

Extract from Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2 – 2006/7 – 2010/11. Countywide Car Parking Strategy. Pages 137 to 143

## **9.7 Countywide Car Parking Strategy**

### ***9.7.1 Introduction And Overview***

Parking policy can play a major role in supporting the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system. The availability of parking space is known to be a key factor in determining people's choice of mode for a particular journey. Together with improvements in alternative modes to provide the "carrot", strategies for parking supply and control can offer an important tool manage demand to encourage a modal shift away from the private car towards more sustainable modes.

Park and Ride can also form an essential part of such a package by offering an alternative to the car for the final part of a journey to a centre. It can therefore enable further demand management measures to be applied within the centre to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors.

The important role parking policy needs to play in addressing Herefordshire transport issues is recognised and this strategy seeks to manage both on and off street parking to maximise the benefits to the people of Herefordshire. This means balancing competing needs of shoppers and visitors against the needs of those who rely on a car to get to work and need all day parking. Charges are used to help to manage the use of the available space to balance these demands. The strategy is integrated and consistent with the objectives of other local strategic plans and recognises how important the car is for travel in this rural county.

Car Parking Strategy has a significant role in delivering the overall aims of the Local Transport Plan. The following table highlights the key linkages between the overall Shared Priorities, Key Outcomes that we have identified for Herefordshire and elements within the Car Parking Strategy.

### 9.7.2 Policy Linkages

**Table 9.7A: Parking Policy Linkages**

Shared Priorities	Key Outcomes	Car Parking Strategy Contribution
Delivering Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to jobs &amp; services</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> <li>• Assets maintained well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of convenient and accessible parking for disabled people</li> <li>• Development of Park and Ride</li> </ul>
Tackling Congestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced congestion</li> <li>• Assets maintained well</li> <li>• Supported and enabled economic development</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Park and Ride</li> <li>• Improved signing reduce congestion caused by searching for spaces</li> </ul>
Safer Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved safety</li> <li>• Assets maintained well</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decriminalised parking enforcement to improve flow of traffic and improve road safety</li> </ul>
Better Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarded environment</li> <li>• Reduced congestion</li> <li>• Increased use of sustainable modes of travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging strategy to support demand management, encourage use of sustainable modes and deter commuter parking close to centres</li> <li>• Improved signing reduce congestion caused by searching for spaces</li> </ul>

### 9.7.3 Developing The Strategy

During 2004, the Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee carried out a detailed review of this strategy. This review considered the full range of issues relating to car parking from strategic policy to more detailed implementation issues. Comprehensive consultation was carried out to inform the review. This included a public session where the Review Team questioned six key witnesses from stakeholder groups and heard evidence of best practice from elsewhere. The consultation carried out included:

- A questionnaire to key organisations, Town and Parish Councils;
- Press statements inviting comment on the Strategy;
- Evidence submitted by key sections of the Council including. tourism, economic development, planning and the County Treasurers;

- Benchmarking information from the Midland Parking Managers Forum.
- Local Councillors were invited to submit their observations.
- Town or Parish Council meetings.
- Public examination meeting
- Focus group sessions to provided qualitative information regarding the likely views of members of the general public.

The review identified that the overall strategy needs to provide appropriate parking for the following market segments.

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

Residents Parking Schemes will be introduced in areas close to centres, subject to local support. Such schemes will be designed to deter long stay commuter and shopper parking which can cause problems for resident wishing to park near where they live.

In developing a Countywide Car Parking Strategy the review identified the need to take account the following key constraints:

- Government Transport Policy
- Overall Local Transport Plan strategy
- Land use planning guidance and policy
- The need to maintain financial income to the Council
- The need to carry out fair and effective enforcement
- The resources available for improving quality, maintenance and signing

The recommendations of the review have been used in the development of this strategy.

## **Strategy Elements**

### **9.7.4 Transport Policy**

The overall parking policy supports the Council's aim to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport to the private car. However, it is recognised that in a predominantly rural county like Herefordshire, many journeys will continue to be undertaken by car and the overall supply of parking needs to be adequate to support the economic vitality of Hereford and the Market Towns.

Funding for capital improvements to the local transport network is available through the Local Transport Plan allocation. However, many essential measures to address the transport needs of the County, such as Community Transport and Park and Ride, require ongoing revenue funding to make them work. Income generated from Car Parking provision and enforcement will be used to support the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. This may enable additional funding to be made available to support sustainable transport projects, such as Park and Ride, Community Transport, public transport, cycling and walking. It may also be appropriate to use such funding to improve the quality of signing and car parks themselves.

### **9.7.5 Supply & Quality**

There must be sufficient parking capacity and turnover of spaces to meet the economic vitality safety and access objectives set out above for the county. A sample of council car parks are surveyed quarterly to establish occupancy levels and this information will be used to determine the need for additional spaces.

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.

The following key principles will be followed:

- Residents should generally be able to park in residential streets. Residents parking schemes will be introduced to achieve this.
- Car parks need to be well signed, attractive, easy to use and well maintained. Quality is largely determined by available budget and under the council's Asset Management Plan, a recommended maintenance programme has been identified for treatment of surfaces, signs and lines.

- In setting charges, consideration will be given to increasing these sums in order to enable improvements to be made to the quality of the car parks.
- The Council recognises that car parks represent a significant property portfolio. As part of the Council's ongoing role of property management, the profitability, capital value and strategic worth of Council owned car parks will be considered to ensure the use of such land for car parking continues to meet corporate aims.

### **9.7.6 Charging**

In considering the level of charges in Council controlled car parks the following key principles will be followed:

- Some free parking is required in most centres, either on or off street, with more being required where alternatives to the car are less readily available.
- 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.
- Any charges must be reasonable in comparison with neighbouring towns.
- Any charges must be in simple multiples of common coin denominations.
- Charges will be reviewed at each car park periodically

Current charges in Council controlled car parks are available on the Council's website at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk).

### **9.7.7 Approach To Different Types Of Parking Provision**

#### Off-street parking:

##### Public Off Street Parking

Across the County there are over 4500 public off-street spaces available in Hereford and the five Market Towns of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Hereford has the largest number of spaces (over 2500) all of which are covered by a charging regime. Outside Hereford, charges are made in certain car parks in all of the five Market Towns of Ledbury, Ross-on-Wye, Kington, Leominster and Bromyard.

The current supply of public off-street parking is considered to be broadly adequate to meet the needs of the Market Towns, although recent redevelopment within Bromyard has indicated a possible need for more publicly available parking provision. Within Hereford there is concern that demand for parking exceeds supply. Car parks within the Inner Ring Road are effectively full during the week and on Market Day car

parks north of the Inner Ring Road are also effectively full. However, a particular deficiency has been identified on the south side of the City Centre which results in longer journeys for vehicles searching for a parking space. In addition, the current ratio of Private Non-Residential to Public Parking is 60:40 in Hereford, this significantly weakens the ability for parking to act as a tool for demand management.

The approach to the provision and management of off-street car parking seeks:

- 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.
- To ensure parking of vehicles does not obstruct the public highway.
- To support the overall transport strategy for the County.
- To help relieve Hereford City and Market Towns of traffic congestion.

We will manage off-street parking as follows:

- Zonal charging structures for Council controlled car parks in Hereford.
- Charges in selected public car parks in all five Market Towns.
- Provision of some free parking in market towns to support the local economy
- Concessionary Parking Scheme for local pensioners based on 'Home Town' Zones.

### **On-street parking,**

There are over 1600 on-street parking spaces available in the main centres of the County, all of which are currently free and generally controlled by means of limited waiting restrictions. Within Hereford there are over 400 spaces, representing 15% of publicly available parking provision for the City Centre. Decriminalised parking enforcement has been introduced throughout Herefordshire and the Council employs a team of Parking Attendants to enforce parking restrictions.

The approach to the management of on-street parking across the County seeks:

- To ensure the safe and free flow of traffic that is essential to economic vitality and business growth.
- To provide for access for servicing for businesses
- To provide residents parking in appropriate locations
- To ensure effective and sensitive enforcement of restrictions
- To provide for disabled people to park and effective enforcement, to prevent obstructions that can impact upon disabled people, bus services and effective loading / unloading by businesses.

- To ensure 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.

We will manage on-street parking as follows:

- Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.
- During the period of this Local Transport Plan, consideration will be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and provide revenue funding to support Park & Ride or other sustainable transport improvements.
- The introduction of Residents Parking Schemes in residential areas close to the centre of Hereford, and in appropriate locations in the Market Towns, to deter commuter and shopper parking.
- The use of limited waiting restrictions within the centres of Market Towns.

### **Private Non-Residential Parking**

The availability of a parking space is an important factor in determining a commuter's choice of mode. A reduction in the availability of private non-residential spaces can be achieved in the longer term through the use of planning controls. Whilst there are over 7000 such spaces in the County's main centres, the majority are located in Hereford City (almost 5000). The scope for controlling the provision of new spaces is mainly confined to Hereford where it is most likely that alternative modes to the private car are available for journeys to work. Parking Standards are currently under review and will be developed to support the aims of the Local Transport Plan and the Unitary Development Plan.

Hereford City Centre has been identified as an area within which a reduction of up to 100% may be applied to the number of spaces required as part of any new development. Developer contributions may therefore be raised in lieu of the provision of parking spaces and the money used to contribute to alternative transport facilities. The Council will seek to redress the balance of total public to private non-residential parking supply, particularly within Hereford through the use of planning controls.

## AREA STRATEGIES

The following paragraphs summarise the approach to applying these principles in Hereford and the Market Towns

### **9.7.8 Hereford**

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. By managing the cost and supply of car parking within the City parking policy can contribute to managing car use and promoting the use of alternatives to the car where they are available and support the development of Park and Ride.

Studies and consultation have highlighted a concern that in Hereford demand for parking exceeds supply and it is proposed that additional capacity be provided through the addition of Park and Ride facilities. Car parks within the Inner Ring Road are effectively full during the week and on market day car parks north of the Inner Ring Road are also effectively full.

During 2004/5 a detailed feasibility study was carried out into the provision of Park and Ride for Hereford. This concluded that there is a convincing business case for providing Park and Ride for the City and that priority should be given to developing a site to serve traffic entering the city from the North first to be followed by provision South of the City, as these represent the highest and second highest likely demand for Park and Ride use based on traffic flows and surveys of potential users. The Hereford Transport Review also recommended that two further sites should be developed in the longer term to serve demand from the South West and North East of the City and the relative priority for these proposals will be developed during future LTP periods.

Due to the high demand for parking space in the City, there is also a need to manage the available spaces better to reduce the amount of circulating traffic searching for a space and contribute to reducing congestion.

The following points summarise the approach to be taken in Hereford:

- Three charging zones (central, middle and outer) with charges close to the centre set to encourage short stay parking for shoppers and deter long stay commuter parking
- Park and Ride facilities will be developed to provide additional parking supply for the City and support modal shift for journeys to the City Centre



- During the period of this Local Transport Plan, consideration will be given to the introduction of on-street charges in central Hereford to contribute to managing demand and provide revenue funding to support Park & Ride or other sustainable transport improvements.
- Improvements will be made to direction signing to car parks and it is hoped to introduce dynamic signing as part of developing an Intelligent Transport System for the City to highlight the availability of spaces and reduce congestion.
- Season tickets are made available in the outer and middle zones only with costs based on a discount compared to parking daily five days a week fifty weeks a year.

#### **9.7.9 Ross-On-Wye**

Ross combines the functions of a market town with those of a tourist attraction and a “gateway” to other places. Charges in Council controlled car parks are set to reflect the fact that there is significant demand for parking by both visitors and local people wishing to access jobs and local services. Charges for car parks closer to the centre are set to encourage short stay and a turnover of spaces to support the local economy with longer term parking allocated to car parks further from the centre. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.10 Ledbury**

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. Charges in Council controlled car parks are set to reflect the fact that there is significant demand for parking by both visitors and local people wishing to access jobs and local services. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.11 Bromyard**

Bromyard is a small market town that serves mainly its local population and people from the surrounding rural areas. The current charges are set to ensure 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. Redevelopment of land previously used for off-street car parking over recent years has indicated a need to provide additional off-street parking spaces to meet current demand. The Council is

investigating opportunities to provide additional car parking to support the local economy.

#### **9.7.12 Leominster**

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 car parks but it is important to ensure a reasonable turnover of spaces particularly for shoppers and visitors to support the local economy. Where charges are made in Council controlled car parks, the level of charges are set to reflect the need to support the economy of the town. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.13 Kington**

Kington is the smallest of Herefordshire's Market Towns with council car parks. It is important here to ensure an adequate supply of parking, including both on and off street spaces. Where charges are made in Council controlled car parks, the level of charges are set to reflect the fact that demand for parking is mainly local in nature and is required to support the local economy. There are no on-street charges.

#### **9.7.14 Residents Parking**

Near town centres and employment areas it is not always possible for residents to find a parking space due to use of limited on street space by commuters and shoppers. The availability of such spaces for commuters and shoppers can also undermines the overall parking strategy that seeks to manage the supply and cost of parking to make best use of available space and promote a shift to more sustainable forms of transport.

To overcome these problems, Residents Parking Schemes have been introduced in a number of areas, particularly in Hereford, in consultation with residents. Further schemes will be introduced where there is local support. Such schemes restrict use of on-street spaces to resident permit holders only.

It is, however, necessary to allow for visitors, deliveries, traders and carers to park when necessary, in addition to residents. The simplest way of achieving this is restrict waiting to a short duration with an exemption to the time limit for resident permit holders. This will be the normal form of residents parking scheme within Herefordshire.

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.

The general approach to granting residents permits will be to issue permits to car owners registered as residential council tax payers at an address within the relevant area. Where space allows, two permits will be available, one marked for the resident's vehicle and one for visitors. Where houses are in multiple occupation, only one permit per council taxpayer will be issued in order to reduce pressure on kerbside space. In no case will the issue of a permit guarantee the availability of a parking space. The charge for permits will cover the administrative costs of issuing the permit plus a contribution to the costs of enforcement.

#### ***9.7.15 Christmas And Special Events***

The Council recognises the importance of supporting the local economy and the role that car parking can make to this. As a result, for certain periods of free parking are traditionally allowed at Christmas in Hereford and Ross-on-Wye to encourage use of local shops for Christmas shopping. This is primarily because, unlike other towns in the County, there are no free public car parks in Hereford or Ross-on-Wye.

The use of car parks for non-profit making events is permitted subject to sufficient parking continuing to be available elsewhere for the general public.

#### ***9.7.16 Provision For Disabled People***

Concessions for the disabled people wishing to park on-street are set nationally, exempting those displaying a blue badge from the time limits otherwise applying and allowing a stop of up to three hours on double yellow lines providing it does not cause danger to other road users. The Council is keen to ensure that appropriate car parking is provided for disabled people. Therefore, in order to also encourage parking off street, all council car parks allow three hours free parking for blue badge holders. Where possible, off-street car parks also include designated wide spaces to assist wheelchair users.

#### ***9.7.17 Parking Concession For Pensioners***

Concessions for pensioners were the subject of considerable debate and consultation in 1999 and 2000 and a countywide system was introduced in January 2001. This allows a pensioner to buy a permit allowing two hours free parking in the town closest to their home. The scheme has been designed to be consistent with policy in relation to transport and social exclusion and helps to support the

economies of the Market Towns, encourage local communities and encourage shorter car trips.

#### ***9.7.18 Parking And The Council's Travel Plan***

The Council has adopted a comprehensive Travel Plan to promote the use of sustainable modes for journeys to, from and during work by staff and visitors. The management of car parking in relation to Council buildings and by staff when carrying out their duties will be considered through the development and implementation of the Travel Plan. This will seek to encourage greater use of alternative modes and support the promotion of car sharing.