brief should be maintained on Smart Cards.

The Committee may wish to recommend that examination of some form of metered parking and parking charges at Winnersh Triangle station should be considered by the newly established Parking Policy Working Group.

Crossrail

Crossrail (the Elizabeth line) will run from Reading and Heathrow T4 in the west on the existing GW lines to Royal Oak (just west of Paddington) where the line enters new bored tunnels to Whitechapel where the line divides with one branch going via Canary Wharf and Woolwich to Abbey Wood. The other line resurfaces at Pudding Mill Lane (to the west of Stratford) where it uses existing GE lines to Shenfield. There will be new underground stations at Paddington, Bond Street, Tottenham Court Road, Farringdon, Liverpool Street, Whitechapel, Canary Wharf and Woolwich Arsenal (all with platform edge doors).

Planned services are 24 trains per hour (tph) in peaks although, currently, only 10 of these services will run west from Paddington. Crossrail services have been let as a concession by TfL to MTR Crossrail and will open in stages, most notably from Paddington High Level to Heathrow T4 in May 2018 (replacing Heathrow Connect), from Paddington to Abbey Wood in December 2018 (when it will be officially retitled

Elizabeth Line) and finally throughout to Shenfield and Reading in December 2019. The service to Reading is expected to consist of two tph, replacing two GWR services.

The trains will be nine cars long each of 23m with three sets of doors per side. They will be air conditioned, high performance trains with a top speed of 90 mph and will accelerate at twice the rate of the existing diesel Turbo fleet. However, their design is optimised for inner London Metro service: there will only be 450 seats in a nine car train (a six car diesel Turbo has about 540 seats), all but a few seats are longitudinal and there will, literally, be more straps hanging from the ceiling than there will be seats. Quite simply, the service is not designed for outer suburban services in Berkshire – and there will be no toilets on the trains.

Crossrail will make it easier to travel and do business in London and the South East. It will reduce congestion on the region's transport network and link London's major commercial and business districts more effectively than ever before. When fully open in 2019 it will add 10% capacity to the central London rail network, bringing an extra 1.5 million people to within 45 minutes of central London.

Twyford Station

Twyford Station will be the Borough's gateway to Crossrail (and other services such as the Western Rail Link to Heathrow and access to Old Oak Common for HS2). Twyford, Maidenhead and Slough will remain GWR operated stations while other stations such as Burnham and West Drayton will be operated by MTR Crossrail. TfL, through its subsidiary London Rail, is carrying out station rebuilds at West Drayton, Hayes and Harlington, Ealing Broadway and Acton Main line.

Page 27 of the Task and Finish Group's report listed a number of problems relating to Twyford station. Apart from platform extensions to existing platforms 1, 2 and 3, no enhancements have yet been agreed for Twyford. Car parking at the station has been insufficient for the past 20 years (leading to the subject being offered as a scrutiny suggestion) and is recognised as being the fundamental reason why commuter parking spills over into residential roads and demand for travel from Twyford is suppressed. It is a problem that needs to be addressed if rail travel from Twyford Station is to achieve its maximum potential. This is recognised by the MP for Maidenhead, Theresa May (now the Prime Minister) who wrote in her letter to the Group "Improving car parking at Twyford is vital and I am pleased to support your efforts to make progress".

Areas to Explore

- The potential economic growth in the Borough as a result of the Crossrail services and the connectivity enhancements;
- The provision of car parking at Twyford Station and improved access to train services.

Essentially these are one and the same. Improved access to Twyford station, particularly the provision of additional car parking could help drive economic growth and maximising the potential of Crossrail depends on providing additional car parking and access. Where could additional parking be provided? The choice is remotely using either feeder buses or a 'Park and Ride and Ride' service; on the north side of the station on the existing railway land; or on the immediate south side of the station.

- Remotely located parking. As the Task and Finish Group report stated, the Group was unaware of any successful 'Park and Ride and Ride' service operating anywhere in the UK, but any such service and any feeder bus services would require a turning and waiting area at Twyford Station and these cannot be located in the narrow, congested Station Road which lies in a Conservation Area.
- Railway Land. Existing car parking is provided alongside Station Road, in Car Park 1 for car park season ticket holders and in Car Park 2 located in the triangular area between the GWML, the Henley Branch and the River Loddon. It is accessed from Station Road via Gas Lane, a narrow winding lane with an awkward junction from the Hurst Road access. The car park is some distance from the station, is not all surfaced, is poorly laid out with narrow bays and the pedestrian access to the station is via the 'barrow crossing' to the end of Platform 4/5. While it would be possible to deck this car park, the work would require closure for an extended period while the work was carried out, but access would still be via Station Road leading to a greater degree of congestion and further degradation of the Conservation Area.
- The South/Hurst Road. The south side of the station could be the preferred location for a whole range of enhancements including improved station facilities, a cycle hub, bus waiting and turning areas, car drop off and greeting areas and finally car parking. This could permit the pedestrianisation of the existing station forecourt and other enhancements in Station Road and the Conservation Area. It is important to note that the Borough Council does not own any land to facilitate such changes.

Demand for Additional Car Parking

Research carried out by the Task and Finish Group and that carried out by GWR suggests that about 1,000 car spaces could be required in total to meet additional demand relating to Twyford station, meaning that an enhancement of some 700 spaces would be required. Twyford Parish Council owns the allotment land adjacent to the station and the recreation ground between Waltham road and Stanlake Lane (which is Green Belt). The Parish Council set up a sub-committee of three Councillors to examine options for the provision of additional car parking.

The sub-committee held a public meeting, on 19th October 2016, which was attended by some 15 allotment holders. The meeting heard a presentation by GWR that included the potential for using part of the allotments for a Multi Storey Car Park.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee may conclude that further exploration of the potential for enhanced car park provision should be explored as part of wider discussions on issues such as traffic movements, air pollution, funding options and partnership working with key stakeholders including Twyford Parish Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial	N/A	N/A	N/A

Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Recommendations agreed by the Executive will be progressed as resources become available within existing budgets. Where additional resources are required to progress any of the proposals or particular priorities are identified then a further report will be submitted to the Executive.

Cross-Council Implications

Tackling the problems relating to commuter parking will enhance access to railway stations, reduce congestion and improve the quality of life for residents living in these locations.

List of Background Papers

Report of the Commuter Parking Task and Finish

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Date 1 March 2017	Version No. 1

Recommendations made by the Commuter Parking Task and Finish Group with management responses, as submitted to the Executive on 31 March 2016.

Recommendations (Paragraph)	Officer response
<p>1 Pricing of Council operated car parks (7.5) 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>The Council's existing pricing policy is based on having a consistent charging regime across the Borough and is not determined from demand. If the Council wishes to consider the suggested approach this would require a review of this existing pricing regime.</p>
<p>2. Parking Provision (8.6) We support the decision to seek to implement CPE.</p>	<p>The CPE implementation project has been established and is on programme to implement CPE in 2017.</p>
<p>3. 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>	<p>On street car parking charges are not currently proposed. Controlling on street parking through the use of charges could give greater control of parking. If the Council wished to consider such an approach in selected areas it is recommended that the proposals are progressed in consultation with local town and parish councils and local residents and businesses</p>
<p>4. Active Transport (9.5) That the Council should continue to work with the TOCs to increase and improve cycle storage at all stations.</p>	<p>The principle of improving facilities to encourage sustainable and active travel modes is set out in the current Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p>5. That the suggested cycle routes from Woodley and Charvil to Twyford Station should be progressed.</p>	<p>These routes would make a considerable contribution to improving the cycle network in the Borough but are, at present, unfunded</p>
<p>6. Ticketing (10.7) The Council should maintain a watching brief on Smart Card development.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p>7. Crowthorne Station (11.9) 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.</p>	<p>This matter can be taken up with Bracknell Forest Council</p>
<p>8. That GWR explores with Wellington</p>	<p>This is a matter between 2 private</p>

College the possible availability of a small part of Derby Field to expand the station car park at Crowthorne.	companies but the issue can be raised with them to progress
9. That Bracknell Forest Council is asked to work with GWR to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Crowthorne Station.	This matter can be taken up with Bracknell Forest Council
10. Wokingham Station (11.13) That SWT is asked to ensure that the design for partial decking in the Wokingham station car park allows further expansion.	This matter can be raised with SWT but it is understood that the design for the deck has been completed and so it is unlikely any changes t that design will be made prior to construction in April 2017.
11. 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.	We will continue to work with bus operators to deliver viable commercial services that improve transport options for residents across the Borough.
12. That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Wokingham Station.	The principle of improving facilities to encourage sustainable and active travel modes is set out in the current local transport plan
13. Winnersh Station (11.16) 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.	Whilst the idea is welcomed this is not a current scheme in the work programme and as such there is no resource available to explore this concept.
14. That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Winnersh Station.	The principle of improving facilities to encourage sustainable and active travel modes is set out in the current local transport plan
15. Winnersh Triangle Station (11.22) That the Council equalises charges for the car park at Winnersh Triangle for both bus and train users.	The Council's current policy is to normalise car parking charges across the Borough and also to ensure that park and ride is self-funding. The current charging regime for bus users is commensurate with other park and ride schemes in the UK. These policies would need to be reviewed if the proposal is accepted
16. That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Winnersh Triangle Station.	The principle of improving facilities to encourage sustainable and active travel modes is set out in the current local transport plan
17. Earley Station (11.27) That the Council works with Earley and	Whilst the idea is welcomed this is not a current scheme in the work programme

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.	and as such there is no resource available to explore this concept. See comment under 8.6 above re on street car parking charges.
18. That the Council works with SWT to enhance the provision of cycle storage at Earley Station.	The principle of improving facilities to encourage sustainable and active travel modes is set out in the current local transport plan.
19. Wargrave Station (11.32) 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.	Whilst the idea is welcomed this is not a current scheme in the work programme and as such there is no resource available to explore this concept.
20. Twyford Station (11.41) 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.	The Council is continuing to explore options for improving access to Twyford station.
21. That the Council seeks professional consultancy advice on the practicality of Park & Ride services and connecting buses to serve Twyford.	Whilst the idea is welcomed this is not a current scheme in the work programme and as such there is no resource available to explore this concept.
22. That Bracknell Forest Council is asked what plans, if any, they have for connecting buses from their new housing in the Binfield area.	This matter can be taken up with Bracknell Forest Council.

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