

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CAR PARKING STRATEGY

1.0 Strategy Objectives

The Council's parking objectives set out to be consistent with and contribute to the overall aims of the National and Regional transport strategies which seek to:

- Achieve a reduction in overall traffic.
- To increase use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel.
- To achieve a more effective and efficient transport system, whilst taking into account:
 - The economic vitality of the town centre
 - The parking needs of people with disabilities
 - The parking needs of local residents, shops and businesses

2.0 Parking Policy Benefits

An effective parking policy will help to further a wide range of urban policy objectives such as:

- Economic vitality of the town centre.
- Social (accessibility).
- Environmental (negative impact of traffic congestion).
- Pricing and availability of parking in the town centre is one of the few ways of managing or restraining car use.
- Compared to major infrastructure changes, parking policies are relatively easy to introduce and cost effective methods of managing demand, which can be easily modified to reflect changing situations.

3.0 Parking Policy Limitations

- Incomplete control of the parking stock can limit the ability to achieve desired objectives
- Conflict between the objectives that parking policies are trying to serve e.g. regeneration, traffic restraint and revenue generation.
- Parking policies are not a total solution in that other supporting measures will be required to achieve urban policy objectives.
- Parking policy interventions can be ineffective without adequate enforcement.

4.0 Local Parking Policy Objectives

- Ensure that the parking strategies aims and objectives are consistent with national, regional and local transport policies.
- Prioritise the parking needs of disabled people, local residents, suppliers of goods and services, businesses and their customers.

- Promote more sustainable travel choices through availability and pricing of town centre car parking
- Discourage the use of town centre parking spaces for long stay parking and seek to maximise the availability of short stay spaces in prime, central locations for use by shoppers and other short stay users.
- Ensure that parking restrictions both on and off- street are effectively enforced and minimise the impact of town centre parking controls on surrounding residential areas.

5.0 Local Parking Policy

5.1 Charging Policy

Policy: This Authority will in principle impose charges for parking at levels reflecting local pressures and needs. These may vary:

- as between the different towns and smaller centres
- as between zones within the larger towns

- However the scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across the stay periods in all towns. These should follow national guidelines. Thus the percentage increase in charge from one time period to the next should be consistent throughout all locations.
- Car parks currently not having charges will be reviewed and the need for application for charges considered in the light of the criteria stated above. Any charges imposed will be designed to regulate use and improve availability as well as diverting long stay away from very central locations. Income earned should cover operating and maintenance costs and allow necessary improvements to the useability, environment and security of a number of these sites.
- Cheshire East Council has inherited a number of off street car parks for which there is no charge. It is intended that parking charges will be considered only on those sites for which a good case can be made under the above criteria.

5.2 Short Stay Parking

Policy: To give priority to and manage the provision of short stay parking in the town centre

- Short stay visitors to the town centre are less likely to travel at peak periods i.e. reduce congestion, improve efficiency of the road network.
- Short stay parking generates a high turnover of spaces allowing more visitors to be accommodated per space.
- Availability of short stay spaces is essential to maintaining the commercial viability of the town centres.

5.3 Long Stay Parking

Policy: To manage the provision of long stay parking in the town centres through pricing to encourage the use of more sustainable transport and by a system of

differential charging to promote the use of peripheral car parks where such parking is to be accommodated.

- Commuters travel at peak periods and are a major contribution to congestion of the road network.
- Commuter parking monopolises parking spaces for the entire working day
- Transport objectives may be achieved more easily through parking policy interventions aimed at the commuter. It is more practicable for example for the commuter to change their travel patterns than it is to continually expand the road network and parking stock.
- Long stay parking provision in connection with bus or rail commuter travel is supported in order to reduce the level of dependency on the motorcar as a means of commuting to work.
- Contract parking: contracts will be made available on selected car parks for regular long stay customers, sold at competitive rates.

5.4 Disabled Parking Provision

Policy: To prioritise where appropriate the needs of those people who have no choice but to use the car to access essential services

- Continue support of the shopmobility scheme within the town centres
- Improve the quality and provision of disabled parking in off street car parks in accordance with Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requirements. Local conditions and demand are also considered in determining the number and location of spaces to be provided.

5.5 Parking Enforcement

Policy: To ensure parking policy interventions are implemented effectively and contribute to the wider objectives of transport planning and economic development; within the provisions of the relevant legislation:

- *Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984*
Provides powers under which Councils are able to provide and manage off street car parks. The use of the Council's car parks is regulated by orders permissible under the Act. It also provides powers for the Highway Authority to make traffic regulation orders for the control and regulation of traffic and parking on the highway.
- *Road Traffic Act 1991 (Decriminalised Parking Enforcement)*
Introduced to address the increase in illegal parking (growing car ownership and use) and fears that police resources would not be able to match the demand for enforcement.
- *Traffic Management Act 2004 (Civil Parking Enforcement)*
Statutory duty on Local Authorities to reduce the cause of congestion and disruption by controlling parking and the road network as a whole.

Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 provides a single framework to make regulations for the civil enforcement of parking and waiting restrictions, bus lanes and some moving traffic offences.

5.6 On-Street Parking

Policy: To provide on street, limited waiting parking facilities where it is considered safe to do so without undue interference with moving traffic, residents, businesses and other urban objectives.

- Cheshire East Council as local highway authority is responsible for the control and regulation of on street parking.

5.7 Residents' Parking

Policy: To prioritise the parking needs of residents in areas which are affected by non-residential parking, or are likely to be affected as a result of policy interventions in relation to long stay parking in the town centres

- The Authority will operate residents' on-street parking schemes which
 - aim to balance the conflicting demands for kerb space
 - manage the displacement of parking
- The Authority will develop robust, fair policies as the available kerb space in many areas will not be sufficient to cater for all demands from residents and other legitimate users.