



# **Scrutiny Review of On-Street Parking**

**Report by the On-Street  
Parking Scrutiny Review  
Group  
April 2009**

**For presentation to the Environment  
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# SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ON-STREET PARKING

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The On-street Parking Scrutiny Review Group were tasked with examining the way in which the Council manages on-street parking within the County and how this fits with the aspirations of the Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2006/7-2010/11 (LTP) of developing “a sustainable and integrated transport system”.

Throughout the Review Group’s investigations and deliberations it became clear that tackling one area of parking provision in isolation of how it integrates with the rest of the transport network would be an inappropriate and potentially disruptive approach. In general, parking charges are regarded by the public as a “cash cow” for the council, disappearing into a general pot without trace. Without first tackling this misconception, the introduction of on-street parking charges would be a political hot potato too hot to handle, particularly in the current economic climate. A clear link between paying for parking and the transport improvements that the income can pay for needs to be developed before any more charges are introduced. A key recommendation of this report is the ring-fencing of income from parking so that it can provide an investment budget for sustainable transport options for the same area as the money is spent in. Understanding that the public need to see that their money is being spent on improvements that increase accessibility and reduce environmental damage, is a fundamental cornerstone of this report. If done successfully, it should garner support and promote a more sustainable approach to accessing our town centres.

There are areas of the council’s management of on-street parking that clearly need reform. The current system for providing residential parking permits has been recommended for significant change (Section 4). The proposed new system should provide much more flexibility for householders, whilst removing the potential for easy misuse and abuse of the visitor’s permit. Dealing with visiting tradesmen, town centre commercial loading bays, the signing and lining of parking restrictions, collection of parking data and the amalgamation of small schemes are all areas where specific recommendations are made by this report.

The Review Group were keen to examine how the introduction of new technology could improve the service the council offers. There was convincing evidence that the use of mobile phone technology could help deliver significant improvements in a way that could also promote the increased use of sustainable modes of travel, a key outcome in every priority area in the LTP. It may also be used as an alternative to “pay on exit” machines in car parks, negating the need for costly additional staffing. There are other technologies available as evidenced by the introduction of the Oyster card for London Transport, but the Review Group were unable to access sufficient local knowledge to assess their efficacy.

There has been one over-arching theme that the Review Group has returned to throughout this process; Herefordshire needs a detailed and strategic plan for the future provision of parking which provides for increased accessibility of our town centres. This should first be developed for Hereford city where the need is greatest and, once improvements are secured, the approach should be rolled out to the market towns. This strategy should provide for the gradual development of a network of sustainable parking options whilst promoting modal shift within a traffic reduction framework. It should set clear outcomes for the reduction in congestion and should be fully integrated with other areas of transport services such as school travel plan implementation & public transport provision. Parking should become easy to use, clearly signposted and above all, should not be seen as problematic.

The Review Group have found this process both fascinating and frustrating, but we hope that the following report adds to the debate about how we accommodate our cars without increasing the traffic.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 25th February 2008 considered a report (Appendix 1) by the then Acting Head of Highways and Transportation with regard to on-street parking controls and a suggestion that the Committee may wish to consider undertaking a review to determine whether any improvements could be made.
- 1.2. The Environment Scrutiny Committee was informed that Council's Countywide Car Parking Strategy formed part of the Council's Local Transport Plan that set out the overall transport strategy for the County. The current strategy identified that during the period of the current Local Transport Plan, consideration would be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and provide revenue funding to support Park and Ride or other sustainable transport improvements. Proposals were being developed for park and ride facilities for Hereford and it hoped to bring forward a scheme to serve traffic entering the City from the North in 2009. In addition, the Council had over recent years continued with a programme of Residents Parking Schemes in residential areas close to the centre of Hereford, and in appropriate locations in the Market Towns, to deter commuter and shopper parking and help enable residents to park. Given the number of schemes that had now been introduced, it was suggested it may be appropriate to review the extent to which they had been successful and whether there were any improvements that could be made to how the schemes were operated and enforced.
- 1.3. The Committee agreed to undertake a review and appointed Councillors: MAF Hubbard (Chairman) RI Matthews; PM Morgan; A Seldon; PJ Watts and JD Woodward. The Lead Officer for the review was Peter Cross (Environment & Culture Support Manager) supported by Paul James, Democratic Services Officer.
- 1.4. Following further consideration by the Chairman of Environment Scrutiny Committee Councillor JD Woodward was appointed to provide Hereford City ward representation.
- 1.5. Based on the report to Scrutiny Committee the Lead Officer prepared a terms of reference (the key lines of enquiry) for the Scrutiny review which were presented to the first meeting of the Review Group.
- 1.6. The Terms of Reference were agreed as:
  - To review the current policies governing on-street parking in the light of any areas of concern that have been expressed, and to identify improvements drawn from best practice elsewhere that could be made to help achieve the policy objectives better.
  - To examine how we manage the streets in terms of residents and non-residents parking in Hereford City (and the Market Towns) to ensure that the treatment of both groups is equitable, to identify the extent to which the current arrangements are successful, to identify whether there are any improvements that could be made to how the schemes are operated and enforced.

- To examine whether and how charges for on-street parking could facilitate the ongoing support of a park-and-ride system in Hereford City and/or other sustainable travel improvements.
- To examine the extent to which on-street parking controls can support the LTP objective of reducing congestion in Hereford City.
- To examine the relationship between on-street and off-street parking and in particular how the physical capacity of the highway network impacts on this relationship.
- To examine the potential impact in Hereford of new enabling technologies (such as those based on smart cards) that could support a shift in behaviours and help to promote a sustainable approach to accessing the city centre.
- To review the current provision for on-street cycle parking and whether it is sufficient.

## **The Review**

- 1.7. Whilst it may appear on the surface that On-Street Parking is a particularly dry subject, the members of the Scrutiny Review Group have regularly commented how engaging this process has been.
- 1.8. In early discussions during the review, it became clear that many of the central issues influencing on-street parking are concentrated within Hereford City and it is for this reason that the Scrutiny Review Group decided to concentrate its efforts on addressing the city's issues. The recommendations are not necessarily immediately transferable to the market towns, with the possible exception of changes to the Residents' Parking Schemes. Dealing appropriately with Hereford should give sufficient experience that can be rolled out to the market towns as they develop.
- 1.9. The Scrutiny Review Group would like to express its thanks to the people who have presented verbal evidence to the Review Group, those who have provided further information and or data as required and to the committee clerk, whose excellent notes, organisational skills and guidance made this process much easier.

## **Next Steps**

- 1.10. The Review Group anticipate that, when approved by the Environment Scrutiny Committee, this report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration.
- 1.11. The Environment Scrutiny Committee would then expect Cabinet within two months of receipt of the report to consider the report and recommendations and respond to the Committee indicating what action the Cabinet propose to take together with an action plan.

## 2. Method of Gathering Information

- 2.1. The Review Group undertook a series of meetings in order to collect the evidence to complete the review. Evidence that was considered included the following:
- 2.2. **Face to Face interviews** – a series of interviews took place with key Council officers and a representative sample of service users and interested parties. A list of those interviewed is set out at Appendix 2.
- 2.3. **Written evidence** - The Review Group considered a range of written evidence to assist their deliberations including:
- a) Herefordshire Council's Parking Policy, Parking Enforcement Protocols, Appeals & Representation Protocols, Countywide Car Parking Strategy, Residents' Parking Schemes – Policy & Criteria, Herefordshire Congestion Assessment and Hereford City Centre Regeneration Strategy – A 10 Year Ambition.
  - b) Technical Notes written for Edgar Street Grid Ltd on Parking for Developments and a Report of Parking Surveys.
  - c) Follow up written information was provided by a number of interviewees at the request of the Review Group.
  - d) Information was also received from Worcester City Council and Staffordshire County Council on resident's parking schemes and policies on the introduction of on-street parking charges.
  - e) Individuals from a range of backgrounds/interests also provided written evidence and opinions for the Review Group to consider,

### **3. Current policies and possible improvements drawn from best practice elsewhere**

- 3.1. The council's current Countywide Parking Strategy forms part of the Local Transport Plan 2006/7-2010/11(LTP) that sets out the overall transport strategy for the county. An extract is provided as part of Appendix 1. This recognises the important role that the parking policy can play in developing a sustainable and integrated transport system for the county. The current strategy identifies (at section 9.7) that, during the period of the current LTP, consideration will be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and to provide revenue funding to support park-and-ride or other sustainable travel improvements.
- 3.2. Charging for on-street parking is contained in the LTP for future consideration, but the Review Group have only received an outline on its possible introduction from the then Acting Head of Highways and this only looked at possible income generation. No consideration was given to the effects of introducing charges or how this supports a wider strategic parking policy, which does not appear to be in existence. The Group are unaware of any real business case having been compiled to support the introduction of on-street charges. The potential of on-street parking charges supporting Park & Ride developments for the city is still relevant, but with no detailed costing available, it is not possible to assess how successful this would be. There is clearly a role for parking charges, both on and off-street, in encouraging visitors to the city to use the Park & Ride service once it is in place.
- 3.3. The Countywide Car Parking Strategy states that parking can "play a major role in supporting the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system". Current council policy is to control on-street parking by means of limited waiting restrictions, with exemptions provided to local residents' through various residents' parking permit systems. All on-street parking is currently completely free of charge which did raise basic questions for the Review Group on how sustainable this approach actually is? The following opinion was expressed during the review, "How can Hereford complain of congestion when you invite the world into your medieval town centre to park on the streets for free?" Conversely, in a county where much of the rural population have to rely on their cars to access the services in their town centres, does it become unsustainable for the town centres to price them off the roads without first providing a viable alternative? This "chicken & egg" situation became a central issue in the deliberations of the review group.
- 3.4. The complexities of an integrated transport system can be experienced on the roads in Hereford on a regular basis. An incident in one part of the city can cause gridlock elsewhere and similar can be said for the provision of parking. To radically alter the current management of parking over too short a time frame could easily lead to unknown and undesirable consequences. On-street parking spaces represent about 15% of those available to the public in Hereford city centre, any proposals to change their management needs to be approached with the utmost care and must take account of the stated aim within the all the LTP key objectives of "increased use of sustainable modes of travel".
- 3.5. The Review Group heard compelling arguments that any recommendations arising out of the review should take account of the Principles set out in the recently published "Hereford City Centre Regeneration Strategy" namely:
  - Build on the County's distinctiveness
  - Ensure sustainability and consideration for the environment

- Next Generation (planning for the needs of young people)
  - Based on Quality and Good Design
  - Community Cohesion
- 3.6 Further to this, a desire was expressed to attract *people* to the city centre, not necessarily their cars and, above all, that parking should not be seen as a problem. This would require a more flexible approach to our streets and how they are designed, especially with the expansion of residential areas within the ESG and living “over the shop” schemes, which by their nature would have dwellings with few or no parking spaces provided.
- 3.7 Throughout the Local Transport Plan and the other policy documents taken into consideration by the Review Group, sustainability and reduction in CO2 emissions are recurring themes. The provision of on-street parking and its management clearly needs to be considered within a wider traffic reduction framework, enabling modal shift from the car to more environmentally friendly modes of transport, but this can only be done by providing viable alternatives that are easy, safe and pleasant to use as part of an overall strategy.
- 3.8 For clarity, it is necessary to define the three types of car park as: city centre – car parks within or on the “inner ring road; edge of centre – car parks within easy walking distance of the centre; city boundary – car parks placed on the outskirts of the city, usually park & ride or park & cycle facilities.
- 3.9 The complete lack of city boundary car parks in Hereford was considered by the Review Group to be a major stumbling block to the development of more sustainable parking habits for the people who need to access the centre. This severely limits the potential of “park & walk”, “park & cycle” and “park & ride” options for visitors to the city. Substantial environmental enhancements along the routes from car parks into the city centre were also considered to be essential if we are to develop a more sustainable attitude to visiting Hereford. Walking into town should be a pleasurable experience, not a trudge along unattractive, cluttered and polluted tarmac corridors. These aesthetic considerations were of particular concern to interviewees representing the views of community groups. Herefordshire residents’ quality of life is one of the main features of the County’s distinctiveness which needs to be built on.
- 3.10 Throughout the deliberations of the Review Group, there was a lack of hard evidence about the people who use the parking provision in the city. Various unsubstantiated figures were offered regarding the number of car journeys that occur within the city and where they originate from. Little is known about who is actually parking within our city centre, where they come from and the purpose of their journey. The Review Group consider that this basic information is crucial to the planning of future provision and our ability to target those people whose car use could, by the provision of attractive alternatives, be considered unnecessary. Some information is available from surveys conducted by ESG Ltd, but this deals purely with capacity issues within car parks and is dated September 2007. More recent information showing a substantial reduction of income from Hereford’s car parks indicate that this ESG survey data may now be out of date. No information is available about on-street parking apart from the overall number of spaces available which frustrated our efforts.
- 3.11 Much is made of the traffic problems in Hereford, but in general the Review Group did not find the experience of using the road network in Hereford to be any worse than other county towns. Indeed, subject to accidents or road works, waiting times in Hereford seem to be far less compared to elsewhere. Outside the morning & evening rush hours and the afternoon school run, driving into Hereford is generally extremely easy with parking readily available, although it could be better signposted for those that do not know

the city. There is clearly a need for a reduction in the levels of congestion during peak hours.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

3.a	The Review Group recommends the Executive commission detailed research into the use of car parks within Hereford City.
3.b	Using the data collected at 3a above, the Review Group recommends that the Head of Planning and Transportation ensures a detailed parking strategy is developed in the Hereford Area Plan (see 7.a below).
3.c	The Review Group further recommends that all future provision of parking should be developed within a traffic reduction framework for town centres. Parking should be seen as an opportunity for increasing the accessibility of the City & our Market Towns. It is essential to develop this mindset before future planning takes place.

#### **4. How we manage the streets in terms of residents and non-residents parking.....**

##### Residents' Parking Scheme

- 4.1 The policy and criteria for Herefordshire Council's Residents' Parking schemes is set out in Appendix 3 of this report. The Review Group would like to highlight that the policy states "Full consideration of a scheme will only be undertaken if a majority of residents support the introduction of a residents' parking scheme." The Review Group would argue that changes to a scheme's management should not require majority support, if the council considers the introduction of a solution to a problem is necessary. The technical expertise and experience of our officers should be relied upon when solving management issues and deciding on the boundaries of a given scheme. Given the benefit of hindsight, the Review Group do not consider it appropriate to allow individual roads within a proposed new scheme area to opt out of a particular scheme. If a majority of residents vote for a scheme, within the boundaries defined by officers, who are now experienced in these matters, then the scheme should go ahead in its entirety. Letting individual roads opt out creates management difficulties, due to the transfer of the problem to those streets, which result in expensive consultation procedures having to be run for a second time to re-include opted out roads.
- 4.2 The Review Group heard a wide range of opinion and experiences about the operation of the various residents' schemes by the council and have identified a number of areas of concern which have led to a clear set of recommendations for change
- 4.3 Currently, each house in a residential parking area can apply for one parking permit for a car registered at that address and one visitor's permit that can be displayed on any car that happens to be visiting.
- 4.4 Visitors' permits appear to be the area of greatest contention. Currently their use is incredibly flexible giving rise, in some quarters, to a strong defence for their retention. However the flexibility of this permit also provides plenty of scope for misuse and outright abuses. The Review Group heard compelling evidence from officers investigating challenges to penalty charge notices about the difficulty they faced in proving clear abuses of the system. Common practise in a two car household is that the second car has the visitor's permit permanently displayed, giving rise to the widespread practise of informal "borrowing" of the neighbours' visitor permit when a third permit is required. Technically this is misuse of the system. The Review Group is of the opinion that were we to be starting from scratch, the current residents' parking scheme would not now be introduced.
- 4.5 The current system does not adequately provide for tradesmen & peripatetic essential workers (doctors, community midwives, etc.) visiting a two car household. The Review Group consider the current system of tradesmen phoning the Parking Manager to request relaxation of enforcement whilst they work on a property, to be too informal a management system to deal with this regular and growing problem. Tradesmen need access to a system that will guarantee their ability to park without penalty at the property they are working on, particularly where the refurbishment works require more than one vehicle to be on site at one time.
- 4.6 The Review Group stress the need for the council to promote the fact that residents do not have a right to park outside their home. The Queen's highways are for the movement of traffic and any schemes for the facilitation of parking exist to prevent obstructions, they do not confer a right on any individual to park in any particular place, kerb-space is available to any road

user, subject to any waiting restriction that may be in force and the laws of obstruction.

- 4.7 The Review Group heard that the geographical size of a residents' parking scheme area was crucial to its efficient operation. Schemes with too small a defined area do not provide enough kerbside spaces to give residents a chance of finding a space, particularly where the scheme is within or close to the historic core of the city. The Review Group felt that there was a strong case for the amalgamation of co-existent small schemes.
- 4.8 The Review Group heard persuasive arguments from local residents who live in areas that are highly sought after by short term shoppers or visitors to other local services that dedicated residents' only bays should be introduced on stretches of kerb-space to allow for some possibility of them finding a space should they be required to use their cars during the day. However, the Review Group did not agree with assertions regarding the placement of these bays close to the homes of residents registered with the scheme, as this would imply a right to park in a particular spot.
- 4.9 The Review Group heard from a community sports group based at premises within a residential parking scheme that was not included in the consultation exercise when the scheme was introduced. Since residents' parking began, the effect on the group had been quite devastating. Regular informal meetings during the week have had to be completely abandoned and matches now had to be arranged for Sundays when no parking restrictions apply. Further, their group had diminished in size from over 100 members to 30 within a year of the parking scheme commencing, with many people commenting that the difficulties with parking had led them to join other groups without the same problems.
- 4.10 The Review Group heard a lot of criticism of the maintenance of "signs & lines" denoting the various Traffic Road Orders which are essential to effective enforcement. The Parking and Civil Enforcement teams have a difficult enough job dealing with irate members of the public, who often become abusive on receipt of a Penalty Charge Notice, without then experiencing problems collecting the fines because a particular line or sign does not comply with legal requirements.
- 4.11 It was recommended to the Review Group that consideration be given to a review of the on-street waiting times within the inner ring road. As many of these spaces are very close to the presumed destination of the visitor, a free parking limit of 2-3 hours was considered too long. These spaces should be prioritised for a high turnover rate, maximising visitors' chances of finding somewhere to park without having to wait too long.
- 4.12 It has also come to the attention of the Review Group that commercial loading bays in our town centres may be discriminating against small locally owned businesses where the turnover of the business does not support the investment required to own a commercial vehicle. Small retailers, often owned & run by local families will use the family car as the business support vehicle. When these businesses try to use commercial loading bays to deliver essential goods to their premises, their vehicles are judged to be non-commercial by Civil Enforcement Officers and issued with penalty charge notices. Technically, loading bays are not available for parking and the period of time available for loading is strictly limited. In practice, a commercial vehicle can park in a loading bay for as long as the time restriction allows and will not receive a penalty charge notice. Conversely, a small business owner can be physically unloading their car and yet be required to move immediately if they are found to be doing so by a Civil Enforcement Officer. The Review Group considers this issue needs addressing as a matter of priority for all loading bays in all town centres, either by registering vehicles owned by small

businesses or relaxing the restrictions to enable an ordinary vehicle appropriate loading/waiting time.

- 4.13 A New Residents' Parking Scheme – best practise in other authorities reveals a commonly used residential parking scheme based on issuing a maximum of two residents' permits to identified cars registered at each address with a maximum of 50 daily "scratchcards" per year per household available for the use of visitors. Overall, residents' parking schemes should cover their costs, and provide for some investment in alternative travel modes and the provision of infrastructure. Consideration should be given to charging considerably less for the first permit than the second, thereby rewarding people for more sustainable approaches to car ownership. Examples of best practise of this type of scheme are readily available, of particular merit is the scheme considered by Bristol City Council Cabinet (17/11/07). The Review Group would suggest the following price levels: first permit - £25, second permit - £40 and £1.50 for daily scratch cards. Discounted permit rates of up to 100% on the first permit for cars with very low emissions should also be considered. This scheme also allows for the immediate cancellation of permits issued to a resident that moves out of a residential scheme area, allowing the new occupant immediate access to permit parking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

4.a	The Review Group recommends that a new residents' parking scheme as outlined in 4.13 above is introduced for all existing schemes to eliminate the issuing of a visitors' permit that can be used on any vehicle.
4.b	It is recommended that the introduction of the new residents' parking scheme should be accompanied by clear promotional material explaining why the changes are deemed necessary and highlighting the increased flexibility the new scheme provides for two car households and emphasizing that residents do not have a "right" to park outside their house.
4.c	The Review Group recommends that tradesmen be permitted to purchase visitors' scratchcards directly from the council whilst working on properties within a residential parking area. Proof of the property owner's residency and the nature of the work should be required
4.d	Other essential peripatetic service providers will normally be able to deliver their service within the currently available free on-street parking time restrictions.
4.e	It is recommended that the boundaries of proposed new schemes should be defined by officers using their experience. Individual roads within a proposed scheme should not be allowed to opt out of the whole scheme.

4.f	The Review Group recommends that the residents' schemes in East Street and Castle Street be amalgamated. In future, where small schemes exist for particular or historic reasons and, in the opinion of officers they would be usefully amalgamated, then this should be taken as a management decision and will not require a majority vote of residents.
4.g	The Review Group recommends the introduction of resident only parking bays in roads within the historic core of the medieval city where residents' schemes exist and specific problems are encountered with a high volume of short stay parking for shopping. The number of spaces provided should only be a proportion of the number of permits issued to the street and should not be collocated with individual addresses. In future it may become necessary to provide resident only bays on edge of town centre roads also.
4.h	Where community group premises exist within a residents' parking zone which does not have access to off-street parking, the Review Group requests that the Parking Team work with the group to enable them to purchase a supply of daily scratchcards at a discount for events/matches set in advance. The parking team will need to ensure the necessary checks are in place to prevent misuse of these permits.
4.i	The Review Group recommends the Head of Highways undertake an immediate review of deficiencies in the signing and lining of restricted parking areas within the county. Where deficiencies are found that a programme of works is instigated to rectify them. Further, that a prioritised system of fault reporting be set up in conjunction with the Civil Enforcement Teams to ensure effective future maintenance.
4.j	The Review Group recommends the Head of Highways instigate a review of the restricted waiting times within the historic core of Hereford city with the aim of reducing these down to more appropriate times to promote a higher turnover.
4.k	The Review Group recommends that the Head of Highways introduce a county-wide relaxation of the restrictions applied to commercial loading bays in town centres to facilitate their use for un/loading by locally owned small businesses that use their private vehicles for business support. Alternatively, that a county-wide scheme of private vehicle registration be instigated for these businesses to enable them to use the commercial loading bays, whichever method is most effective and least costly.

**5. Whether and how charges for on-street parking could facilitate the on-going support of a park and ride system in Hereford City and other sustainable travel improvements.**

- 5.1. The Review Group heard conflicting evidence about the possibility of income from on-street parking charges being able to support the costs of a park & ride scheme. The recent introduction of limited on-street charges in Worcester was, in the opinion of their Civil Enforcement Team Leader, too low to fund park & ride.
- 5.2. Set-up costs for the infrastructure of on-street parking charges mean that for the first few years of operation, charges would simply fund their own introduction. The Review Group accepts that in the longer term, there would be some income that could off-set other sustainable travel options for the visitor to Hereford city, but there was a strongly held view by both the Review Group and many of the people it interviewed that the alternative options should be in place *before* charges are introduced.
- 5.3. Much of the work of the Review Group was carried out whilst the current national recession was developing and we have therefore been unable to take full account of how the recession is changing footfall in Hereford city and elsewhere. It is clear that there has been a downturn in the number of people accessing the city centre which has been alluded to in the reporting of lower than normal income from car parks in the city. The introduction of on-street charges at this stage is likely to increase the pressures already being felt by retailers and businesses operating in town centres across Herefordshire and is therefore not considered an option at this stage.
- 5.4. The Review Group considered the future possibility of individual roads within a town centre developing plans to improve the design of the local environment to promote the economic regeneration of the immediate area. Such community-led plans may wish to examine the possibility of paying for the improvements through the introduction of on-street parking charges for visitors. The Review Group thought this to be a more appropriate use of potential income from on-street charging schemes as the relationship between the charge and what it is paying for is more instant.
- 5.5. The Review Group discussed alternative approaches to the funding of park & ride and other sustainable travel schemes. It was generally felt that income from parking schemes, both on & off-street should be ring-fenced to provide a regular investment budget for strategic environmental improvements and developing sustainable travel options for the visiting public. The Review Group believes that, properly promoted at the point of payment, this approach would allow the public to understand why charges were being made for car parking. Ring-fencing of this nature should have a geographical relation to the improvements paid for; thus, money charged for car parking in Ledbury should pay for environmental improvements to Ledbury and not simply disappear in to the council's general expenditure.
- 5.6. The Review Group accepts that on-street parking charges are an inevitable part of a truly integrated approach to developing a sustainable transport system for our city and market towns. Their introduction will never be popular, but this can be greatly ameliorated by the way in which it is done. Clearly linking payment for any type of parking with real outcomes in the improvement of the environment and sustainable travel options for the area were seen as the way forward.

## RECOMMENDATION

5.a	The Review Group cannot recommend the introduction of on-street parking charges at this current time. Future introduction of on-street parking charges should be detailed in the parking strategy (3.b & 7.a) to encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.
5.b	The Review Group recommends that should community-led plans be forthcoming regarding the re-design and regeneration of individual streets within the city centre, then consideration should be given to funding these up front and then recouping the costs by the introduction of charges within the streets that have benefitted.
5.c	The Review Group recommends that all future income from parking of any sort be ring-fenced to provide a regular investment budget for strategic environmental improvements that promote sustainable travel options within the geographical location that the income is earned. Outcomes from this investment strategy should be promoted at point of payment for parking services.

## **6. The extent to which on-street parking controls can support the LTP objective of reducing congestion in Hereford City**

- 6.1. The Local Transport Plan states there are over 400 on-street parking spaces available in Hereford city representing 15 % of publicly available parking provision. These are *all* subject to restrictions on the amount of time a vehicle is allowed to park after which a penalty charge notice can be issued by a Civil Enforcement Officer, time limits vary between 1 and 3 hours.
- 6.2. To assess whether further controls, such as the introduction of parking charges for on-street parking spaces, would support the LTP objective of reducing congestion in Hereford city, the Review Group attempted to gain an understanding of why congestion occurs in the first place. Throughout the Review Group's investigations, various theories were proposed as to why congestion was such a problem. The widely held belief that Hereford requires a second river crossing to take through traffic away from the city was a recurring theme, but this did not answer another widely held belief that the majority of the car journeys in Hereford start and end within the boundaries of the city, signifying that the through traffic may not be the cause of the problem.
- 6.3. Congestion is clearly at its worst during the morning and evening rush hours with a very busy period for the "school run" between 15.00 – 16.00hrs. Outside of these times, notwithstanding road works and other incidents, waiting times due to congestion were not considered to be onerous. Indeed it was also generally accepted that Hereford did not have a serious congestion problem during the school holiday periods, suggesting that a relatively small reduction in the amount of traffic can have a significant benefit on congestion levels.
- 6.4. The Review Group heard of the excellent work being done under the School Travel Plan initiative introduced by central government, requiring all schools to have a Travel Plan in place by 2010. Whilst 86% of Herefordshire schools have got a plan, the Review Group saw little evidence of their effective implementation and hence little effect on congestion levels. This is exacerbated by parental choice under the national admission to school policy leading to a high percentage of Herefordshire parents exercising their choice not to send their children to their "catchment school", increasing the likelihood of large numbers of children being transported to school by car.
- 6.5. Entitlement to free school travel requires primary pupils to live more than 2 miles and secondary pupils more than 3 miles from their catchment school. These distances were set in 1875 and the Review Group thought it highly unlikely that modern parents would require the children to walk such distances. The discretionary ability for the Council to extend this eligibility would be prohibitively expensive and would do little to address parental concerns over the safe delivery of their children to school.
- 6.6. The LTP also identifies over 2500 public off-street car parking spaces with almost another 5000 privately owned non-residential parking spaces also available, with the vast majority of these spaces distributed close to or inside Hereford's medieval city centre. The provision of such a large number of parking spaces, whether privately owned or publically controlled, must be influencing congestion levels.
- 6.7. The LTP also states "The Council will seek to redress the balance of total public to private non-residential parking supply, particularly within Hereford, through the use of planning controls", but the Review Group found little evidence that this had been strategically thought through and applied.

6.8. Although there were some anecdotal opinions about drivers circulating the city streets trying to find a space to park in, the review Group found no evidence to support the view that the provision of on-street parking in Hereford city was increasing the congestion experienced on our roads. Indeed it is the stated belief of several members of the Review Group that Hereford's difficulties with congestion are not nearly as bad as the generally held public perception of the problem. A well thought out, strategic policy approach to congestion in Hereford that includes better implementation of city school travel plans; a reduction in the number of privately owned parking spaces and the development of city boundary car parks with attractive routes linking them to the centre needs to be dovetailed with the introduction of on-street parking charges at the right moment to promote modal shift.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

6.a	The Review Group recommends that increased on-street parking controls in the form of charges should only be introduced when viable sustainable alternative options for city boundary parking are already in place. It is at this point that charges could be used to promote the sustainable alternatives and promote congestion reduction.
6.b	The Review Group recommends that a targeted campaign of school travel plan implementation and monitoring be carried out within areas considered to be experiencing high levels of congestion, notably Hereford city.
6.c	The Review Group recommends that the Head of Planning and Transportation Services draw up an action plan to redress the balance of total public to private non-residential parking supply in Hereford. This could form part of the Hereford Area Plan recommended in section 7 below.

**7. The relationship between on-street and off-street parking and in particular how the physical capacity of the highway network impacts on this relationship.**

- 7.1. During the Review Group's deliberations, it became increasingly clear that the relationship between on-street and off-street parking was a complex one. The level of car parking provision, its geographical location and the way in which it is priced and paid for all contribute to how efficient the system is and how successful the service is at enabling people to access the facilities they need to. The physical capacity of the highway network, much criticised in Hereford for its inability "to cope", is also seen as a lynchpin to the successful operation of a market town. Access to a town's services should be easy, well signposted and pleasant to use and should encourage users to opt for more sustainable modes of travel to reduce congestion.
- 7.2. As has been explored in section 6 above, on-street parking in Hereford is a fairly small, but significant proportion of the publicly available parking spaces (15%), but when taken as a proportion of the total number of parking spaces, including the privately owned non-residential provision, the proportion is far less significant (5.3%). By definition, the on-street parking available to the visitor is geographically located as city centre or edge of centre, but so is the majority of the off-street parking provision too. The presence of a large long stay car park at Merton Meadow priced at an incredibly reasonable £1 per car per day does nothing to encourage commuters to explore alternatives to driving into the centre of town; indeed parking here is cheaper than using the bus, actively discouraging commuters from changing their habits.
- 7.3. The extensive provision of parking of all types close to Hereford city centre encourages the public expectation of being able to drive freely into a medieval town without hindrance and at little cost. The result is that the physical capacity of the highway is placed under pressure during peak demand.
- 7.4. The Review Group was disappointed to discover that there is no purpose built long stay city boundary parking provision at all and is of the opinion that whilst this remains the case, little can be done to encourage modal shift as there are simply no alternatives. It is clear that this lack of a strategic approach to the provision of parking that encourages modal shift within a traffic reduction framework is yet to be developed in Herefordshire.
- 7.5. The Review Group welcomes the development of a park & ride facility to the north of Hereford, but has heard some evidence to suggest that its effect will only be felt when similar facilities are developed on more of the main routes into the city and that these should not be limited to park & ride. Park & cycle facilities with secure overnight cycle storage should be included within these new schemes with new payment systems to reward regular users (see section 8 below). This is in line with the Key Outcomes in the LTP.
- 7.6. Once these other options are in place, the council should actively seek to reduce the availability of long term parking at city centre and edge of centre sites, both publicly and privately owned. High quality medium term parking (up to 4 hours) should be developed on edge of centre sites, with attractive routes linking them with shops and services. Only short term parking should be available within the historic core of the city. All parking should be available on the more flexible payment system outlined in section 8. Consideration should be given to increasing parking charges close to the centre, whilst decreasing charges for city boundary car parking.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

7.a	The Review Group recommends that the Head of Planning and Transportation Services instigate the development of a comprehensive parking strategy as part of the Hereford Area Plan. This document should provide the policy behind an achievable parking strategy which slowly develops a network of sustainable parking options that promote modal shift within a traffic reduction framework for Hereford City followed by the Market Towns. New payment systems, behavioural change and congestion reduction should form key outcomes for the parking strategy.
7.b	The Review Group cannot make any recommendations to change on-street parking strategy in isolation of off-street parking provision. To do so would be counterproductive and would not form an integrated approach.
7.c	The Review Group recommends that the routes connecting all medium stay car parks (edge of centre) be examined for potential environmental improvements to ensure that these are perceived as safe and pleasant to use.

**8. The potential impact in Hereford of new enabling technologies that could support a shift in behaviours and help to promote a sustainable approach to accessing the City Centre.**

- 8.1. The Review Group was only able to gather information from one company regarding new enabling technologies and this centred on the use of mobile telephones to pay for parking services. The Chairman of the Review Group did meet with a company developing smart card payments services, but it was evident that this technology was still at development stage and the costs of introduction would be prohibitive. However, the information gathered about the potential of mobile phone technology was extremely promising.
- 8.2. The Review Group heard that it is possible to pay for many different services using the mobile phone provider's charging system, but the high level of fees taken by the companies meant that this could not be considered as an option for parking fees.
- 8.3. Alternatively, it would be possible to develop a system using a credit/debit card pre-registered via a website to a particular mobile telephone number. Using the standard SMS text procedure, a visitor to an on-street parking space or car park would text the location of the car parking space, the duration of their stay and their vehicle registration number. The charge could then be automatically taken from the credit/debit card. The system could be set up to send a reminder text when their parking charge was due to run out, giving the visitor the option to extend their payment to the limit of any time restrictions applicable. Civil Enforcement Officers could be provided with a hand held mobile device that would provide up to the minute information on what spaces had been paid for by which car.
- 8.4. Information received by the Review Group suggests that this type of system would not cost a fortune to set up and is already well within the operational capabilities of current technology. Guaranteed response rates function at all times with built-in capacity to enable efficient functioning even in extreme circumstances – the rescue efforts during the July 7<sup>th</sup> London bombings were co-ordinated using this system.
- 8.5. A benefit of this type of payment system is the flexibility it can provide in offering both the "carrot" and the "stick" to encourage behavioural change to more sustainable methods of accessing the centre of towns. If a mobile phone payment system was adopted in the new park & ride facility, it would be possible to automatically allow the person who used park & ride all week to access their workplace, a free period of parking at the weekend for family shopping as a "reward" for behaviour that reduces congestion and emissions. If on-street parking charges are introduced, it would be possible to still offer anyone registered with the system, say, one on-street parking slot in town per week free of charge, which would reduce opposition to the introduction of charges. If that same person wished to park on-street on a daily basis, the "stick" could be introduced by increasing charges for unsustainable behaviour.
- 8.6. It would also be possible to offer discounts on higher city centre parking charges according to how often they are used, favouring the occasional visitor and encouraging the more regular user to park in city boundary car parks, thereby encouraging modal shift as stated in *all* of the Key Outcomes for Herefordshire in the LTP.
- 8.7. The Review Group heard many requests from interviewees about "pay on exit" car parks, with retailers reporting that many sales are lost because shoppers are rushing back to their cars before their ticket runs out. The successful introduction of a mobile phone payment service would negate the requirement for the expensive new machinery with staffing that pay on exit

car parks require and, as stated in 8.3 above, the system would even send a text to remind you to top up your parking payment if you were running late, without requiring your return to the car park.

- 8.8. Implementing a cashless payment system that requires individuals to pre-register predicates a level of interaction between service provider and user. By definition, most users that pre-register will have a degree of local connection, either by living or working locally or by being a regular visitor to our county. The dialogue that would need to occur for such a system to work should be taken as an opportunity to promote modal shift to more sustainable approaches to travel. Such a system will not suit everyone and a cash system will always be required for the occasional visitor, but in the long term, it is possible that unforeseen benefits would emerge in a similar way to those that have emerged with the introduction of the “Oyster” card in London.
- 8.9. The Review Group recognises that the detail of any such scheme would be complex, but that cashless systems are already in operation elsewhere, notably at Westminster City Council, and could be used as examples of best practice to enable the development of a scheme of excellence. Further, a system that actively promotes behavioural change in line with the stated policy aims of the LTP, but still provides the flexibility that people require, will be more readily accepted by the general public. This would provide a more integrated approach to our local transport network and enable people to access the facilities they need to whilst reducing the impact of this on the environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

8.a	The Review Group recommends that the Head of Highways investigates the development and implementation of a mobile phone cashless payment system for all of the county’s car parks as outlined above. At the outset, this system needs to be developed to ensure it has the capacity for automatically rewarding sustainable behaviour and applying penalties for unsustainable use of the transport network. Further, when on-street charges are introduced in the future, the Review Group recommends that this system has the ability to provide all registered users with one free parking period per week, ameliorating the effects of charging and ensuring access to services is maintained.
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## 9. The current provision for on-street cycle parking and whether it is sufficient

- 9.1. The Review Group received information that promoted cycling as one of the most sustainable modes of personal transport, being cheap with zero CO2 emissions and offering substantial health benefits. With two thirds of all car journeys being less than 3 miles which would take the average cyclist 15-20 minutes, cycling could be an extremely effective method for reducing traffic and easing congestion. During the rush hour over short journeys, cycling is often the fastest way to get around our towns and city.
- 9.2. From the information obtained during the review the Review Group commends the on-going work for the introduction of new cycle parking facilities in the county.
- 9.3. The Review Group did not receive any information that provided a definitive answer to whether the provision of on-street cycle parking is sufficient. The gradual increase year on year of cycle journeys within Hereford, suggested that it may not be which was corroborated by the personal experience of the Chairman of the Review Group. The Review Group was informed that there was currently a moratorium on the installation of cycle racks at new locations within High Town, Hereford, although some existing racks are to be replaced to accommodate cycles with wider handlebars. Locations on the periphery of Hereford centre were being investigated, with plans to add to the provision at health centres and doctors' surgeries as well as improved facilities in Ledbury and Leominster.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1	The Review Group recommends that the current moratorium on new cycle parking facilities in High Town, Hereford, be lifted and further sites for additional parking be investigated and introduced.
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## ON-STREET PARKING

Report By: **ACTING HEAD OF HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION**

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To highlight the Council's current policy with regard to on-street parking controls and consider whether it may be appropriate for this Committee to undertake a review to determine whether it would wish to recommend any improvements.

### Financial Implications

1. None as a result of this report

### Background

2. The Council's Countywide Car Parking Strategy forms part of the Council's Local Transport Plan that sets out the overall transport strategy for the County. This recognises the important role that the parking policy can play in developing a sustainable and integrated transport system for the County. It encompasses the Council's current approach to the management of both on and off-street parking. A copy of the strategy is attached as Appendix 1 for reference.
3. During 2004, this Committee carried out a detailed review of the previous strategy. That review considered the full range of issues relating to car parking from strategic policy to more detailed implementation issues. It also included comprehensive consultation with stakeholders. The recommendations arising from that review helped with the development of the current strategy that was subsequently incorporated into the Local Transport Plan.
4. The strategy sets out a countywide approach to the management of the Council's off-street car parks. This includes detailed area strategies for Hereford and the Market Towns to ensure that car park management is tailored to recognise local needs. It is not considered necessary to review this aspect of the current strategy at present.
5. There are over 1600 on-street parking spaces available in the main centres of the County, all of which are currently free and generally controlled by means of limited waiting restrictions. Within Hereford there are over 400 spaces, representing 15% of publicly available parking provision for the City Centre. Decriminalised parking enforcement was introduced some years ago throughout Herefordshire and the Council employs a team of Parking Attendants to undertake enforcement of parking restrictions.
6. The current strategy identifies that during the period of the current Local Transport Plan, consideration will be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and provide revenue funding to support Park and Ride or other sustainable transport improvements. The Council is currently developing proposals for

park and ride facilities for Hereford and it is hoped to bring forward a scheme to serve traffic entering the City from the North in 2009. The Committee may wish to consider the approach that should be taken to this aspect of the strategy.

7. In addition, the Council has over recent years continued with a programme of Residents Parking Schemes in residential areas close to the centre of Hereford, and in appropriate locations in the Market Towns, to deter commuter and shopper parking and help enable residents to park. Given the number of schemes that have now been introduced, it may be appropriate to review the extent to which they have been successful and whether there are any improvements that could be made to how the schemes are operated and enforced.
8. The Committee may wish to consider the approach they would wish to take to reviewing the recommending any improvements to the Council's policy in relation to the management of on-street parking.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Committee consider whether to undertake a review of the Council's policy in relation to on-street parking controls.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix 1: Extract from Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2006/7

**Extract from Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2 – 2006/7 – 2010/11.  
Countywide Car Parking Strategy. Pages 137 to 143**

**9.7 Countywide Car Parking Strategy**

**9.7.1 Introduction And Overview**

Parking policy can play a major role in supporting the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system. The availability of parking space is known to be a key factor in determining people's choice of mode for a particular journey. Together with improvements in alternative modes to provide the "carrot", strategies for parking supply and control can offer an important tool manage demand to encourage a modal shift away from the private car towards more sustainable modes.

Park and Ride can also form an essential part of such a package by offering an alternative to the car for the final part of a journey to a centre. It can therefore enable further demand management measures to be applied within the centre to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

The important role parking policy needs to play in addressing Herefordshire transport issues is recognised and this strategy seeks to manage both on and off street parking to maximise the benefits to the people of Herefordshire. This means balancing competing needs of shoppers and visitors against the needs of those who rely on a car to get to work and need all day parking. Charges are used to help to manage the use of the available space to balance these demands. The strategy is integrated and consistent with the objectives of other local strategic plans and recognises how important the car is for travel in this rural county.

Car Parking Strategy has a significant role in delivering the overall aims of the Local Transport Plan. The following table highlights the key linkages between the overall Shared Priorities, Key Outcomes that we have identified for Herefordshire and elements within the Car Parking Strategy.

### 9.7.2 Policy Linkages

**Table 9.7A: Parking Policy Linkages**

Shared Priorities	Key Outcomes	Car Parking Strategy Contribution
Delivering Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to jobs &amp; services</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> <li>• Assets maintained well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of convenient and accessible parking for disabled people</li> <li>• Development of Park and Ride</li> </ul>
Tackling Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced congestion</li> <li>• Assets maintained well</li> <li>• Supported and enabled economic development</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Park and Ride</li> <li>• Improved signing reduce congestion caused by searching for spaces</li> </ul>
Safer Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved safety</li> <li>• Assets maintained well</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decriminalised parking enforcement to improve flow of traffic and improve road safety</li> </ul>
Better Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarded environment</li> <li>• Reduced congestion</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging strategy to support demand management, encourage use of sustainable modes and deter commuter parking close to centres</li> <li>• Improved signing reduce congestion caused by searching for spaces</li> </ul>

### 9.7.3 Developing The Strategy

During 2004, the Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee carried out a detailed review of this strategy. This review considered the full range of issues relating to car parking from strategic policy to more detailed implementation issues. Comprehensive consultation was carried out to inform the review. This included a public session where the Review Team questioned six key witnesses from stakeholder groups and heard evidence of best practice from elsewhere. The consultation carried out included:

- A questionnaire to key organisations, Town and Parish Councils;
- Press statements inviting comment on the Strategy;
- Evidence submitted by key sections of the Council including. tourism, economic development, planning and the County Treasurers;

- Benchmarking information from the Midland Parking Managers Forum.
- Local Councillors were invited to submit their observations.
- Town or Parish Council meetings.
- Public examination meeting
- Focus group sessions to provided qualitative information regarding the likely views of members of the general public.

The review identified that the overall strategy needs to provide appropriate parking for the following market segments.

a) Visitors / Shoppers / Tourists

The Strategy should allow for short stay parking on and off street close to shopping areas, improved signage and provision of Park and Ride for Hereford.

b) Workers / Commuters

Long stay parking should be located further from centres. Location and management of such spaces should encourage use of alternative forms of travel for journeys to work and support Park and Ride in Hereford.

c) Residents

Residents Parking Schemes will be introduced in areas close to centres, subject to local support. Such schemes will be designed to deter long stay commuter and shopper parking which can cause problems for resident wishing to park near where they live.

In developing a Countywide Car Parking Strategy the review identified the need to take account the following key constraints:

- Government Transport Policy
- Overall Local Transport Plan strategy
- Land use planning guidance and policy
- The need to maintain financial income to the Council
- The need to carry out fair and effective enforcement
- The resources available for improving quality, maintenance and signing

The recommendations of the review have been used in the development of this strategy.

## **Strategy Elements**

### **9.7.4 Transport Policy**

The overall parking policy supports the Council's aim to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport to the private car. However, it is recognised that in a predominantly rural county like Herefordshire, many journeys will continue to be undertaken by car and the overall supply of parking needs to be adequate to support the economic vitality of Hereford and the Market Towns.

Funding for capital improvements to the local transport network is available through the Local Transport Plan allocation. However, many essential measures to address the transport needs of the County, such as Community Transport and Park and Ride, require ongoing revenue funding to make them work. Income generated from Car Parking provision and enforcement will be used to support the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. This may enable additional funding to be made available to support sustainable transport projects, such as Park and Ride, Community Transport, public transport, cycling and walking. It may also be appropriate to use such funding to improve the quality of signing and car parks themselves.

### **9.7.5 Supply & Quality**

There must be sufficient parking capacity and turnover of spaces to meet the economic vitality safety and access objectives set out above for the county. A sample of council car parks are surveyed quarterly to establish occupancy levels and this information will be used to determine the need for additional spaces.

There should be sufficient overall parking supply to support economic activity. However, this should be managed and located so as to support Local Transport Plan objectives to reduce congestion and encourage the use of alternative forms of transport, such as Park and Ride. Within Hereford, new parking supply should be provided in the form of Park and Ride with charges and management of car parks in the City carried out to maximise Park and Ride use and reduce congestion.

The following key principles will be followed:

- Residents should generally be able to park in residential streets. Residents parking schemes will be introduced to achieve this.
- Car parks need to be well signed, attractive, easy to use and well maintained. Quality is largely determined by available budget and under the council's Asset Management Plan, a recommended maintenance programme has been identified for treatment of surfaces, signs and lines.

- In setting charges, consideration will be given to increasing these sums in order to enable improvements to be made to the quality of the car parks.
- The Council recognises that car parks represent a significant property portfolio. As part of the Council's ongoing role of property management, the profitability, capital value and strategic worth of Council owned car parks will be considered to ensure the use of such land for car parking continues to meet corporate aims.

### **9.7.6 Charging**

In considering the level of charges in Council controlled car parks the following key principles will be followed:

- Some free parking is required in most centres, either on or off street, with more being required where alternatives to the car are less readily available.
- A "Zonal" policy with short stay charging for inner car parks to help visitors and shoppers find spaces convenient to town centres is appropriate for Hereford.
- Any charges must be reasonable in comparison with neighbouring towns.
- Any charges must be in simple multiples of common coin denominations.
- Charges will be reviewed at each car park periodically

Current charges in Council controlled car parks are available on the Council's website at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk).

### **9.7.7 Approach To Different Types Of Parking Provision**

#### Off-street parking:

##### Public Off Street Parking

Across the County there are over 4500 public off-street spaces available in Hereford and the five Market Towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Hereford has the largest number of spaces (over 2500) all of which are covered by a charging regime. Outside Hereford, charges are made in certain car parks in all of the five Market Towns of Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye, Kington, Leominster and Bromyard.

The current supply of public off-street parking is considered to be broadly adequate to meet the needs of the Market Towns, although recent redevelopment within Bromyard has indicated a possible need for more publicly available parking provision. Within Hereford there is concern that demand for parking exceeds supply. Car parks within the Inner Ring Road are effectively full during the week and on Market Day car

parks north of the Inner Ring Road are also effectively full. However, a particular deficiency has been identified on the south side of the City Centre which results in longer journeys for vehicles searching for a parking space. In addition, the current ratio of Private Non-Residential to Public Parking is 60:40 in Hereford, this significantly weakens the ability for parking to act as a tool for demand management.

The approach to the provision and management of off-street car parking seeks:

- To support the economic vitality of Hereford City and Market Towns by providing land close to commercial centres where those who wish to access shops and services can park their cars.
- To ensure parking of vehicles does not obstruct the public highway.
- To support the overall transport strategy for the County.
- To help relieve Hereford City and Market Towns of traffic congestion.

We will manage off-street parking as follows:

- Zonal charging structures for Council controlled car parks in Hereford.
- Charges in selected public car parks in all five Market Towns.
- Provision of some free parking in market towns to support the local economy
- Concessionary Parking Scheme for local pensioners based on 'Home Town' Zones.

### **On-street parking,**

There are over 1600 on-street parking spaces available in the main centres of the County, all of which are currently free and generally controlled by means of limited waiting restrictions. Within Hereford there are over 400 spaces, representing 15% of publicly available parking provision for the City Centre. Decriminalised parking enforcement has been introduced throughout Herefordshire and the Council employs a team of Parking Attendants to enforce parking restrictions.

The approach to the management of on-street parking across the County seeks:

- To ensure the safe and free flow of traffic that is essential to economic vitality and business growth.
- To provide for access for servicing for businesses
- To provide residents parking in appropriate locations
- To ensure effective and sensitive enforcement of restrictions
- To provide for disabled people to park and effective enforcement, to prevent obstructions that can impact upon disabled people, bus services and effective loading / unloading by businesses.

- To ensure that on-street parking enforcement supports economic activity by ensuring effective turnover of short-stay parking for shoppers and visitors in the centres of towns.

We will manage on-street parking as follows:

- Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.
- During the period of this Local Transport Plan, consideration will be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and provide revenue funding to support Park & Ride or other sustainable transport improvements.
- The introduction of Residents Parking Schemes in residential areas close to the centre of Hereford, and in appropriate locations in the Market Towns, to deter commuter and shopper parking.
- The use of limited waiting restrictions within the centres of Market Towns.

### **Private Non-Residential Parking**

The availability of a parking space is an important factor in determining a commuter's choice of mode. A reduction in the availability of private non-residential spaces can be achieved in the longer term through the use of planning controls. Whilst there are over 7000 such spaces in the County's main centres, the majority are located in Hereford City (almost 5000). The scope for controlling the provision of new spaces is mainly confined to Hereford where it is most likely that alternative modes to the private car are available for journeys to work. Parking Standards are currently under review and will be developed to support the aims of the Local Transport Plan and the Unitary Development Plan.

Hereford City Centre has been identified as an area within which a reduction of up to 100% may be applied to the number of spaces required as part of any new development. Developer contributions may therefore be raised in lieu of the provision of parking spaces and the money used to contribute to alternative transport facilities. The Council will seek to redress the balance of total public to private non-residential parking supply, particularly within Hereford through the use of planning controls.

## AREA STRATEGIES

The following paragraphs summarise the approach to applying these principles in Hereford and the Market Towns

### **9.7.8 Hereford**

Hereford is the county town, attracting large numbers of workers, shoppers and business trips and also a significant number of tourists. The need here is primarily to manage the available spaces. By managing the cost and supply of car parking within the City parking policy can contribute to managing car use and promoting the use of alternatives to the car where they are available and support the development of Park and Ride.

Studies and consultation have highlighted a concern that in Hereford demand for parking exceeds supply and it is proposed that additional capacity be provided through the addition of Park and Ride facilities. Car parks within the Inner Ring Road are effectively full during the week and on market day car parks north of the Inner Ring Road are also effectively full.

During 2004/5 a detailed feasibility study was carried out into the provision of Park and Ride for Hereford. This concluded that there is a convincing business case for providing Park and Ride for the City and that priority should be given to developing a site to serve traffic entering the city from the North first to be followed by provision South of the City, as these represent the highest and second highest likely demand for Park and Ride use based on traffic flows and surveys of potential users. The Hereford Transport Review also recommended that two further sites should be developed in the longer term to serve demand from the South West and North East of the City and the relative priority for these proposals will be developed during future LTP periods.

Due to the high demand for parking space in the City, there is also a need to manage the available spaces better to reduce the amount of circulating traffic searching for a space and contribute to reducing congestion.

The following points summarise the approach to be taken in Hereford:

- Three charging zones (central, middle and outer) with charges close to the centre set to encourage short stay parking for shoppers and deter long stay commuter parking
- Park and Ride facilities will be developed to provide additional parking supply for the City and support modal shift for journeys to the City Centre

- During the period of this Local Transport Plan, consideration will be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and provide revenue funding to support Park & Ride or other sustainable transport improvements.
- Improvements will be made to direction signing to car parks and it is hoped to introduce dynamic signing as part of developing an Intelligent Transport System for the City to highlight the availability of spaces and reduce congestion.
- Season tickets are made available in the outer and middle zones only with costs based on a discount compared to parking daily five days a week fifty weeks a year.

#### **9.7.9 Ross-On-Wye**

Ross combines the functions of a market town with those of a tourist attraction and a “gateway” to other places. Charges in Council controlled car parks are set to reflect the fact that there is significant demand for parking by both visitors and local people wishing to access jobs and local services. Charges for car parks closer to the centre are set to encourage short stay and a turnover of spaces to support the local economy with longer term parking allocated to car parks further from the centre. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.10 Ledbury**

Ledbury is a thriving market town with a significant tourist draw. It is important to manage the parking to ensure that visitors are well catered for. Charges in Council controlled car parks are set to reflect the fact that there is significant demand for parking by both visitors and local people wishing to access jobs and local services. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.11 Bromyard**

Bromyard is a small market town that serves mainly its local population and people from the surrounding rural areas. The current charges are set to ensure spaces are usually available near the centre whilst keeping enough free parking spaces for those not wishing to pay but willing to walk a little further. Redevelopment of land previously used for off-street car parking over recent years has indicated a need to provide additional off-street parking spaces to meet current demand. The Council is

investigating opportunities to provide additional car parking to support the local economy.

#### **9.7.12 Leominster**

Leominster serves as a commercial and administrative centre for north Herefordshire in addition to providing several tourist destinations. The town is well provided with conveniently located car parks but it is important to ensure a reasonable turnover of spaces particularly for shoppers and visitors to support the local economy. Where charges are made in Council controlled car parks, the level of charges are set to reflect the need to support the economy of the town. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.13 Kington**

Kington is the smallest of Herefordshire's Market Towns with council car parks. It is important here to ensure an adequate supply of parking, including both on and off street spaces. Where charges are made in Council controlled car parks, the level of charges are set to reflect the fact that demand for parking is mainly local in nature and is required to support the local economy. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.14 Residents Parking**

Near town centres and employment areas it is not always possible for residents to find a parking space due to use of limited on street space by commuters and shoppers. The availability of such spaces for commuters and shoppers can also undermines the overall parking strategy that seeks to manage the supply and cost of parking to make best use of available space and promote a shift to more sustainable forms of transport.

To overcome these problems, Residents Parking Schemes have been introduced in a number of areas, particularly in Hereford, in consultation with residents. Further schemes will be introduced where there is local support. Such schemes restrict use of on-street spaces to resident permit holders only.

It is, however, necessary to allow for visitors, deliveries, traders and carers to park when necessary, in addition to residents. The simplest way of achieving this is restrict waiting to a short duration with an exemption to the time limit for resident permit holders. This will be the normal form of residents parking scheme within Herefordshire.

In some locations pressure on space is so great that this arrangement does not "reserve" sufficient space for the residents and in these circumstances consideration

will be given to making a more prescriptive order, reserving specific marked bays for use by resident permit holders only.

The general approach to granting residents permits will be to issue permits to car owners registered as residential council tax payers at an address within the relevant area. Where space allows, two permits will be available, one marked for the resident's vehicle and one for visitors. Where houses are in multiple occupation, only one permit per council taxpayer will be issued in order to reduce pressure on kerbside space. In no case will the issue of a permit guarantee the availability of a parking space. The charge for permits will cover the administrative costs of issuing the permit plus a contribution to the costs of enforcement.

#### ***9.7.15 Christmas And Special Events***

The Council recognises the importance of supporting the local economy and the role that car parking can make to this. As a result, for certain periods of free parking are traditionally allowed at Christmas in Hereford and Ross-on-Wye to encourage use of local shops for Christmas shopping. This is primarily because, unlike other towns in the County, there are no free public car parks in Hereford or Ross-on-Wye.

The use of car parks for non-profit making events is permitted subject to sufficient parking continuing to be available elsewhere for the general public.

#### ***9.7.16 Provision For Disabled People***

Concessions for the disabled people wishing to park on-street are set nationally, exempting those displaying a blue badge from the time limits otherwise applying and allowing a stop of up to three hours on double yellow lines providing it does not cause danger to other road users. The Council is keen to ensure that appropriate car parking is provided for disabled people. Therefore, in order to also encourage parking off street, all council car parks allow three hours free parking for blue badge holders. Where possible, off-street car parks also include designated wide spaces to assist wheelchair users.

#### ***9.7.17 Parking Concession For Pensioners***

Concessions for pensioners were the subject of considerable debate and consultation in 1999 and 2000 and a countywide system was introduced in January 2001. This allows a pensioner to buy a permit allowing two hours free parking in the town closest to their home. The scheme has been designed to be consistent with policy in relation to transport and social exclusion and helps to support the

economies of the Market Towns, encourage local communities and encourage shorter car trips.

***9.7.18 Parking And The Council's Travel Plan***

The Council has adopted a comprehensive Travel Plan to promote the use of sustainable modes for journeys to, from and during work by staff and visitors. The management of car parking in relation to Council buildings and by staff when carrying out their duties will be considered through the development and implementation of the Travel Plan. This will seek to encourage greater use of alternative modes and support the promotion of car sharing.

## Appendix 2

### Interviewees for the On-Street Parking Review

#### Officers

Mr A Ashcroft – Head of Planning and Transportation  
Mr Richard Ball, - Head of Highways  
Mr Andrew Blackman – Admissions and Transport Manager  
Mr S Burgess – Interim Transportation Manager  
Mrs Alison Cook – Income and Recovery Manager  
Mr Jim Davies – Public Transport Manager  
Mr M Edwards – Integrated Transport Assistant  
Mr A Lee-Jones – Lead Engineer (Traffic)  
Mr Mick Morris – Parking Manager  
Mr Simon Moran – Civil Enforcement Officer  
Mrs Cynthia Palmer (Hereford City Centre Manager).  
Ms Linda Sinker – School Travel Advisor

#### Users of the Service:

Mr A Carter – President, Castle Green Bowling Club, Hereford  
Mr Philip Collins, Collins Engineering Ltd  
Mr I Higton – Chair, Castle Street Residents Association, Hereford  
Mr Morris Jones - Phillip Morris, Widemarsh Street, Hereford;  
Ms Paige Mitchell  
Mr Edward Pritchard - Pritchard and Son, King Street, Hereford.  
Rev P Towner – Chair, St James Residents Association, Hereford

#### Technology provider

Mr Tony Burt & Ms Hannah Stewart (NetSecrets Ltd)

### Residents Parking Schemes

#### Policy and Criteria

##### **Policy**

Public highways are, and always have been, provided for the movement of people, vehicles and goods. The legal definition refers to “the passage and re-passage” of traffic. In particular, roads are not provided for the purpose of parking and this applies both to those who own properties fronting onto any particular road, as well as to those who might otherwise find it convenient to park there for their own reasons.

Householders are often resentful when others park outside their homes, even where the householder does not actually have the use of a car. Many residents even believe, incorrectly, that they actually have rights to park on the road outside their property. In general, where parking is not otherwise prohibited by order, kerbspace is available to any road user, subject to the laws of obstruction.

Class I and II roads in particular are provided and maintained to facilitate the movement of traffic. The needs of residents, businesses and others have to be subordinated to the need to keep traffic moving safely.

Where an area contains a mixture of land uses, such as residential, business, shopping, commerce and transport facilities, the residents will often feel swamped by the daily influx of other vehicles. Even where the residents have off-street parking facilities, they may on occasion be obstructed by others (a matter for the police) and may, in any case, feel that their environment is suffering. It might be assumed that people would consider such things before buying a given house but their subsequent complaints often suggest that the matter had been given no thought at all.

Where the same problems are experienced in a predominantly residential area, which is adjacent to other developments that attract large numbers of parked vehicles, the daily intrusion is particularly resented and there may be calls for “residents only” parking.

The main element of any such scheme is that all extraneous parking is displaced by enforceable restrictions. Several styles of Resident Parking are available, however in all cases some provision has to be allowed for visitors and deliveries i.e.:-

- (i) Some lengths of kerbspace are prescribed for limited waiting by visitors and other lengths are identified as being for residents only.
- (ii) Some lengths of kerbspace are prescribed for limited waiting for any purpose, residents being exempt from any limit on waiting.

In the main, the Council have adopted the second style, as it is considered that this will remove long term parking, but still allow for non residents to park for short periods to visit residents or local businesses. Residents who have a car can purchase a permit, to be displayed inside the windscreen when it is parked in a prescribed area, providing exemption of the limited waiting period. The purchase of a permit does not entitle the resident to park in any particular space, neither is any space guaranteed. In some areas, where sufficient road space will allow, a ‘Visitors’ permit can be purchased, as is stated and allowed within the associated Traffic Regulation Order.

The success of any resident parking scheme depends upon the degree of enforcement undertaken, and this is undertaken by the councils Civil Enforcement Officers.

Since a major feature of any such scheme is the displacement of large numbers of parked

cars, particular thought must be given to where those vehicles will go thereafter. To avoid them simply being displaced into other residential streets, outside the limits of the scheme under consideration, it is essential that off-street parking space, adequate and acceptable to the drivers involved, is available. If this is not available, the displaced vehicles would simply replicate the same problem again in another nearby area.

In any urban area there is always some extraneous parking, it follows that a major improvement to the environment can be achieved by such a scheme and the residents obtain considerable benefits in both convenience and improved surroundings.

The cost of a permit is not determined by the value placed upon these benefits but by the estimated costs of implementing and administering the scheme. All such schemes should be self financing; otherwise the wider community of ratepayers will be subsidising the benefits gained by some, whilst themselves being denied the opportunity to park in the restricted streets. Thus costs for the permits (£10.00 in Bromyard, £24.00/£25.00 in remaining zones June 2008), is intended to cover the costs of on street signing and lining, administration of permits and contribute toward enforcement duties.

Permits are will be made available for residents whose postal address is within the area of a residents parking scheme (as specified within the Traffic Regulation Order) and are registered with the Council as a Council Tax payer. Vehicles must also be registered at that address as detailed upon the registration document (or company vehicles).

In areas where two permits are issued the second one is designated as a visitors permit and can be used upon any private vehicle.

The categories for Council Tax payment are as follows:

Single occupancy dwelling

- a) Owner and resident of a property.
- b) Resident of a property.

Multi occupancy dwelling

- c) Residents of contained units with no shared facilities.

Where a property is divided into units with shared facilities such as kitchen and/or bathroom, the owner/landlord is liable for Council tax, however a maximum of two permits will be allowed for residents, in accord with standard conditions .

Within the controlled zone, where extraneous long-term parking is prohibited, visitors may park in prescribed places for up to 1 hour. This limitation is a serious disadvantage of such schemes because genuine visitors cannot be distinguished from others and are controlled by the same regulations, Commuters etc. will be removed by the limited waiting restrictions however a 'Visitors' permit may be available, where road space is sufficient, for the parking of visitors for periods longer than the prescribed limit. A resident may purchase either or both types of permit, however two 'visitors' permits will not be issued, one in lieu of the dedicated permit.

Most of the waiting restrictions in the controlled zone apply only between 8am and 6pm to control daytime long stay parking. However, due to high vehicle ownership in some areas the demand for parking spaces by residents far outweighs the amount available at night when they return from work etc.

### **Criteria**

The Council has adopted the criteria set out below in the consideration of any proposed schemes. However, it should be noted that when residents are apprised of both the advantages and the disadvantages of such schemes, only a minority may be interested in

proceeding further. More commonly, residents seek to be exempted from existing waiting restrictions which cannot be done.

- (i) Eighty percent of the kerb space in the area under consideration shall be regularly occupied by extraneous vehicles.
- (ii) Full consultations with residents will be undertaken. Full consideration of a scheme will only be undertaken if a majority of residents support of the introduction of a residents parking scheme.
- (iii) Less than fifty percent of the residents have a facility to park off the road. This may be relaxed slightly in a conservation area.
- (iv) The majority of property which fronts the roads concerned shall be residential.
- (v) A charge shall be made for permits, sufficient to cover the implementation and administration of the requested scheme.

#### **Terms and condition of issue.**

- 1) The occupier of each self-contained dwelling can apply for a maximum of two parking permits, subject to there being no current permits being held by another or previous occupier. You can only purchase one visitors and one vehicle permit. **You cannot purchase two visitors permits.**
- 2) The permits, which remain the property of Herefordshire Council, will be issued upon receipt of an appropriate completed form identifying the name and address for which the application is made. In addition to completing the application you will need to provide the following:  
  
Visitors permit – proof of residency  
Vehicle permit – proof of residency **AND** proof of vehicle ownership  
  
See reverse of application form for acceptable documentation.
- 3) A permit does not give any right to the provision of a parking space, but simply allows a vehicle displaying a valid permit to park in excess of the permitted period laid down or in designated resident parking areas.
- 4) A permit will be issued in respect to a motorcar, motorcycle (with or without side-car), invalid carriage, or motor vehicle constructed or adapted for the purpose of carrying goods but not exceeding 3½ tonnes maximum gross weight.
- 5) The permits are invalid once the holder vacates the property, or disposes of a vehicle identified on a vehicle permit. Any invalid permits must be surrendered to Herefordshire Council.
- 6) New permits cannot be issued in respect of any dwelling until previous permits have expired or have been surrendered.
- 7) The permits are **only** valid in the streets which are included in the particular zone applied for and must not be used in any other location. A list of streets for this zone are listed at the end of these terms and conditions.
- 8) **Vehicles must NOT be parked in anticipation of a permit being received or whilst awaiting a replacement or renewal. Any vehicle not displaying a valid permit is liable to receive a Penalty Charge Notice.**

- 9) Fraudulent use of the permits **will** lead to the removal of the permits and may lead to prosecution.
- 10) Lost permits – a replacement visitors permit will not be replaced if the original is lost. A new permit will only be issued once the lost permit has expired and on receipt of a new application.

A duplicate vehicle permit can be issued, but you will be required to make a new application, completing the relevant application form and providing the necessary evidence. You will need to pay the full charge and the new permit will be valid for full year from the date of issue.