

APPENDIX J

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 NOVEMBER 2008

EXECUTIVE - 2 DECEMBER 2008

Title:

PARKING STRATEGY
[Portfolio Holder for Car Parking: Cllr Robert Knowles]
[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

The revised and updated Parking Strategy (that replaces the current strategy written in 2000) outlines Waverley's approach to the provision, control and management of parking in the Borough. It explains what is planned for the next three years, why it is being actioned and the benefits to be gained. It supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities as well as national, regional and local transport policies.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The Council's corporate priorities are considered and demonstrated throughout the strategy.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

Equality and diversity implications are considered in the strategy.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

Income from Waverley's car parks is significant. The strategy covers the use and protection of car parks as assets, as well as the effect of different charging regimes on the proper management of the various car parks. The strategy does not include any proposed charging scheme.

Legal Implications:

There are no particular legal implications. However there are risks of challenges if specific legal processes, such as changing Parking Orders, are not properly followed.

Introduction

1. The Borough of Waverley forms the south-west part of the county of Surrey. It borders West Sussex to the south and Hampshire to the west. It has good strategic transport links with principal road and rail routes to London and

Portsmouth. Six railway stations give access to London Waterloo in around 45 minutes. Heathrow and Gatwick airports are within easy reach. The Borough has a population of around 115,000.

2. The four main centres are Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh. Waverley is largely a rural area and the 16 parishes contain over 20 villages. The centres attract many visitors and have robust economies that meet most day-to-day shopping and business needs.
3. Waverley Borough Council is a local authority delivering many services including public car park provision. Waverley manages 37 off-street car parks (around 4,100 parking spaces). Of these, 28 car parks operate on a 'Pay and Display' basis (around 3,700 spaces). The other 400 spaces are made up of contract spaces (eg. Station Road, Godalming) and free spaces, mostly in small village car parks. Surrey County Council has responsibility for traffic and highway matters including on-street parking and Waverley acts as its agent to enforce on-street waiting restrictions.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Observations

4. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Strategy at its meeting on 11 November 2008. The Committee agreed that the following draft observations should be passed to the Executive for consideration:
 - The Committee welcomed the strategy but there were specific concerns regarding the detail of the report specifically wording used for statistics.
 - The Committee thought the proposals in the strategy were commendable but hoped that they were realistic and achievable.
 - Councillors applauded proposals for lower car park charges for low-emission vehicles.
 - Councillors questioned why there were 400 car parking spaces free of charge in the Borough.
 - Members felt that car parks were suitable sites for recycling facilities, but asked that the number of car parking spaces used for this should be minimal.
 - The Committee asked that careful consideration was given to the impact of charging for on-street parking on the vitality of Town Centres. Members noted that Sutton, a London Borough, had suspended car parking charges until Christmas to help support local businesses and recognised that issues of land ownership could affect income and the impact on out car parking changes on traffic levels.
 - Councillors asked officers to consider the length of stay for on-street parking, as well as management of these by traffic wardens to ensure that the spaces were not abused.
 - Councillors supported on-street parking in towns as it could slow traffic speeds and make the environment safer for shoppers
 - A further comment was raised in relation to the lack of control over vendors' vehicles at Cranleigh Market. Officers were asked to ensure that this was managed to ensure public car parking spaces were not encroached into.

Several of these constructive observations have been incorporated into the draft Strategy.

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to recommend to the Council that the revised Parking Strategy for Waverley be adopted.

Background Papers (SDCS)

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Paul Frame

Telephone: 01483 523322

E-mail: paul.frame@waverley.gov.uk

G:\bureau\comms\executive\2008-09\189 ELOS Parking Strategy Report.doc

PARKING STRATEGY FOR WAVERLEY 2009 - 2012

Improving parking in Waverley

This strategy (replacing the strategy written in 2000) outlines our approach to the provision, control and management of off-street parking in the Borough of Waverley.

It explains what it is we plan to do over the next three years, why we are doing it and the benefits to be gained.

It supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities and as well as national, regional and local transport policies.

On street parking restrictions are set by Surrey County Council.

The following documents set out the planning policies for car and cycle parking:

- National planning policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport 2001. Other national planning policy statements also refer to parking
- The South East Plan is the regional spatial strategy. When adopted it will replace the Surrey Structure Plan 2004. Until then policies in both the draft South East Plan and the Surrey Structure Plan (including the County Councils Supplementary Planning Guidance "A parking Strategy for Surrey 2003") apply.
- The Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 sets out the local planning policies for the Borough.

Leisure

The Council is committed to improving and supporting opportunities for all to take part in sport, recreation, and culture

Improving Lives

The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for all, particularly the more vulnerable within our society

Value for Money

The Council is committed to ensuring that all activities it carries out are customer focussed and provide good value for money.

Environment

The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing Waverley's unique mix of rural and urban communities

Provision of parking

Maintain an adequate supply of parking

Why:

It is important to provide adequate space for parking for residents, to support the economic stability of Waverley's town centres and to attract new investment. At the same time we need to try to reduce car travel, congestion and use land efficiently.

We will:

Maintain current parking stock levels, and regularly review the supply of parking space within the Borough.

Work with the County Council to look at the opportunities there may be to make better use of kerbside parking places, especially around the main shopping centres and rail network.

Policies in the Surrey Structure Plan 2004 and the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002 aim for balance. Policy LO3 of the Structure Plan and Policy T3 of the Local Plan seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the town centres as the focus of shopping, commercial and social life in the Borough. It seeks to retain and encourage a mix of uses, which contributes to the vitality and viability of these centres.

Policy DN3 of the Structure Plan and Policy TC14 of the local plan encourage alternative modes of travel to the car and try to reduce congestion. TC14 of the local plan states that for town centre developments, where there is already good public transport, then a lower amount of parking for offices and major town centre retail, residential and leisure development will be required.

Officers are aware that public transport throughout the Borough is not good enough to meet this policy requirement and in many areas is non-existent. Government guidelines in rural areas are not realistic.

WBC Corporate Plan - Environment

The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing Waverley's unique mix of rural and urban communities

Other forms of transport

Reduce unnecessary journeys by car and encourage other forms of transport.

Why:

There are many benefits in everyday life if the roads are less congested. Traffic congestion can be improved if motorists can be encouraged to make some small changes in the way they travel and change their routines by using other means of transport, travelling with others or by travelling on foot. This would make a positive impact on our local environment

Some motorists transporting children to and from school can add to the traffic congestion. The parking restrictions that protect children walking to school and at the school entrance are now well signed and marked. The reasons for operating a concessionary school parking scheme introduced in 2001 are now obsolete.

Coach travel is environmentally friendly and brings visitors and shoppers to our centres. There are few opportunities in the Borough for a coach to stop and wait in our town centres.

Community service vehicles such as the 'Hoppa' are extremely important to the less mobile or vulnerable people within our society. There are limited waiting places within our town centres for these vehicles.

Drivers who chose to drive vehicles with low or zero exhaust emissions should be encouraged.

We will:

Seek to increase and improve parking for bicycles and motorcycles. Installing secure cycle stands in our car parks where a need can be demonstrated.

Promote 'park and stride' and try to encourage the motorist to walk for part of their journey.

We will work with partners to encourage school travel plans and other initiatives to reduce the need for or usage of parking spaces.

Work with other authorities to encourage the development of schemes such as the 'walking bus' (where a group of children walk to school together with accompanying adults) and development of the Yellow School Bus operations. The concessionary School Parking Scheme will close in September 2009.

Work with the County Council to identify:

- a site for coach parking at each main centre.
- Identify additional waiting places for community service vehicles

Develop a scheme that will take the level of vehicle emissions into account when setting the cost of a season ticket or permit.

Encourage employers, schools, colleges and similar establishments, through community and public involvement, to achieve a voluntary reduction of car usage and parking demand.

The Council will continue to look at ways of encouraging cleaner/greener vehicles.

Policy M5 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan states that the Council will seek to improve conditions for cyclists by promoting and providing cycle parking facilities in town centres, railway stations and at major public buildings. One of the objectives of the Waverley Borough Cycling Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2005 is to improve the quantity, quality and security of cycle parking facilities at convenient locations.

WBC Corporate Plan – Environment:

.
The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing Waverley's unique mix of rural and urban communities

Parking Management and Control ***Effective and fair***

Why:

The management and control of parking is necessary for the continued provision of parking, public safety and to maintain traffic flow.

Waverley directly controls parking within its car parks and since April 2006, undertakes the enforcement of waiting restrictions on the streets of Waverley on behalf of the County Council. An increase in compliance with waiting restrictions brings many benefits:

- Less traffic congestion
- Accident reduction improved safety for pedestrians, cyclists as well as the motorist
- Cleaner and more friendly local environment
- Brings custom to the many local shops, businesses and visitor attractions
- Buses will arrive on time and people will feel more encouraged to make use of them

In its enforcement role, Waverley must strike the right balance between too much and too little enforcement. It must be fair to the motorist, but also effective in enforcing waiting contraventions when they occur.

We will:

Work with the highway authority to ensure waiting restrictions are applied where necessary, regularly reviewed and ensure that timed on street bays fit the local requirements of the area. We will work together to ensure that the meaning of a waiting restriction is evident to a motorist and they are accurate and clearly signed and marked.

Work with Surrey County Council, Network Rail and South West Trains (in consultation with local residents) to provide additional off-street parking spaces and restrict on-street parking in residential areas around railway stations.

Continue to seek a 100% compliance with parking regulation and direct our enforcement team to those areas where compliance with parking regulation has degenerated or could be better.

Review our enforcement plan to ensure that on-street enforcement effort meets the aims of parking enforcement.

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 makes provision for councils to enforce off-street car parks regulations. The Road Traffic Act 1991 enabled Councils to take responsibility for parking enforcement from the police in a civil rather than criminal way. The Traffic Management Act 2004 provides for the civil enforcement of most types of parking contraventions.

The Regional Transport Strategy should set out the context for parking controls. Controls over both on street parking and car parks should be backed up by adequate enforcement.

Car park design

Making car parks easier to use, safer and more accessible

Why:

A good car park design will provide maximum space for visitors and shoppers, safe and clear access routes whilst providing adequate space between spaces to allow manoeuvres without causing accidental damage or putting the safety of people including children at risk. It should be clear to a motorist, where parking is and is not permitted. A car park should be a friendly place to visit and good lighting, clear sight lines, clear instructions and regular maintenance and cleaning all play a part in helping to achieve this. The special requirements of people with disabilities should be taken into account.

It is good practice to provide public information. For example:

- How to pay for parking
- What to do in the event of a machine fault
- The quickest route to the shops and attractions
- How to avoid a penalty charge
- Alternative car parks that may be used if the car park is full
- Where economy long term parking can be found

A survey of 326 car park users, showed that we can improve:

23% felt strongly that the car parks were generally clean, tidy and in good order

23% feel completely safe in the car parks

6% felt that the public car parking facilities in Waverley are very good in comparison to elsewhere

34% felt that it was important to personal safety to have car park security systems such as closed circuit television (CCTV)

We will:

Review the layout and design of our parking areas and make alterations to improve vehicular and pedestrian access and take action to reduce the fear of crime.

Increase the number of parking bays within our car parks that are designated for the use of blue badge holders to comply with national guidelines.

Undertake routine inspections of the car parks and carry out remedial works as necessary.

Improve signage and provide information boards

WBC Corporate Plan - Improving lives, Environment, Value for Money

The Council is committed to improving the quality of life for all, particularly the more vulnerable within our society

Disability Discrimination Act

Department for Transport –Inclusive mobility guidance Car Park design

Car Parking Charges

Continue to be strategic with parking charges

Why:

What to charge the motorist to park has been the subject of much debate over the years. The approach has been to apply similar charges across the Borough. Historically, the charges have been set according to whether the car park is for the use of long or short-term stay motorists and the proximity of the car park to the main shopping centres.

Each town centre has an individual character, competes with different neighbouring towns and offers different shopping experiences. The towns are situated in separate corners of the Borough. The cost of parking at each location should take account of the demographic and geographic situation of each centre and the level of demand.

Some businesses rely more than others on public parking in order to be successful. The businesses that operate in and around car parks can also change over a period of time.

In some locations it may help the business community if the charging period reflects the use of a car park during the evening as well as the day.

There are reasons why one car park should be less expensive than another in the same or different centre. Applying charges helps to manage parking space better and spread parking across a town to under used parking space. Applying a charge for parking where previously parking has been free of charge can help to address local parking situations and ensure that space is used correctly in support of a local community.

We will:

Introduce a pricing policy that recognises the individuality of the main centres in Waverley, is relevant to the car park location and surrounding activities, and can be changed quickly to react to a changing environment.

National planning policy guidance in PPG13 for car parking charging is the same as the guidance for parking controls and should be used to encourage non-car use. It also advises that Councils should set out appropriate levels and charges for parking so that they do not undermine the vitality of other town centres.

WBC Corporate Plan - Value for Money

The Council is committed to ensuring that all activities it carries out are customer focussed and provide good value for money.

Methods of payment

Making payment more convenient

Why:

Waverley operates 24 'pay and display' car parks across the Borough. These are spread across our town centres. Many of the car parks have fewer than 300 spaces.

Motorists are familiar with the 'Pay and display' system of parking and the need to have the required number and amount of coins in order to purchase a ticket.

To overcome the need for coins, a season ticket or contract permit can be purchased in advance. Ticket options are limited to either annual or six monthly season tickets or a contract permit. For some people this is not an affordable option.

Advances in technology mean that alternative payment options are now available. Systems may be purchased that permit payment for parking by phone, debit or credit card and smart card. New technology comes at a price, may not be compatible with existing systems and can in some cases cost both the motorist and council more.

We will:

Research and introduce an alternative payment option that is compatible with the existing pay and display machines, is efficient and cost effective.

Promote the benefits of season tickets and permits by introducing shorter periods (one month, three month, etc).

Review the cost of existing residents permits, that permit parking between the hours of 4.30pm – 6pm and 8am – 9.30am.

Reduce the number of contract spaces in the town centres in order to ensure that space is shared between a number of motorists.

WBC Corporate Plan - Value for Money

The Council is committed to ensuring that all activities it carries out are customer focussed and provide good value for money.

Managing our assets

Making the most of what we have

Why:

Over the years a number of markets and similar events made use of our car parks on a Sunday. These events, normally in partnership with town or parish councils, can add vitality to our town centres. Permission must be sought from the Council before such events can take place.

The opportunities to recycle our waste have grown over the years as we have become more efficient at collecting and separating our recyclable waste material. The early recycling sites started life in the pay and display car parks but the size and number of collection bins is outgrowing these locations. These sites take up valuable parking space and concerns for public safety are increasing.

Many motorists purchase pay and display tickets. The space on the reverse of a pay and display ticket is valuable and can be used to promote activities, local community schemes, products and local services.

The Council owns most of the land that is used for our car parks. These are valuable assets that support the economic viability of Waverley's town centres and need to be protected from the development of permissive rights.

We will:

Produce policy and publish guidance on the use of our car parks for Sunday markets and similar events. This will include information on our charges, suitable days, risk assessments and trading legislation.

Work with recycling officers and other authorities to encourage the development and design of sustainable local recycling centres and identify the more appropriate locations for these centres.

Actively promote the advertisement space on the reverse of pay and display tickets in order to reduce the cost of ticket production.

Require any residence or business, accessing their property through a car park, to enter into a licence agreement with the Council, in order to prevent the development of permissive rights

WBC Corporate Plan - Value for Money

The Council is committed to ensuring that all activities it carries out are customer focussed and provide good value for money.

WBC Corporate Plan - Environment

The Council is committed to protecting and enhancing Waverley's unique mix of rural and urban communities