

REVIEW OF THE COUNTY-WIDE PARKING STRATEGY

BY: THE PARKING STRATEGY REVIEW GROUP

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. At their meeting on 21st October 2003, the Environment Scrutiny Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) that the County-wide Parking Strategy be reviewed. This recommendation was subsequently endorsed by Cabinet and the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) requested that Environment Scrutiny Committee carry out a review. At their meeting on 23rd January 2004, the Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed that a small review Group be formed and that it be representative of different areas of the County. The membership of the Review Group was comprised of: Councillor J.H.R. Goodwin – (Chairman of the Review Group); Councillor B.F. Ashton, Councillor Mrs A.E. Gray, Councillor K.G. Grumble and Councillor J.W. Newman. The terms of reference for the review, as set out in the Scoping Statement (attached at Annex 1) were agreed.

1.2. The current County-wide Parking Strategy, appended at Annex 2, was approved for adoption by Cabinet at its meeting on 31st January, 2002. The strategy continues to provide the framework for car parking policy in the County. Progress on implementing the key actions identified in the current strategy was considered by the Review Group and is summarised in Annex 3.

1.3. It is anticipated that, when approved by Environment Scrutiny Committee, this report will be presented to the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) for consideration. The Review Group hopes that the findings contained in this report will form the basis of a new County-wide Parking Strategy for inclusion in the revised Herefordshire Local Transport Plan.

2. MEETINGS OF THE REVIEW GROUP

2.1. The Review Group met on a number of occasions to address the questions posed in the Scoping Statement. The Review Group had the clear intention that the Strategy be fully examined and these meetings were held to hear or consider evidence and to formulate the final report. It was recognised early on that a wide range of issues would need to be considered – not just the emotive issue of parking charges. Discussions and debate at Review Group meetings covered the full range of issues

from strategic policy to more detailed implementation issues. A meeting was held on 28th October 2004 in public session to hear from six invited witnesses.

3. METHODS USED TO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS

3.1. The Review Group evaluated the methods available for gathering evidence from a wide range of stakeholders to assist with undertaking the review. A range of different methods was used to ensure effective consultation. The following methods were employed:

- A questionnaire was sent to key organisations/partners, Reference Groups, Town and Parish Councils;
- A press statement was issued inviting the public to comment on the Strategy via their Town or Parish Council,
- Key sections of the Council e.g. tourism, economic development and the County Treasurers, were requested to submit evidence of the effect of the Strategy on their areas;
- Key organisations or stakeholders were invited to submit further evidence or comment;
- Comments were obtained from the Midland Parking Managers Forum.
- Local Councillors were invited to submit their observations.
- Members of the Review Group have attended a number of Town or Parish Council meetings.
- Representatives of identified key user groups were invited to give evidence at a public meeting of the Group on 28th October, 2004.
- Consultation was also undertaken through two focus group sessions drawing members from the Herefordshire Voice panel. This provided qualitative information regarding the likely views of members of the general public.

3.2 Full details of the consultation techniques employed and the results of this consultation are presented in a separate Consultation Report. Copies of the Consultation Report have been issued to Members of the Environment Scrutiny Committee. Copies are available to the public on request from the Committee Officer (Scrutiny) tel. (01432) 260460.

4. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

4.1. The Review Group kept in mind the section in the terms of reference “whilst maintaining a net financial contribution to the Engineering & Transportation budget no less than existing.” The Review Group was also conscious that car parking income could play a role in ensuring

ongoing revenue funding to meet the aims of the Council's Local Transport Plan, for example in relation to Park and Ride.

- 4.2. In relation to Council car parks the Review Group heard from the County Treasurer that car parking is a net earner for the Council. The net budget contributes over £1m to keep the charge to Council Taxpayers lower than it otherwise would have to be. £1m represents in the region of 1.7% of the overall Council tax bill, which equates to £15 per Band D property.
- 4.3. However, the net income (excluding income from decriminalised parking) is not attributed to supporting any specific area of the Council's spending. Under legislation governing decriminalised parking services, the service is intended to be self-financing. Under the Business Plan for the implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement in Herefordshire it was intended that the service would break even. However, should a surplus be generated then this is ring-fenced for transportation related purposes defined by the Road Traffic Act 1991
- 4.4. The Review Group have received copies of the Audit Commission briefing entitled "The Price is Right? – Charges for Council Services".
- 4.5. Having taken account of the Council's Property Management Scrutiny Review, the Review Group considers that it is important to ensure that the relative profitability of different car parks is kept under review. While undertaking the review it became apparent that current data collection methods made it difficult to obtain data on each car park. The Review Group also appreciated that a balance needed to be struck between the financial worth and the strategic worth of any individual car park. ***It is recommended that that the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) undertake a detailed investigation into the profitability/capital value/strategic worth of each Council owned car park.*** To ensure this is carried out effectively all associated costs with car parks should be attributable to specific car parks.

5. KEY QUESTIONS

- 5.1 The following key questions were raised in the Scoping Statement for the Review Group to consider. These have been considered during the consultation and data collection stage and during discussion at Review Group meetings. Detailed below are the Group's comments in relation to the questions.

Q1 Why does the Council provide car parking?

The Council provides and manages car parking for a wide range of reasons but primarily 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.
- Ensure parking of vehicles does not obstruct the public highway.
- Support the Council's integrated transport strategy.
- Help relieve Hereford City and Market Towns from traffic congestion.

Q2 Why does the Council make and enforce on-street parking restrictions?

Decriminalised parking was introduced in Herefordshire through the transfer of responsibility for on-street enforcement of parking restrictions from the Police to the Council. In line with Government guidance, this was undertaken to improve the effectiveness of enforcement within the County and ensure on-street parking restrictions are complied with. Improving enforcement of these restrictions is important to prevent obstructions and ensure the free flow of traffic, ensure spaces are available for essential uses such as loading and disabled parking and to facilitate the turnover of short-stay spaces for use by shoppers.

As this was introduced after the publication of the current strategy, the Review Group has consulted on the way in which decriminalised parking enforcement is carried out. The Review Group's comments on the approach to, and operation of on-street parking are contained within the report. The Consultation Report, (see separate document), highlights a number of objectives that were suggested by stakeholders. **The following question was asked of stakeholders:**

What should be the principal objectives for the Council's management of on-street parking across the County?

A wide variety of suggestions were received. Those most frequently referred to can be summarised as:

- To ensure free flow of traffic
- To provide for loading and unloading for businesses
- To provide for disabled people to park
- To provide residents parking in appropriate locations
- To ensure effective and sensitive enforcement of restrictions

The Review Group wishes to support these suggested objectives and believe the following further objectives should also be considered:

1. Ensuring the safe and free flow of traffic is essential to economic vitality and business growth.
2. Effective enforcement, coupled with ongoing review of restrictions, should seek to prevent obstructions that can impact upon disabled people, bus services and effective loading / unloading by businesses.

3. 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.

Q3 What is the balance between supply to support economic activity and managing demand to reduce congestion and meet Local Transport Plan objectives?

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.

Q4 How can the parking market best be segmented?

The Group considers that the market is best segmented as follows:

- a) Visitors / Shoppers / Tourists
- b) Workers / Commuters
- c) Residents

Q5 What is the best strategy for each segment?

The overall strategy should seek to provide appropriate parking for each segment.

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

This is defined at section 7.7 (Residents Parking)

Q6 What are the constraints within which we must work?

The Review Group has identified the following key constraints:

- Government Transport Policy
- Local Transport Plan
- Planning Guidance
- Need to maintain financial income

- Need to carry out fair and effective enforcement
- Council resources available for improving quality, maintenance and signing

Q7 How should the assets be maintained?

Maintenance should be improved to enhance the quality of parking and efficiency of use. Income from charges should contribute to such improvements.

6. PARK AND RIDE

- 6.1 During the course of the review the Review Group has heard about Park and Ride schemes in York and Shrewsbury and ***The Review Group recommend that the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) continues with the ongoing work into the financial and operational viability of a Park and Ride scheme for Hereford with a view to implementing suitable schemes, if they can be demonstrated to be viable.***

7. CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES

- 7.1 The tables presented in this section highlight the key strategic elements of the current Parking Strategy. In reviewing the Strategy the Review Group has considered these key points in turn. It has considered the views expressed by stakeholders during the consultation and the research carried out by the Review Group. As a result, the Review Group would wish to draw the comments highlighted in bold to the attention of the Cabinet Member regarding the possible revision of these strategic elements.

7.2 Policy Linkages

- 7.2.1 The Strategy sets out, in summary form, how the County-wide Parking Strategy should help to achieve the overall policy aims of the Herefordshire Plan and specific transportation policy aims.
- 7.2.2 The Review Group has discussed a number of these links and is of the opinion that the summary should be reviewed to ensure that the information in the Strategy is up to date, particularly in relation to the Council's Corporate Plan which will act as an overarching policy.
- 7.2.3 ***The Review Group recommends that the Cabinet Member reviews and where necessary updates the policy linkages identified in the current strategy for inclusion in the revised Parking Strategy to be included in the next Local Transport Plan.***

7.3 Supply and Quality

7.3.1 The Review Group have received evidence from the Herefordshire Parking Study 2000 (Annex 4) and from Car Parking Surveys 2002/3 (Annex 5) that average car park occupancy levels indicate that car parks in Hereford are effectively full. Many stakeholders also highlighted this during consultation.

7.3.2 The Review Group have heard from Planning Services that, in general terms, under Government Planning Policy and Guidance, the number of parking spaces that can be required within any given new planning development has been reduced. The Review Group is concerned that in residential areas this may over time further erode the availability of on-street parking. The Review Group has received information from the Government Office of the West Midlands (GOWM) relating to national planning policies. Particular attention was drawn to Policy T7 in the revised Regional Planning Guidance, which requires local authorities to work within maximum standards for parking associated with new development.

7.3.3 The Review Group received evidence from stakeholders, which indicates that there is a general consensus that car parks should be designed to be safe, well signed, attractive, easy to use, and should be well maintained.

7.3.4 The following table highlights the recommendations of the Review Group in relation to Supply and Quality.

Strategic Issue (Text contained in current Parking Strategy with paragraph number from current document where appropriate – see Annex 2)	Comments by the Review Group
Supply and Quality	
1.1 There must be sufficient parking capacity and turnover of spaces to meet the economic vitality safety and access objectives	<p><i>The Review Group wishes to express concern that in Hereford demand for parking exceeds supply most of the time during the working day and that additional capacity should be provided through the addition of Park and Ride facilities, subject to this being financially viable. There is also a need to manage the available spaces better to reduce the amount of circulating traffic searching for a space.</i></p>

<p>1.2 Residents should generally be able to park in residential streets.</p>	<p><i>The Review Group wishes to support the statement but highlights that “second passes”, that are issued to households, can be used by tradesmen carrying out work at the property. Future proposals for residents parking should be brought forward by Town Councils. The Review Group would also recommend that the Cabinet Member allows for partial refunds of passes returned prior to their expiry date to encourage homeowners who move house to return their pass so that a pass can be issued to new occupiers.</i></p>
<p>1.3 Car parks need to be well signed, attractive, easy to use and well maintained.</p>	<p><i>The Review Group wishes to support but expresses concern regarding poor maintenance and signing. It is recommended that improvements to signing should be included in the revised strategy to improve the efficiency of car parking and reduce congestion. The Review Group suggests that, when appropriate, the use of intelligent signs (e.g. car park full) could be introduced for Hereford.</i></p>
<p>1.3 In setting charges, consideration will be given to increasing these sums (for maintenance) in order to improve the quality of the car parks.</p>	<p><i>The Review Group wishes to support the principle subject to charges being in line with market forces.</i></p>

7.4 Transport Policy

7.4.1 The current Parking Strategy forms part of the Council’s Local Transport Plan. A new Local Transport Plan is currently being prepared and this review of the Parking Strategy will need to feed into this revised plan.

7.4.2 Current Government Guidance in relation to preparation, by Local Authorities, of their Local Transport Plan recognises the importance of integrating parking policy with the overall transport strategy for an area. This recommends that together with measures to improve local transport facilities, the management and control of supply, cost and enforcement of parking should be used to meet local needs, support the local economy and encourage, where possible, a shift in travel behaviour away from the car towards more sustainable modes of transport.

7.4.3 The following table highlights the recommendations of the Review Group in relation to Transport Policy.

Transport Policy	
Strategic Issue (Text contained in current Parking Strategy with paragraph number from current document where appropriate)	Comments by the Review Group
2.1 The overall parking policy should encourage use of alternative forms of transport to the private car.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support the statement but recognises that Herefordshire is a rural County and that parking supply within Hereford and the Market Towns needs be adequate to support economic vitality.</i>
2.2 Income from Car Parking should assist in the provision of sustainable transport projects (such as Community transport, public transport, cycling and walking) and for achieving the wider ambitions set out in the Herefordshire Plan.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support. This is also based on consultation responses showing a majority view that income generated from parking charges should contribute to transport improvements. The Review Group also wish to highlight the need to use income to improve quality and maintenance, signage and invest in Park and Ride</i>

7.5 Charging

- 7.5.1 Parking charges can be an emotive aspect of the Strategy and are set out in Section 3 of the current Strategy.
- 7.5.2 In relation to statement 3.5 concerning the review of charges, the Review Group agree that charges should be reviewed (but not necessarily increased) on an annual basis. The Review Group were of the opinion that an annual review should be undertaken as under the current strategy, and in accordance with the Council's annual budget review. However, this should not rule out a periodic review in certain circumstances e.g. if neighbouring authorities raise their charges by a significant amount.
- 7.5.3 The Review Group considered representations which indicated support for the introduction of "Pay on Exit" systems for car parks in Hereford. The Review Group recognised that there may be benefits of such systems in avoiding visitors and shoppers having to return to their car before their pay and display ticket has expired, which could encourage longer stays to support the local economy. However, the Review Group considers that, whilst the situation should be periodically reviewed, such systems are likely to be a significant cost that at present is not considered justified. The Review Group is also aware that the introduction of such schemes are likely to require the removal of a number of parking spaces to

accommodate the equipment required and have an ongoing revenue requirement in terms of maintenance and a staff presence on site to ensure the system continues to operate smoothly.

7.5.4 The Review Group has also considered a suggestion that higher parking charges be imposed during the tourist season. While this could generate additional income, the opinion was that this would complicate the charging scheme, would lead to additional administrative costs and would effect locals as well as tourists. This opinion was born out by the consultation results that do not indicate any significant level of support for such a proposal.

7.5.5 The following table summarises the Review Group's conclusions.

Charging	
Strategic Issue (Text contained in current Parking Strategy with paragraph number from current document where appropriate)	Comments by the Review Group
3.1 Some free parking is required, either on or off street, with more being required where alternatives to the car are less readily available.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support the principle of this for the Market Towns. There is a need for more time limited parking restrictions in shopping areas.</i>
3.2 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.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support and recommend that, on the assumption that Park and Ride is introduced in Hereford, charges within the centre should be higher than those for Park and Ride to encourage greater use.</i>
3.3 Any charges must be reasonable in comparison with neighbouring towns.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support this approach.</i>
3.4 Any charges must be in simple multiples of common coin denominations.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support this statement.</i>
3.5 Charges should be reviewed (but not necessarily increased) on an annual basis.	<i>The Review Group supports the statement. However, to allow for changes in circumstances, this should not rule out any periodic review of charges.</i>

7.6. Town Specific Statements

7.6.1 The current Strategy includes a number of statements regarding the role of car parking in each of Herefordshire's towns. The Review Group has considered these statements in the light of the views expressed by stakeholders and wish to highlight the following points to the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation).

Town Specific Statements	
Strategic Issue (Text contained in current Parking Strategy with paragraph number from current document where appropriate)	Comments by the Review Group
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.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support and recommend that additional parking supply should be in the form of Park and Ride in Hereford</i>
On street charges in central Hereford only if and when the additional revenue is needed to fund Park & Ride or other sustainable transport improvements.	<i>The Review Group wishes to recommend that this only be done if required to support the business case for Park and Ride and also suggests that other increases in parking revenue could also be used to help fund Park and Ride.</i>
Ross combines the functions of a market town with those of a tourist attraction and a "gateway" to other places.	<i>The Review Group agree with this statement. However, the Review Group recommend that the Cabinet Member consider identifying an area designated for free parking.</i>
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.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support this statement.</i>
Bromyard serves mainly its local population and people from the surrounding rural areas. The current regime ensures 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.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support this approach. The Review Group has identified that there is a need to identify new car park provision in Bromyard as part of reviewing the service property requirements.</i>
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	<i>The Review Group wishes to highlight the potential incorporation of the former Council staff car park at Etnam Street within the public parking area to enable proper controls to be</i>

car parks but a reasonable turnover of spaces particularly for shoppers and visitors is needed.	exercised.
Kington is the smallest of Herefordshire's Market Towns with Council car parks and also perhaps has the most fragile economy. It is important here to ensure an adequate supply of parking, including both on and off street spaces.	<i>The Review Group wishes to support this approach. The Review Group recommend that the Cabinet Member consider amending the charge time for Mill Street, Kington, to commence at 9am rather than 8am.</i>

7.7. Residents Parking

7.7.1. Due to limited on-street space for parking, particularly near Hereford City centre by workers and shoppers, a number of Residents Parking schemes have been introduced. The current Strategy outlines how systems are implemented to accommodate short term parking for visitors, deliveries, carers, etc in addition to residents within the defined areas.

7.7.2. The Review Group has considered the Residents Parking Scheme and generally agrees with this method of parking restriction. However, it has been made aware that this type of parking scheme was causing a degree of concern to local businesses, such as tradesmen, when undertaking work in areas covered by Residential Parking Schemes. The Review Group is aware that a number of Local Authorities had approached this problem by issuing, on payment of an appropriate fee, either a short-term permit (2 to 3 weeks) for the designated address or on-street scratch card permits.

7.7.3. The current Resident Parking Scheme in Herefordshire already provides for a second 'visitor' permit that may be issued by the resident to any visitor or tradesmen while at the property. The use of the visitor permit in these circumstances puts the onus on the resident to ensure that the permit is returned when the visitor or tradesmen leave. On balance, therefore, the Review Group concluded that it would not be appropriate to introduce an additional system for issuing temporary passes for trade vehicles visiting houses in Residents Parking Zones.

7.7.4. The Review Group would wish to draw the points highlighted in the following table to the attention of the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation).

Residential Parking	
Strategic Issue (Text contained in current Parking Strategy with paragraph number from current document where appropriate)	Comments by the Review Group
<p>Residents parking schemes will be introduced, restricting use of spaces to resident permit holders only.</p> <p>It is, however, necessary to allow for visitors, deliveries, carers, etc. in addition to residents. The simplest way of achieving this is restrict waiting to a short duration (such as 30 minutes) with an exemption to the time limit for resident permit holders. This will be the normal form of residents parking scheme within Herefordshire.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>The Review Group wishes to support the provision of residents parking where this has the support of residents. The Review Group wishes to highlight the potential to use the second visitor pass for tradesmen. Enforcement in relation to this should be carried out in accordance with the current requirements within the Traffic Regulation Orders</i></p>

7.8. Parking Concessions

7.8.1. Section 5 of the current Strategy covers the subject of Concessions. The Review Group has debated the four areas identified and has made the following observations:

7.8.2. **(1) Disabled People** – National regulations are in place governing the Blue or Orange Badge holder scheme. The key comments received on this scheme seem to relate to the availability of designated spaces in suitable locations and ensuring that those spaces are kept accessible. Evidence has been received that other drivers, including delivery vehicles, may be using designated disabled driver spaces. ***The Review Group recommends that enforcement should be targeted to ensure availability of such spaces for use by disabled people.***

7.8.3. **(2) VIPs including Councillors and (3) Senior Council Officers and Council Staff** – The Review Group notes the adoption of the Council’s Travel Plan which seeks to actively encourage the use of

alternative modes of transport by staff e.g. walk to work or between Council offices, car share, cycle, public transport. The Review Group supports this initiative. It appreciated that forms of transport other than the car were not always appropriate but should be used when possible. The Review Group has also heard that proposals arising from the Property Management Scrutiny Review may affect the accommodation of staff. ***The Review Group therefore considered that this concession should be kept under review as part of the Council's Travel Plan initiative and proposals arising from changes to staff accommodation.***

7.8.4. **(4) Pensioners** – The Review Group has noted that concessions for pensioners were reviewed during 1999 and 2000 and a County-wide system was introduced in January 2001. This system was based on the concept that those who were granted the concession would be allowed the concession only in the town nearest to them – their “Home Town”. The Review Group has been advised that the “Home Town” scheme allows for pensioners to obtain, on payment of £5.00 a disc which allows the holder 2 hours free parking in any car park in their nearest “Home Town”.

7.8.5. Approximately 5000 discs are currently in circulation. They relate to Hereford and the Market Towns and are distributed as indicated in the following table:

	% of passes issued
Hereford	67
Bromyard	1
Kington	0
Ledbury	12
Leominster	1
Ross	19

7.8.6. Based on an average usage of twice per week and taking into account the first 2 hours charge on the relevant car parks the Group have been informed that the scheme is costing the Council an estimated £100,000 per annum in lost car parking revenue. (This is after allowing for an annual income of approximately £25,000 from the sale of the discs).

7.8.7. Information received, particularly from the Midland Parking Managers Forum, indicates that Herefordshire is the only Authority in the Midland area offering this type of concession.

7.8.8. While acknowledging that there may be difficulties in accessing public transport in rural parts of the County, this element of the strategy could be seen as encouraging the use of the car which is contrary to the Council's aim of encouraging public transport use. The Review Group questioned whether this concession should be continued.

7.8.9. The conclusions of the Review Group in relation to Concessions are summarised in the table below.

Concessions	
Strategic Issue (Text contained in current Parking Strategy with paragraph number from current document where appropriate)	Comments by the Review Group
<p>Parking concessions are currently available to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Disabled (by means of the national blue / orange badge scheme) b) VIP's including councillors and senior council officers c) Council Staff d) Pensioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>The Review Group wishes to support and recommend that enforcement pay particular attention to making sure disabled spaces are available for use and that general parking does not cause an obstruction for disabled people within town centres.</i> b) <i>The Review Group wishes to recommend that this be considered through the Council's Travel Plan</i> c) <i>The Review Group wishes to recommend that this be considered through the Council's Travel Plan</i> d) <i>The Review Group wishes to observe that the current scheme represents a net loss to the Council and, whilst encouraging shorter rather than longer trips, it is contrary to the Council's aim of encouraging bus use. The Review Group suggests that the Cabinet Member considers the withdrawal of this concession.</i>

8 TOURISM

8.1 The Review Group has received evidence that the 2002 Herefordshire Visitor Survey indicated that 91% of all visitors come to the County by private car/motorcycle. This figure had remained constant (evidenced by similar surveys in 1996 and 1999) and was considered to reflect both the real and perceived difficulties for visitors in reaching and touring around Herefordshire. The Herefordshire Tourism Unit was committed to encourage visitor use of public transport and to the promotion of cycling and walking. They also work with coach and tour operators, particularly through the Travel Trade Guide, to try to increase the proportion of visitors who visit as part of an organised coach tour (currently only 2%). This includes organising, in every other year, familiarisation visits to the County for tour representatives.

8.2 The Review Group considered the provision of suitable locations for coach pick up, drop off and stop-over points in Hereford and the market towns. ***The Review Group concluded that the revised strategy should include a policy to guide the future designation of coach pick up, drop off and stop-over points.***

8.3 The Review Group has identified the following principal points from the tourist context. **The Review Group recommend that:**

- ***There should be adequate and attractive places to park;***
- ***Car parks should have clearly visible and accessible cycle parking;***
- ***There should be clearly designated, safe, central drop-off points for coaches with easily accessible coach parking;***
- ***There should be good pedestrian signage in car parks to encourage visitors to walk, rather than drive, to the various tourist locations;***
- ***There should be a customer-friendly approach to dealing with the issuing of parking fines.***

9. HGV Parking

9.1 The Strategy does not currently cover the issue of parking of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), particularly in relation to parking up at night.

9.2 The Review Group are conscious that many HGVs use the M50 and A49 and other arterial roads and may require overnight parking. The Group have heard that Bridge Street, Leominster, Merton Meadow, Hereford and Ashburton Estate, Ross-on-Wye, are popular HGV stopover locations. The Review Group recognise that a degree of localised income is generated from drivers by their spending on accommodation, refreshment etc. A number of

nuisance incidences have been reported, including late night noise. The Review Group are of the opinion that these can be overcome through proper management. The Review Group consider that if adequate provision is not provided then the number of HGVs using laybys would increase. This may have an adverse effect on the environment at laybys. The Review Group were of the opinion that specific HGV sites should be encouraged at strategic locations throughout the County but particularly along the M50 and A49 corridors. ***The Review Group concluded that the identification and provision of suitable HGV parking be included in any future parking strategy.***

10 ISSUES ARISING FROM THE RECENT PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW

10.1 The Review Group was made aware that the recent Property Management Scrutiny Review, considered by Cabinet on 16th December, 2004, identified a need to ensure that current and future property needs are taken into account when planning the future of car parking services provided by the Council. The Review Group supports this and recognises the importance of ensuring that car parks are located in suitable places and that they continue to meet needs. However, the Review Group would wish to highlight the continued importance of retaining the current level of parking supply in Hereford and ensuring car parks are convenient and meet the needs of shoppers, visitors and commuters. The Review Group considered these issues at a strategic level but is of the opinion that a more in-depth review is necessary to examine in detail the property requirements of the parking service. Such a review is considered to be beyond the scope of the current review which has looked at the Parking Strategy. ***As such the Review Group recommends that the Cabinet Member undertakes a detailed review of property needs for the parking service. In particular, this should take into account the development of Park and Ride for Hereford and the identified possible need for more parking provision in Bromyard. This review should also consider whether current car parks are best located to meet current and future needs.***

11. FURTHER SCRUTINY OR REVIEW

11.1 The Review Group anticipate that the findings contained in this report will form the basis of a new County-wide Parking Strategy and that the Strategy will be included as part of a new Herefordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP). It is within this context that the Review Group anticipates that any proposals by the Cabinet Member (Highways and Transportation) or Cabinet may be scrutinised via the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions) or otherwise by report to the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

12.1 The Review Group is very grateful to the many organisations, Town and Parish Councils, County Councillors and members of the public who responded to the questionnaire or took part in giving evidence. The Review Group particularly acknowledge the assistance from:

- Rob Surl, Head of Transportation, Shropshire County Council.
- Peter Elliot, First.
- William Lyons, Area Manager, Chamber of Commerce and Business Link, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
- Rev Paul Towner.
- Mr Phillip Dazeley
- Mrs Cynthia Spaul, Hereford City Manager.

The Review Group also acknowledge the officers who assisted with the review.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Scoping Statement

Annex 2 – Current Herefordshire Car Parking Strategy

Annex 3 – Progress Report on implementing current Car Parking Strategy

Annex 4 – Herefordshire Parking Study 2000

Annex 5 – Car Parking Surveys 2002/3