

TITLE	Borough-wide Parking Management Action Plan – Results of Consultation
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 June 2019
WARD	None Specific - Borough-wide;
DIRECTOR	Director of Locality and Customer Services - Sarah Hollamby

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

An effective Parking Management Action Plan (PMP) would be expected to result in a variety of benefits, to all members of the Council's residential, business and visitor communities through;

- improvements to road safety as a result of less antisocial and hazardous parking;
- improved access to shops and services due to higher turnover of available spaces;
- reduced congestion, air/noise pollution & fuel costs due to less circulation for parking spaces;
- improved health & wellbeing from participation in active travel modes; and
- improved public transport reliability due to less congestion caused by parking obstruction

Benefits are also for businesses and the local economies, from increased availability of parking spaces in local town centres, to the provision and enforcement of service loading bays that improves business efficiency and to the reduced traffic congestion and delay that can impact upon business costs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee;

1. Considers the summary of responses received following consultation amongst ward members; and
2. Provides feedback to officers on the draft Borough-wide Parking Management Action Plan (Appendix B) for 2019-2025.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

As a result of the increasing number, variety and complexity of parking-related problems and issues being identified across the Borough, all Members were invited to participate in the development of a revised Parking Management Action Plan at the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 11th March 2019, by submitting a summary of the main parking related concerns of residents and businesses for analysis by officers.

The management of on/off street parking in the borough presents a significant challenge to the Council's service delivery and the realisation of its 21C ambitions. Wokingham has one of the highest car ownership rates of any local authority in England and its parking management strategy and associated policies and procedures, need to have regard for

the potential level of vehicle ownership/use and the availability of high quality alternative means of transport.

Growing car ownership and use, increased demand for on-street restrictions by residents and members, the introduction of CPE and changes to our local road network have resulted in an increase in the volume and nature of requests, demands and complaints to the Council regarding parking management issues. These requests form a substantial and growing proportion of the Council's transportation service delivery and are clearly becoming an increasingly higher profile concern for residents and businesses.

The Council's current approach to addressing them presents a confusing parking management landscape for customers, which leads to problems such as;

- antisocial parking behaviour within neighbourhood settings;
- traffic congestion on key routes and at key commercial and education centres;
- dissatisfaction with perceived enforcement protocols;
- overspill at some car parks and apparent spare capacity in others;
- impacts upon business viability; and
- detriment to residential street quality

Historically, most of these issues have been managed independently within the Council but there is now an obvious need to address parking management more holistically to overcome these challenges, through the introduction of a practical, borough-wide Parking Management Action Plan.

This report summarises the responses received from ward members and sets out a draft parking management action plan (Appendix A) upon which ward members are invited to comment in advance of its development, formal consultation and adoption as an operational service delivery document later in this financial year.

Background

Wokingham as a borough is undergoing a significant road transport transformation, with regeneration of Wokingham Town Centre and expansive residential communities throughout the borough planting seeds of anticipation and optimism for continued economic growth. To be able to respond to that optimism, capitalising on the opportunity for growth across the Borough and dealing with the transportation challenges it presents, the Council needs to ensure it has transport infrastructure that is responsive, sustainable and fit for purpose.

The Council's plans for economic growth and sustainability rely upon its delivery of a progressive programme of parking control measures that will help it support the local economy and these measures will need to focus on keeping its road network, particularly in core areas and close to rail, bus and major road corridors, free from congestion and the detrimental effects of traffic and pollution.

Effective parking management is integral to these objectives and a robust parking management strategy enables the Council to strike the right balance between demands for accessibility by private car, the needs of Wokingham's growing and changing population, the quality of its residential communities and the economic and operational opportunities presented by new technology.

Wokingham Borough Council does not have a current Parking Management Action Plan. The Council adopted its previous Parking Management Strategy in 2011, drawing together key issues, recommendations and actions which were used to generate Statements of Intent which were assigned 'short', 'medium' and 'long' term timescales.

A cross-party, member-led Working Group was set up in 2017 resulting in a draft Action Plan covering 28 Areas for Action and 45 Statements of Intent and whilst there have been subsequent intentions to undertake a borough-wide review of parking services, with the aim of establishing operational policies and management procedures, these have been overtaken by decisions to address immediate parking issues, rather than the development of a longer term plan with an agreed implementation action plan.

As a consequence, the continued growth in car ownership and use, increased demand for on-street parking restrictions by both residents and elected members, the absence of a comprehensive parking service plan for managing parking supply, demand and pricing and changes to our local road network have all contributed to a confusing parking management landscape for our customers.

This in turn has had a major impact on the Council's resources for managing the increased number of requests, demands and complaints regarding parking management issues. In addition, the associated problems of congestion and road safety on key routes, growing dissatisfaction with enforcement protocols and perceived overspill at some car parks and spare capacity in others.

The purpose of a revised Borough-wide Parking Management Action Plan would therefore be to clearly define the Council's vision for parking management, in support of the regeneration and economic development of Wokingham as a Borough and to set out a programme of actions for resolving the issues identified.

The Action Plan would also form a statement of the Council's understanding of the issues affecting residents and businesses; show its commitment to the future management of parking demand and supply. This is set against a backdrop of broader transportation and mobility needs, rapidly developing technology and the Council's wider aspirations for the Borough as a connected network of places and localities.

Analysis of Issues

WBC Parking Management Responsibility

The Council currently has responsibility for managing parking provision in three forms;

- **On-street parking.** This is parking within the public highway with enforcement undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council through a service contract with NSL. On-street parking can include free parking places, disabled parking places, residents' parking zones and paid-for parking (typically through pay and display);
- **Council off-street car parks.** These are provided by the Council and are for the use of the general public. Where charges apply these generally relate to the length of stay. Car parks can be both for short and long stays and includes our Park & Ride sites; and

- **Private off-street car parks.** These are privately owned and operated by private parking companies, eg. Network Rail for use by a variety of users including the public, residents and employees. The Council can influence these through planning controls.

The Committee's recommendations on the type and scale of issues affecting each of these forms of parking provision was sought.

Legislative Background

The **Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984** places a statutory duty upon all local highway authorities to make Traffic Regulation Orders in order to control traffic for road safety and movement and to manage on-street parking provision within their areas.

The **Traffic Management Act 2004** places a network management duty upon Wokingham Borough Council to keep traffic flowing, and to co-operate with other authorities to the same end. Local authorities have to exercise all of their functions that have an impact on traffic in a more co-ordinated way. This Act places a strong emphasis on the local authority taking responsibility for parking enforcement through the development and implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE).

Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 is the legal framework that enables Wokingham to undertake Civil Parking Enforcement in order to help manage the issues of indiscriminate and illegal parking. The Act also places a duty on the Council to manage the flow and safety of traffic efficiently.

The Results of Consultation

Through the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, all Members across the borough were invited to submit their views on parking and those of their constituents to the Council's Traffic Management, Parking & Road Safety Team Manager through the traffic.management@wokingham.gov.uk email inbox. The opportunity to submit comments remained open until Wednesday 1st May 2019, following which all comments received were analysed.

A total of 12 formal responses to the invitation were received and this report summarises all of the issues raised and incorporates these into the draft Parking Management Action Plan enclosed in Appendix A of this report.

Next Steps

Officers will review the feedback received from the Committee on the draft Parking Management Action Plan and programme the actions set out for the 2019/20 financial year. This will include the commissioning of further analysis work to determine a) parking capacity & demand; b) a strategy for setting parking charges; c) the potential for new technology as part of a wider ITS strategy; and an annual Parking Services Report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £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 Year (Year 1)	Est £10,000	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Years 2 to 5)	Est (£15,000)	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Unknown at this stage	Unknown at this stage	Revenue

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

A nominal sum of £10,000 has been estimated as the cost of implementing actions from the Borough-wide Parking Management Action Plan in 2019/20, with a forecast saving of £15,000 in parking service delivery costs over the period 2020-25.

Cross-Council Implications

Implementation of the draft Parking Management Action Plan has the potential for improvement to service delivery across several service areas, Education and Housing as well as reduced Parking Service delivery costs in Highways & Transportation.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

1. Report to Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 March 2019
2. Appendix A - Summary of Responses Received
3. Appendix B - Draft Parking Management Action Plan

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