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# Scrutiny Review into Car Parking – Supporting Information

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## 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 At its meeting of 15 September 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) agreed to conduct a review into car parking in West Berkshire. The review was undertaken by a cross-party task group, working with Council officers from the Environment Directorate. The members of the working group were Councillors Lee Dillon, James Fredrickson (until his appointment to the Executive), Mike Johnston and Rick Jones. Councillor Johnston was elected as the Chairman.
- 1.2 The task group concluded its review on 6 December 2015 and made nine recommendations which were endorsed by the OSMC at its meeting on 5 January 2016.

## 2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference for the task group were to conduct a review into car parking in West Berkshire, and in particular to seek an understanding of:

- The current policies for residents' of on-street and off-street parking;
- The effect (including usage, revenue generation, congestion and displacement) of the parking policies in isolation;
- The interrelationship between the policies and their cumulative effect;
- The future plans for car parking provision;
- The method and effectiveness of parking policy communication to the public;

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

- 2.2 The task group considered all aspects of car parking including:

- Background and context of the Council's duties, powers, strategies and aims;
- Resident's schemes;
- Off-street parking;
- On-street parking.

- 2.3 Thirty two findings were identified as part of this process and the task group concluded that:

- Overall each individual aspect of the Council's involvement in car parking is being managed adequately;

- There is scope for a higher and more strategic view to be taken, incorporating each aspect of car parking (on-street, off-street and residential) into a holistic plan. The development of such an integrated plan, tied to articulated outcomes, should enable the public to be better able to understand what the Council is aiming to achieve;
- There are a number of, smaller scale, recommendations that should improve specific aspects of the Council's planning and operations but overall there is confidence in the political oversight and day to day application of the planning and operational management of car parking.

2.4 As stated in 1.2 above the task group identified nine recommendations.

2.5 The findings, conclusions and recommendations of the task group are set out in detail in the report to the OSMC meeting on 5 January 2016 that can be found at Appendix D.

### 3. Options for Consideration

3.1 These are as identified in the OSMC report of 5 January 2016 that can be found at Appendix D but are more specifically set out in the Response Template at Appendix C.

### 4. Proposals

4.1 See the Response Template to the OSMC Review of Car Parking at Appendix C to this report.

### 5. Conclusion

5.1 The Executive is requested to consider the recommendations and responses from the Highways and Transport Service set out in the Response Template at Appendix C and to grant approval to proceed accordingly.

### 6. Consultation and Engagement

6.1 Not applicable.

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#### Background Papers:

None as all relevant papers are appended to this report.

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#### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

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**Wards affected:**

All wards.

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**Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:**

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim:

**MEC – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

**SLE2 – Deliver or enable key infrastructure improvements in relation to roads, rail, flood prevention, regeneration and the digital economy**

**MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy aim and priorities by developing a parking plan to ensure that all aspects of the planning, implementation, development and operation of on-street, off-street and residential parking in the district is managed holistically.

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**Officer details:**

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Job Title: Traffic Services Manager  
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## Appendix B

### Equality Impact Assessment - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity.

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

<b>Name of policy, strategy or function:</b>	Scrutiny Review into Car Parking
<b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b>	N/A
<b>Owner of item being assessed:</b>	Mark Cole
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Mark Edwards
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	1 March 2016

<b>Is this a:</b>		<b>Is this:</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>New or proposed</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Already exists and is being reviewed</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Function</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Is changing</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Service</b>	<b>Yes</b>		

<b>1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, strategy function or service and who is likely to benefit from it?</b>	
<b>Aims:</b>	To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) review into car parking.
<b>Objectives:</b>	To respond to the recommendations of the OSMC.
<b>Outcomes:</b>	Ensure that a higher and more strategic view to is taken, incorporating each aspect of car parking.
<b>Benefits:</b>	Development of an integrated plan, tied to articulated outcomes, which should enable the public to be better able to understand what the Council is aiming to achieve. Improve specific aspects of the Council's planning and operations.

<p><b>2. Note which groups may be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</b></p> <p>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race,</p>
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Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
All groups making use of the Council's on-street, off-street and residential parking encompassing all of the strands.	No particular group should be disadvantaged.	OSMC recommendations delivered with no evidence of disadvantage to any specific group.
<b>Further Comments relating to the item:</b>		

3. Result	
<b>Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or service, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</b> All service users needs will be considered.	
<b>Will the policy, strategy, function or service have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</b> The impact of all proposals arising out of the OSMC recommendations on all service users will be taken into consideration.	

**If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered 'yes' to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.**

**If a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage Two template.**

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
<b>Stage Two required</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Owner of Stage Two assessment:</b>	<b>Mark Edwards</b>
<b>Timescale for Stage Two assessment:</b>	
<b>Stage Two not required:</b>	<b>Not required</b>

**Name: Mark Edwards**

**Date: 1 March 2016**

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**Please now forward this completed form to Rachel Craggs, the Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) for publication on the WBC website.**

# Appendix C

## Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Review into Car Parking

It is recommended that the Executive Member for Transport should:

<p><b>Recommendation (1)</b></p>	<p>Working through both the Head of Highways and Transport and the Head of Planning and Countryside, develop a parking plan to ensure that all aspects of the planning, implementation, development and operation of on-street, off-street and residential parking in the district is managed holistically. The plan should include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an assessment of the needs of all likely stakeholders, including residents, shoppers, visitors and commuters (and the extent to which ‘transport hubs’ should be developed and operated);</li> <li>• how the identified needs will be met;</li> <li>• how that outcome will be achieved;</li> <li>• the ongoing measurement and reporting of key performance information to ensure that the stated aims of the plan are being achieved;</li> <li>• a communications plan;</li> <li>• how complimentary strategies (eg signage, public transport) can be used to offset demand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service response</b></p>	<p>The Council has a duty to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP) which sets the framework for the delivery of all aspects of transport and travel for West Berkshire. The local Transport Plan provides the framework for 8 existing strategies one of which is the existing “Parking Strategy”. The current plan (the 3<sup>rd</sup>) 2006 – 2026 is due to be refreshed in line with the new Local Plan and the parking strategy should be refreshed as part of that process. As part of this refresh of the LTP the “Passenger Transport Strategy” will also be refreshed. As well as the overarching strategies, there are 15 existing key policies and policy LTP K11 covers Parking. This policy is supported by policies LTP P1 – Town Centre Parking, LTP P2 – Residential Parking, LTP P3 – Parking Standards (new development) and LTP P4 – Enforcement. Similarly policy LTP K9 covers Passenger Transport and this policy is supported by LTP PT1 – Bus Services, LTP PT2 – Community &amp; Voluntary Transport, LTP PT3 – Rail, LTP PT4 – Taxis &amp; Private Hire, LTP PT5 – Info, promotion and ticketing, LTP PT 6 – Infrastructure &amp; Interchange and LTP PT7 – Park &amp; Ride. All of these policies will be reviewed as part of this refresh process.</p>
<p><b>Action to be taken</b></p>	<p>A detailed work programme to be drafted and agreed with the Portfolio holder for Transport and over seen by the Transport</p>

	Policy Task Group.
<b>Target deadline</b>	April 2019
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Production of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Local Transport Plan.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Bryan Lyttle and Transport Policy Team supported by the Transport Services and Traffic Services teams

<b>Recommendation (2)</b>	To further embed transport planning co-operation with Reading Borough Council and through the Head of Planning and Countryside, consider the preparation and development of an integrated transport plan (to include all aspects of car parking) in the east of the district.
<b>Service response</b>	There is already a Transport Vision for the Eastern Area contained within the LTP (separate visions are included for each of the four spatial areas identified in the Core Strategy). Reading BC was consulted on the draft plan and separate cross-boundary meetings with Reading officers are held to discuss any cross-boundary issues. They have also been contacted in the development of the supporting strategies as they have been developed.
<b>Action to be taken</b>	To be included as part of the refresh to the Local Transport Plan.
<b>Target deadline</b>	April 2019
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Production of the 4 <sup>th</sup> Local Transport Plan.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Bryan Lyttle

<b>Recommendation (3)</b>	Through the Head of Highways and Transport, consider extending the capability and coverage of the 'Ticketer' system used by certain operators of Council-contracted bus services to allow the generation of reports that can help show where traffic congestion affects local roads and causes delays to contracted local bus services using those roads.
<b>Service response</b>	The Transport Services Team is in discussions with Hungerford-based Corvia Limited, supplier of the 'Ticketer' smart ticketing system which was successfully introduced in April 2014, to introduce an extra module, under the existing call-off contract, that will allow live tracking and production of reports to help identify where delay hotspots affect tendered bus services.
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Introduce the Schedule Adherence module to the existing Ticketer installation.



<b>Target deadline</b>	End of April 2016
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Schedule adherence module added to existing Ticketer installation.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Peter Walker

<b>Recommendation (4)</b>	Through the Head of Highways and Transport, ensure that the views of those in streets neighbouring proposed residential parking schemes are obtained in addition to those directly affected by proposals.
<b>Service response</b>	It is not practical to seek the views of neighbouring residents when introducing residents parking schemes in response to problems that have been identified by residents in the roads where the problems are occurring. We only proceed with a residents parking scheme if there is a consensus in favour of doing so and there are problems that must be addressed. There have been many occasions when we have tried to anticipate the knock on effects of a scheme in neighbouring streets and introduce some restrictions in these neighbouring streets at the same time but the residents concerned invariably reject this approach because they see it as an inconvenience and because they can't see a problem in their streets at that point in time. When the residents parking scheme is introduced we undertake ongoing monitoring of the effects and if difficulties do occur in neighbouring streets we then take appropriate steps to deal with these. At this point the residents in the neighbouring streets are usually supportive of what we need to do or are requesting that we take steps to address their problems. It is nonetheless the case that notices are placed on site in the streets where residents parking schemes are proposed for three weeks and advertisements are placed in the local newspapers. Consequently residents from neighbouring streets do have an opportunity to make representations when new residents parking schemes are proposed and these are taken into consideration before final decisions are taken.
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Continue with the current process that we adopt.
<b>Target deadline</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mark Cole

<b>Recommendation (5)</b>	Through the Head of Highways and Transport, ensure that residential parking schemes are revenue cost-neutral (or better) to the Council after no more than 3 years operation.
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<b>Service response</b>	We are happy to work towards achieving a position where the income from sales of residents' permits and residents' visitor permits for residents parking schemes is self financing over a three year period. The income from these permits is already recorded on spreadsheets within the Parking team. In the future we will also record the costs of introducing the schemes on spreadsheets within the Traffic Management team so that the cost and income for each scheme can be checked every three years. It should be stressed however that these schemes are not introduced in order to generate a profit but to address parking problems in the streets concerned.
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Record the costs of new residents parking schemes on spreadsheets in the Traffic Management team.
<b>Target deadline</b>	Commence recording the costs from 1 April 2016
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	The spreadsheets will be available and the incomes from schemes will be able to be demonstrated to be cost neutral or better three years after introduction.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mark Cole

<b>Recommendation (6)</b>	To ensure that there is sufficient parking for residents close to their own homes, through the Head of Highways and Transport, consider where necessary the extension of access to off-street parking to augment capacity in residential schemes. This may be particularly relevant for those planned residential developments with limited on-street and off-street spaces.
<b>Service response</b>	Overnight use of West Street car park and Pelican Lane car park is already permitted for residents from nearby residents parking zones that have insufficient parking capacity so this practise is already established in principle. Extending this to other residents would be possible if required but this should only be when really necessary and not just available to all residents of all zones. The Highways and Transport Service needs to retain discretion on when it is appropriate to offer this extension of use of its car parks based on the needs of specific groups of residents. Customers using our car parks between 6pm and 8am currently have to pay a £1 evening charge every time they park so allowing residents to park in the car parks during these hours for the small annual residents parking permit charge of £25 that currently applies would be extremely low compared to the £365 it would cost to pay to park every evening. The Council is intending to increase the charges to £30 and £2 respectively, which would result in an even larger differential cost of £30 verses £730. It may therefore be necessary to introduce a more appropriate charge for residents' permits for those residents who are permitted to use our car parks. This would be a matter for consideration by members. The use of the two multi-storey car parks, Northbrook and Kennet Centre, and Northcroft Lane

	<p>West car park between 6pm and 8am will not be possible because these car parks are locked overnight. It will not be possible for residents to have access to our car parks during the day because the capacity is required for use by visitors, shoppers, workers and season ticket holders. Residents wishing to park during the day will need to pay the same charges as all other users.</p> <p>Residential Parking for New Development is a proposed Development Management Policy that forms a part of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document that is going out for examination in public and will be scrutinised by an independent inspector. It is expected that this process should be concluded by November 2016. This documentation, which has been approved by Full Council, indicates that residential development resulting in an intensification of dwellings within an existing Residential Parking Zone will need to accommodate its parking needs within its site. The residents of the new development will not be eligible for a residents parking permit under the Residents Parking Scheme. Consequently it will not be appropriate for residents of new developments that come forward in the future to be permitted to have access to off-street spaces.</p>
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Continue to treat matters of insufficient capacity in certain streets or zones on the specific circumstances of each case. If the situation changes significantly going forward and large numbers of residents require use of the Council's car parks consideration will need to be given to the charging levels for this benefit and members approval sought if the charges need to be revised.
<b>Target deadline</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Good management of parking capacity in residential parking streets and zones.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mark Cole

<b>Recommendation (7)</b>	Through the Head of Highways and Transport, carefully evaluate the impact on operational efficiency of the introduction of paperless residential parking permits. If necessary strong consideration should be given to the introduction of technologies such as hand-held or body mounted Automated Number Plate Recognition systems for CEO's to reduce or eliminate the requirement for time-consuming data entry.
<b>Service response</b>	We are already in the process of going over to a paperless system for residents parking permits and residents visitor permits using our notice processing contractor. The process will commence at renewal of the Pangbourne residents permits on 1 June 2016 and will be introduced at the various renewal dates for other areas of the district until completion by 31 March 2017.

	<p>It is intended that paperless residents' visitor permits will be available for all areas by the end of June 2016. The current paper system is fairly resource hungry and going paperless will ease this situation. However it should be noted that this will not create any spare capacity within the Parking team because a parking officer will be lost from the team in 2016/17 as part of the Council's budget savings proposals. The operational efficiency of this change to paperless permits will nonetheless be carefully monitored as recommended. Paper applications will still be available for those members of the public who do not want to use the electronic paperless system.</p> <p>At present we only issue some 1,200 residents permits and some 12,000 residents' visitor permits per annum. At this low level it is not considered cost effective to invest in hand-held or body mounted Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems. There are also issues with misreads from these devices but they will no doubt become more reliable in the future as technology improves. The CEO's already have hand held computers for processing parking restrictions that have a fairly long lifespan and inputting data is not particularly onerous at this stage. However consideration will certainly be given to ANPR devices as the existing equipment comes towards the end of its useful operational life and if the numbers of transactions increase significantly.</p>
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Ongoing evaluation of the impact on operational efficiency of going over to paperless residential permits will be carefully monitored. The full impact will only be able to be identified when the new system has been fully operational for all areas of the district for a full financial year at the end of March 2018.
<b>Target deadline</b>	31 March 2018 for impact on operational efficiency. No date at this time for technologies such as ANPR.
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Improved efficiency in processing of permits and reduced printing costs of paper permits.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Martyn Baker

<b>Recommendation (8)</b>	Through the Head of Highways and Transport, commission a study to further understand the recent growth trends, and current and future demand for car parking in Newbury. The Terms of Reference for the study should expressly include the identification of ways to increase both the capacity (initially) and (subsequently), the occupancy of on-street and off-street schemes and the use of complimentary strategies to mitigate demand.
<b>Service response</b>	The Newbury Parking Study was commissioned by the Council and the report produced by WSP was published in May 2013. The study looked at whether future supply of parking in the town

	<p>centre will be sufficient to meet demand and whether it is located at suitable locations. The conclusion was that as we move towards 2026, in the daytime, overall demand for parking is generally matched by supply although net spare spaces amount to less than 5% of total supply. However spatial analysis indicates that the locations of spare spaces will not be matched by demand, with a substantial number of people having to travel up to 2km to find spaces. In the evening, demand is heavily dependent on events taking place. On evenings with heavy demand, the most convenient car parks may be full causing people to use spare capacity elsewhere in the town. This may not be as attractive, potentially reducing the appeal of coming to Newbury for evening entertainment. There are a number of options that will need to be considered to plan for adequate provision for parking in Newbury town centre in the future (by 2026). These include: opportunities to increase parking stock; improved access and signage to car parks with spare capacity; bus priority measures on key corridors; personalised travel planning at new and existing developments; workplace travel planning; and improved cycle routes and parking facilities. There is not a capacity issue that needs to be resolved now but as indicated above there will be as we move towards 2026. Consequently it will be necessary to commission a further study to review and refresh the 2013 WSP report and obtain answers to the options identified. This recommendation is therefore welcomed, but it will be necessary to identify a funding source before this can be commissioned. It is not an urgent action but we do need to start the refresh process in time to obtain answers so that we can plan the way forward.</p>
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Commission a study to review and refresh the 2013 Newbury Parking Study.
<b>Target deadline</b>	Completion of study by April 2018
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Publication of an updated report identifying actions and timescales for their implementation.
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Bryan Lyttle and Mark Cole

<b>Recommendation (9)</b>	Through the Head of Highways and Transport, assess the effectiveness and take-up of the payment methods by which on-street parking is paid for. The use of a mobile telephone application should also be considered.
<b>Service response</b>	In all on-street pay to park locations a pay by mobile phone service is already available by registering a credit or debit card for dial up payments. Payment by text is also available and the service provider offers a smartphone application that may be downloaded by the customer. Details of payment options are shown on the Council's website and on the service provider's website. There are some locations where it is not economically

	viable to provide pay and display machines and at these locations the pay by phone service is the only payment option. Assessment of sales records show that there is a strong take up of pay by phone parking at most on-street locations.
<b>Action to be taken</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Target deadline</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Evidence of achievement</b>	Records already show strong sales using the mobile phone service..
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Mark Cole

## Appendix D

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Scrutiny review into car parking</b>	<b>Item x</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission	
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	5 January 2016	

**Purpose of Report:** To outline the results of the review into car parking in the district.

**Recommended Action:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission endorses the recommendations of the Task Group prior to their consideration by the Executive.

**Key background documentation:** The minutes of and papers provided to the task group (available from Strategic Support).

Task Group Chairman	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Mike Johnston – Tel (01635) 582463
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	<a href="mailto:mjohnston@westberks.gov.uk">mjohnston@westberks.gov.uk</a>

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<b>Name:</b>	David Lowe
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# Executive Report

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting of 15 September 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) agreed to conduct a review into car parking in West Berkshire.
- 1.2 This report provides the findings and recommendations arising from the review and provides detail on its Terms of Reference and methodology.

## 2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference for the task group were to conduct a review into car parking in West Berkshire, and in particular to seek an understanding of
- The current policies for residents', on-street and off-street parking;
  - The effect (including on usage, revenue generation, congestion, displacement) of the parking policies in isolation;
  - The interrelationship between the policies and their cumulative effect;
  - The future plans for car parking provision;
  - The method and effectiveness of parking policy communication to the public;

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

## 3. Methodology

- 3.1 The review has been conducted by a cross-party task group, working with Council officers from the Environment Directorate. The members of the working group were Councillors Lee Dillon, James Fredrickson (until his appointment to the Executive), Mike Johnston and Rick Jones. Councillor Johnston was elected as the Chairman.
- 3.2 The task group held the meetings outlined in the table below.

Meeting date	Meeting focus
Tuesday 27 October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Election of the Chairman</li><li>• Agreement of the scope and Terms of Reference</li><li>• Briefing on<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Legal duties and powers</li><li>○ Parking Strategy</li><li>○ Parking policy framework</li><li>○ Performance measurement</li><li>○ Operating costs and income generation</li></ul></li><li>• Agreement of the review activity and schedule</li></ul>



<p>Tuesday 10 November 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking schemes in operations                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Locations</li> <li>○ Rationale and purpose</li> <li>○ Scheme establishment process</li> <li>○ Method of operation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Assessment of effectiveness</li> <li>• Future plans</li> <li>• Communications strategy</li> </ul>
<p>Monday 6 December 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulation of the recommendations</li> </ul>

#### 4. Acknowledgements and Thanks

- 4.1 The Chairman and Members of the task group would like to acknowledge and thank all those who supported and gave evidence to the review.

#### 5. Findings

##### Background and Context

- 1) The Council’s duties and powers for the civil enforcement of parking arise from Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and come from the requirement for it to secure ‘the expeditious movement of traffic’ on road networks. The Council’s current Parking Policies are set out in its Local Transport Plan 2011-2026.
- 2) Car parking forms part of the Council’s Clear Streets Strategy, which aims to make best use of the highway. The Council, through the Strategy, aims to
  - Eliminate dangerous and inconsiderate parking on yellow lines.
  - Keep main roads clear of illegally parked vehicles.
  - Keep the roads clear for emergency services vehicles.
  - Relieve congestion by keeping unauthorised vehicles out of pedestrianised areas, bus stops, taxi ranks and disabled parking spaces.
  - Ensure that only vehicles with a valid permit are parked in the Residents’ Parking Zones.
- 3) The aims of the Strategy are achieved through the use of regulated on-street parking, off-street parking (car parks) and residents’ schemes. Compliance with the terms of schemes and other traffic regulation is carried out by 15 Full Time Equivalent Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), who are employed by the Council and have been in place since April 2009. The Council operates in accordance with the DfT guidance ‘Operational Guidance to Local Authorities – Parking Policy and Enforcement’.
- 4) Transport policy is developed by a team in the Planning and Countryside service, whilst transport operations (including car parking), is the responsibility of the Highways and Transport service. There is close co-ordination and co-operation between the policy and operations teams, which the task group was pleased to note are under the unified direction of a single Executive Member.

- 5) Although there is a close working relationship between the policy teams in West Berkshire and Reading councils, there is scope for greater co-operation, particularly in ensuring that local transport plans are integrated, especially in the east of the district.
- 6) The types and numbers of parking offences are reported on annually and trends are analysed in order that improvements to existing schemes can be made, however performance against the specific aims of the Clear Streets Strategy is not measured. The Annual Report is published on the Council's website.
- 7) Bus punctuality and complaints, for example from the public or refuse crews, which inform assessments of traffic flow, are used as a proxy for assessment of the effectiveness of traffic parking arrangements outside of the Council's managed schemes.
- 8) The realisation of income from car parking – effectively a revenue generation target – forms part of the Highways Service annual budget. All income must be spent on highway maintenance, road safety and traffic management. Net annual income from parking is as shown below
  - Parking fines c£220k
  - Misuse of bus lanes c£60k
  - Parking charges (ticket sales, season tickets, resident permits etc) c£1.6m
- 9) CEOs issue around 8,000 penalty charge notices per year. Individual officers do not work to targets or quotas.

### **Residents' Schemes**

- 10) Fifteen residential parking schemes, introduced and operating on common principles, are in place in Hungerford, Lambourn, Pangbourne, Theale, Thatcham, and, the majority, in Newbury. These cover 98 roads across the district, for which 1,078 permits have been issued.
- 11) Residential parking schemes were (and are) introduced in response to residents' complaints that they have been unable to park close to their properties and where they have few opportunities to park off street. Prior to their introduction, all residents in (but not around) the proposed scheme are consulted for their views, with the decision on whether to introduce them being dependent upon majority support. They are administered as 'zones' within which individual roads, or parts thereof, are then subject to the enforceable restrictions imposed by Traffic Orders. Ward Councillors are kept informed throughout the process.
- 12) The impact of on-street parking schemes is reviewed 1 year after implementation to ensure that their aims have been achieved and that there are no unintended consequences. The assessment of a scheme's effectiveness and the extent to which it has satisfied residents is assessed through the monitoring of enquiries and complaints.
- 13) The introduction of schemes can cause 'displacement' of parking to other areas and some schemes have been extended beyond their original boundaries to address this unintended consequence.

- 14) Schemes are considered to be 'relatively' costly to introduce although this is in part off-set by revenues from the annual charge of £25 per permit. There is also a small income from the visitor parking permits, with 12,640 being issued to residents in 2013/14.
- 15) Some residents' parking space is made available for wider day time use by allowing between 1 and 4 hours free parking to the general public.
- 16) In Newbury residents' parking schemes have been extended to incorporate access to off-street parking during the evening parking charge period (from 6pm to 8am the next day) when demand for on-street parking exceeds supply. The long-term viability of such use will need to be assessed given the trends in development and loss of surface level parking, for example in the Market Street car park which will be lost to the new development.
- 17) It is the Council's intention to replace the existing residents' and visitors' paper permits with 'virtual' (or electronic) permits during 2016. In order that effective enforcement can be carried out, remote access to the permit database will be provided. It is not yet clear whether this change will allow the use of scanning technology, for example Automatic Number Plate Recognition, to ensure that the use of virtual permits does not create unintended operational inefficiencies for CEO's.
- 18) The provision of parking spaces is incorporated into the wider town planning policies, with the Residential Parking Policy setting out the parking requirements for new developments. This ranges from 0.75 parking spaces for a one-bedroomed flat through to 3 parking spaces for houses of 4 bedrooms or more. The spaces may be either within the curtilage of the property or in car parking areas within the overall site.
- 19) The Residential Parking Policy also expressly states that development resulting in an intensification of dwellings within an existing Residential Parking Zone will need to accommodate its parking needs within its site. The residents of the new development would not be eligible for a residents' parking permit under the Residents' Parking Scheme. Conversion of office buildings to flats, could also create a significant demand that will not be provided for.
- 20) The Task Group was concerned to learn that only 60% of the properties in the proposed Market Street development would have allocated parking.

### **Off-Street Parking**

- 21) The Council operates 28 car parks, the majority of which are in Newbury, which provide for 2,134 general use and 95 disabled spaces. A number of tariffs operate, with car parks being priced to promote the maximum usage. More than 500 season tickets were purchased in 2013/14, the last year for which figures are available.
- 22) A study, commissioned by the Council and conducted in 2013 by the company WSP, gives a projection that demand for off-street parking in Newbury is set to increase to such an extent that by 2025 there will be a shortfall in provision. It is the Council's aspiration to increase supply before this point, although it is not clear from

where the supply will be found and the costs are presently unknown. Given the significant changes resulting from unanticipated developments (for example office to housing conversions), new forecasts for residential developments (although offset to some degree off-set by the retention of The Wharf), officers in the Highways service are of the view that a further study to assess the impact of recent developments, current usage, future demand and potential supply would be of benefit.

- 23) A bid by Great Western Railway (to Network Rail) for infrastructure improvements around Newbury train station includes provision for an additional level on the proposed multi-storey car park at the Market Street development.
- 24) The use of the Variable Message Signs, which indicate where in Newbury off-street car parking spaces are available, have helped to increase occupancy and usage. The use of season tickets at the Northbrook multi-storey has increased usage but the capacity exists for it to be increased further still.
- 25) There is a recognised demand for additional parking in Thatcham.
- 26) It is anticipated that there will be a redevelopment of the Kennet Centre in the 10 years to 2025 which will present an opportunity for the provision of additional car parking capacity, required to meet the projected demand. Separately, the Council has a lease on the Kennet Centre car park until 2112.
- 27) The feasibility of operating a park and ride scheme in Newbury has been examined twice in recent years by the Transport Policy Task Group. Both studies have concluded that such a scheme could only operate if it were to be subsidised by the Council and is not therefore a preferred option.

### **On-Street Parking**

- 28) The Council applies charges for on-street parking in 17 locations in Newbury and Hungerford, introduced in two phases. There are 114 spaces on Hungerford High Street which are subject to pay and display restrictions and 312 spaces around Newbury which are subject to on-street charging restrictions (142 of these are Pay by Phone only). The effect of these schemes will be assessed after one year of operation.
- 29) Although the principle of paying to park is broadly accepted – if not entirely welcomed – by the public, take up and utilisation is dependent on charges that are carefully set and which have their effect monitored. Although not measured, it is expected that the introduction of fees for on-street parking causes some drivers to change their parking habits.
- 30) An increase in the number of locations that are subject to on-street parking charges would appear to present an opportunity for the Council to generate additional revenue.
- 31) On street parking can be paid for in cash or by mobile phone.

- 32) Officers in the Highways and Transport Service are of the view that the Council's Parking Policies could be developed further and more widely communicated to the public to promote understanding of the Council's position.

## 6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Overall the task group has formed the view that each individual aspect of the Council's involvement in car parking is being managed adequately.
- 6.2 There is however scope for a higher and more strategic view to be taken, incorporating each aspect of car parking – on-street, off-street and residential – into a holistic plan. The development of such an integrated plan, tied to articulated outcomes, should enable the public to better able to understand what the Council is aiming to achieve.
- 6.3 There are also a number of, smaller scale, recommendations that should improve specific aspects of the Council's planning and operations but overall the task group has confidence in the political oversight and day to day application of the planning and operational management of car parking.

## 7. Recommendations

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Executive Member for Transport should:

- (1) Working through both the Head of Highways and Transport and the Head of Planning and Countryside, develop a parking plan to ensure that all aspects of the planning, implementation, development and operation of on-street, off-street and residential parking in the district is managed holistically. The plan should include, but not be limited to,
- an assessment of the needs of all likely stakeholders, including residents, shoppers, visitors and commuters (and the extent to which 'transport hubs' should be developed and operated)
  - how the identified needs will be met;
  - how that outcome will be achieved
  - the ongoing measurement and reporting of key performance information to ensure that the stated aims of the plan are being achieved
  - a communications plan;
  - how complimentary strategies (e.g., signage, public transport) can be used to offset demand;
- (2) To further embed transport planning co-operation with Reading Borough Council, through the Head of Planning and Countryside, consider the preparation and development of an integrated transport plan (to include all aspects of car parking) in the east of the district;
- (3) Through the Head of Highways and Transport, consider extending the capability and coverage of the 'Ticketer' system used by certain operators of Council-contracted bus services, to allow the generation of reports that can help show where traffic congestion affects local roads, and causes delays to contracted local bus services using those roads;

- (4) Through the Head of Highways and Transport, ensure that the views of those in streets neighbouring proposed residential parking schemes are obtained, in addition to those directly affected by proposals;
- (5) Through the Head of Highways and Transport, ensure that residential parking schemes are revenue cost-neutral (or better) to the Council after no more than 3 years operation;
- (6) To ensure that there is sufficient parking for residents close to their own homes, through the Head of Highways and Transport, consider where necessary the extension of access to off-street parking to augment capacity in residential schemes. This may be particularly relevant for those planned residential developments with limited on-street and off-street spaces;
- (7) Through the Head of Highways and Transport, carefully evaluate the impact on operational efficiency of the introduction of paperless residential parking permits. If necessary, strong consideration should be given to the introduction of technologies, such as hand-held or body mounted Automated Number Plate Recognition systems for CEOs, to reduce or eliminate the requirement for time-consuming data entry;
- (8) Through the Head of Highways and Transport, commission a study to further understand the recent growth trends, current and future demand for car parking in Newbury. The Terms of Reference for the study should expressly include the identification of ways to increase both the capacity (initially) and (subsequently) the occupancy of on-street and off-street schemes and the use of complimentary strategies to mitigate demand.
- (9) Through the Head of Highways and Transport, assess the effectiveness and take-up of the payment methods by which on-street parking is paid for. The use of a mobile telephone application should also be considered.

## **Appendices**

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There are no appendices to this report.