

Title of Report:	Review into car parking in West Berkshire
Report to be considered by:	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission
Date of Meeting:	15 September 2015

Purpose of Report: To outline to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission the proposed Terms of Reference for a review into car parking in the district.

Recommended Action: Amend, if necessary, and approve the Terms of Reference for the review.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman	
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Executive Report

- 1.1 At its meeting of 30 June 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission considered the retention on its work programme of a review into Newbury Town Centre car parking proposed by Tony Vickers (formerly the ward member for Northcroft).
- 1.2 This report sets out the rationale for a review into car parking and proposes Terms of Reference and a methodology for the examination of the topic.

2. Rationale for the review

- 2.1 The item as originally proposed by Councillor Vickers in July 2013 (as shown at Appendix A) was for an examination of 'Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue' and specifically to determine

if there is any way in which the council owned car parking assets (multi-storey, off-street surface and on-street) can be used to maintain (or even increase) net revenue from parking, while at the same time maintaining or improving service to all categories of user.

- 2.2 During the debate on 30 June 2015, which was to determine whether the item should remain on the Commission's work programme, the members of the Commission agreed that car parking had been a very prevalent item raised by voters during the recent elections.
- 2.3 Having considered a submission from the Council's Traffic Services Manager on the work that had been and was being undertaken to assess both supply and demand, members formed the view that a scrutiny examination of parking across the district, rather than just Newbury, would be of value.

3. Proposed Terms of Reference and review methodology

- 3.1 It is proposed that a review is undertaken into car parking in West Berkshire, and in particular to seek an understanding of

- (1) The current policies for residents', on-street and off-street parking;
- (2) The effect (including on usage, revenue generation, congestion, displacement) of the parking policies in isolation;
- (3) The interrelationship between the policies and their cumulative effect;
- (4) The future plans for car parking provision;

and to then report to the OSMC and subsequently the Executive with recommendations as appropriate.

- 3.2 The review will be carried out through the establishment of a time-limited task group, comprising 4 members (3 x Conservative members, 1 x Liberal Democrat).

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that members of the Commission amend, if necessary, and approve the Terms of Reference for the review.

Appendices

Appendix A
Appendix B

Proposal for scrutiny by Councillor Tony Vickers, July 2015
Extract of 30 June 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Management
Commission meeting minutes

Appendix A Proposal for scrutiny by (then) Councillor Tony Vickers, July 2013

Your suggested topic(s)	
Your suggested topic for scrutiny:	
Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue	
Your reasons for requesting that this topic be considered:	
see attached notes for further details	
Topics suggested for scrutiny need to meet one of the following criteria. Please click the appropriate box(es):	
(1) The issue is an area of key public concern (e.g. as identified through Members surgeries, constituents' concerns, the Annual Satisfaction Survey, raised in the local media, etc).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) There is evidence of poor performance within the activity (i.e. through performance indicator data, experience of Members, internal or external auditor findings, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) It is a budgetary area in need of examination to ensure value for money is being obtained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(4) There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends within the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) It is a corporate priority for the Council as published within the Council Strategy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(6) It has an external focus (e.g. scrutiny of the Council's partners, government agencies, utility providers, private sector companies, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7) It is a Central Government priority area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8) It is an area of new Government legislation that has significant implications for the Council or its partners.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The outcomes you hope scrutiny of this topic will achieve:	
better utilisation of council-owned car parks and public highways in vicinity of retail, commercial and residential town centre area, with increased net revenue	
If you have already raised this issue with a Member or Officer of West Berkshire Council, please provide details here:	
numerous occasions with parking and planning services and at planning and transport member task groups	

Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue

Note on proposed scrutiny task for Resource Management Working Group, by Cllr Tony Vickers.

1. There are currently hundreds of empty spaces at all times in the Council's Newbury town centre multi-storey car parks. Meanwhile there is a serious shortage of on-street parking spaces for town centre residents, such that if residents entitled to a permit in the town centre (and nearby) zones were to obtain one they could rarely find a space in which to use it within 400m of their homes – which is the furthest that many residents can walk.
2. Newbury town centre is unique in West Berkshire District in its mix of employment types and associated travel patterns of private car use. Despite requests to have a 'holistic' look at all aspects of parking in this area, within the context of a review of overall parking policy that has long been promised, the only reviews undertaken by the parking service have been to modify the residents parking zones and to extend on-street parking charges. These reviews have not included the potential for residents to use their permits in nearby off-street car parks nor for shoppers and commuters to move from off-street to multi-storey car parks.
3. The purpose of this scrutiny task is to see if there is any way in which the council owned car parking assets (multi-storey, off-street surface and on-street) can be used to maintain (or even increase) net revenue from parking, while at the same time maintaining or improving service to all categories of user.
4. In justification, the criteria ticked on the form were (1) public concern; (3) value for money; and (5) corporate priority.
5. **Public Concern.** Constituents of Northcroft and Victoria Wards have become increasingly unhappy, as officers in the parking service can confirm, at the reduction in available road space for parking near their homes. These are not residents of newly developed properties but live in established streets, where the impact of nearby developments (both residential and non-residential) with inadequate parking has harmed their amenity in terms of ability to park near their homes. Meanwhile since the electronic displays of available spaces in the pay-on-exit car parks has been introduced, it has been very evident to residents that the Council owns a very under-used parking resource which is denied to them, as council tax-payers.
6. **Value for Money.** It would seem likely that by displacing some commuters and shoppers from off-street car parks in or near residential areas into nearby multi-storey car parks (e.g. Eight Bells to Market Street M/S, or West Street into Northbrook Street M/S), with some adjustment – even a reduction - to hourly rates of charging and by allowing residents with parking permits – possibly for an

increased annual charge – to have unrestricted use of certain off-street car parks, a better use of council-owned assets could be achieved, with increased net revenue.

7. **Corporate Priority.** The vibrancy of Newbury Town Centre is a key priority. Many businesses support a holistic review of parking policy of the kind described: Newbury BID recently expressed concern at the on-street parking charges proposals that the Council is advertising. At present there is friction between some residents and some businesses because the latter are seen to be using (or in the case of M/S car parks not using!) the former's assets: car parks which they are paying to maintain empty.

8. [A related issue which causes friction between residents and the Council corporately is the temporary use of vacant sites as privately run car parks which under-cut the Council-owned ones and meanwhile pay little or nothing into the Council's coffers and are not available to council-tax-paying residents for parking. However it would require change of national policy to address this.]

Appendix A Extract of 30 June 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission meeting minutes

The Commission considered the second suggested topic for scrutiny: Newbury Town Centre Parking. Councillor Mike Johnston advised that it was evident, through the course of the Election campaign, that local parking matters were an area of interest to residents. He acknowledged that some degree of work had been undertaken to review Newbury parking but he considered that the information could be scrutinised as part of a holistic review.

Mark Cole introduced a background report to the Commission and advised that an independent review had taken place to consider the availability of parking in Newbury and that the situation would continue to be monitored. In addition, the service planned to conduct further reviews to oversee the current parking needs of local residents. Councillor James Fredrickson stated that he was surprised to read that some areas of Newbury parking were underutilised. He suspected that there could be 'pinch points' within certain areas of parking.

Councillor Webster stated that various groups had been established to review parking in various forums and asked the Commission whether they would be minded to consider a review which incorporated the entire District.

Members concluded that it would be beneficial to review the longer term availability of parking across West Berkshire with consideration given to findings of those reviews already underway/ planned.