



# PROJECT CENTRE

## Mid Sussex District Council Parking Strategy 2011 - 2020

December 2010

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Mid Sussex District Council's (MSDC) Parking Services Business Unit manages and maintains 32 car parks, (20 in the 3 larger centres and a further 12 in other locations), comprising a total of 2545 parking spaces.
- 1.2 The Council provides enforcement for all 32 of these car parks as well as enforcing on-street parking restrictions and administering West Sussex County Council's (WSSC) Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) scheme in East Grinstead.
- 1.3 MSDC administer the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions on behalf of WSSC. The provision of on-street parking and restrictions is the responsibility of WSSC.
- 1.4 Parking income makes a valuable financial contribution of approximately £1.5 million per annum (2009/.2010 figures) to the Council's overall budget. It also provides a valuable social function with approximately 1.5 million visits made to our pay and display car parks in the 09/10 financial year.
- 1.5 Project Centre were commissioned by Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) in December 2009 to produce a parking strategy for Mid-Sussex to cover the period 2010 – 2020 for the provision of affordable, secure and supportive parking for the communities within Mid Sussex.
- 1.6 In order to inform the new parking strategy Project Centre prepared a technical report. The key objectives of the technical report were:
  - To consult with stakeholders and the public in and around the district with respect to current provision and future expectations;
  - To review all aspects of on and off-street provision and enforcement provision and identify areas of good practice and/or areas for improvement in the current service;
  - To identify potential service improvements and consider their respective advantages and disadvantages in respect to both cost and operation;
  - To clarify the council's role as provider, partner, facilitator, enabler and strategic director of parking provision;
  - To produce a costed action plan with recommended timescales for implementation with regard to the specific options;
  - To produce a new parking strategy setting out the council's specific aims and objectives and associated areas for further consideration with respect to parking services during the period of new strategy.

- 1.7 The findings of the technical report form the basis for the proposed strategy, however, a cross party working group consisting of MSDC members developed the final draft strategy after consideration of the technical report.
- 1.8 The new Parking Strategy will cover a 10 year period from 2011-2020 inclusive and the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review October 2010 will have a significant impact upon the financial resources that will be available to the Council, certainly in the early years of the Strategy and most probably throughout the duration. It is important that the major work areas with financial implications are subject to a business case at the appropriate time, and that priorities are carefully managed within the resources available to the Council; work areas may change due to opportunities coming forward and/or major change in circumstances. Therefore, the document whilst outlining the aims and objectives of the Council allows flexibility to accommodate changing demands.
- 1.9 In general, condition surveys and reviews of current practices have demonstrated that the current operation of on and off-street parking enforcement and off-street parking management is carried out to a generally high standard and this has been reflected in the views of the public and the results of condition and facilities surveys carried out by Project Centre.
- 1.10 Public and stakeholder consultation identified some degree of dissatisfaction with current parking charges and, to a lesser degree, methods of payment. Stakeholders also identified a desire for town council's to have increased input into the setting of parking tariffs. As a result, potential changes to parking tariffs and the mechanism for their review as well as potential improvements to methods of payment have been included in the strategy for consideration during the emerging strategy period.
- 1.11 Another consideration at the time of drafting the parking Strategy has been the WSCC Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) review that commenced in Mid Sussex in August 2010. This has highlighted the need to work with WSCC to provide a coordinated and consolidated approach to parking management in Mid Sussex as the two parking regimes of on and off-street provision are closely linked.

## 2. CAR PARKING STRATEGIC AIMS

2.1 Within the Council's Corporate plan the areas for improvement that the Council is seeking to achieve have been grouped into three themes as follows:

- Better Lives
- Better Environment
- Better Services

2.2 The strategic aims of Mid Sussex District Council's Parking Service can be summarised as follows:

- Ensure levels of income and revenue as identified in the yearly service plan;
- Provide an effective and efficient parking service;
- Manage the council's assets effectively and cost efficiently;
- Serve the requirements of the community by providing an appropriate level and range of car parks;
- Apply strategic planning to ensure that the needs of the community are met through development and implementation of parking measures;
- Support the local economy, local businesses and town centre vitality through the provision of a quality parking service;
- Recognise the importance of car parking charges in influencing travel choices and promoting sustainable transport choices;
- Communicate regularly and effectively with customers in order to promote and improve services and inform future management and provision;
- Through close working with key partners, provide parking services, which are appropriate to the main population centres and rural locations by identifying the specific needs and expectations of all communities in Mid Sussex.

2.3 Council car parks include those in town centres (paid), villages, leisure centres, recreation grounds and open spaces.

2.4 The policy context in which this strategy is set is detailed in Appendix A.

### 3. MAIN FINDINGS OF TECHNICAL REPORT

#### 3.1 Off-Street Car Parks review:

- Condition of most car parks is very good;
- The Council's ongoing maintenance programme results in well maintained and presented facilities;
- Park Mark accreditation programme is very successful;
- There is good direction signing and customer information in car parks;
- There is some shortfall in Disabled Bay provision;
- Rural car parks in Handcross and Horsted Keynes are in a poorer condition, but are adequate for their purpose.

#### 3.2 Off-Street Income Review:

- Fall in usage since April 2009, although income is still equivalent to April 2009 levels;
- Transactions have declined since 2008;
- Short term usage is down slightly outside of peak periods;
- 40% fall in Long Term transactions in some locations, the most significant falls being in East Grinstead.

#### 3.3 Consultation with Stakeholders and the Public:

- Stakeholders identified affordability as the key element for measuring the success of the emerging parking strategy;
- Stakeholders were dissatisfied with current charges;
- Stakeholders were particularly concerned with medium term prices being prohibitive to shoppers dwelling in town centres;
- For both groups concern was raised that increases in long term parking charges were resulting in increased levels of on-street parking in residential areas;
- Both groups were in agreement that car park tariffs in villages should be lower than those in town centres;

- The public identified a desire for a charge for 20 or 30 minutes and the provision of pay and display machines which give change;
- The majority of the public confirmed that the condition of the car parks were good or better, the safety of themselves and their vehicles in the car parks was good or better, directional signage was good or better and that motorcycle provision was also good or better;
- The majority of the Public expressed dissatisfaction with car park capacities and pricing;
- The Public also thought that the existing cycle provision should be improved.

#### 4. STRATEGY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The following provides the Aims and Objectives of the Strategy for the period 2011 – 2020. Details of the associated areas to be considered to deliver these aims are included in Appendix B.

1. Continue to operate a co-ordinated enforcement service for both “on street” and “off street” situations whilst seeking to maximise efficiency where possible and adopt closer working with partners to provide a consolidated and flexible approach to all aspects of parking provision and management
2. Adopt off-street tariffs, which serve economic, environmental and traffic management aims through fair and flexible charging and payment methods.
3. Continually assess and review demand, capacity and customer requirements with the aim of providing a sufficient supply of quality parking both now and in the future.
4. Work with partners to ensure that parking issues are fully considered in the development of Local, Regional and other strategic transport policy affecting Mid Sussex and that current policy relating to parking is considered in all aspects of development, parking provision and parking management.
5. Continue to support rural car parking in the District in partnership with local parish councils and to establish ways in which the operational costs of these car parks could be recovered.
6. Carry out all aspects of car park management and enforcement to an acceptable standard and continuously review facilities and services to ensure standards are maintained within the resources available.
7. Provide adequate facilities for blue badge users and non car users and continuously monitor demand to ensure current and future needs are met.

5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.1 The strategy will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that it remains consistent with the strategic aims and policies of the council.
- 5.2 Aspects of the strategy, such as the introduction of new controlled parking zones will trigger reviews immediately following implementation, as these have the potential to have an impact upon the strategy.

## Quality

It is the policy of Project Centre to supply Services that meet or exceed our clients' expectations of Quality and Service. To this end, the Company's Quality Management System (QMS) has been structured to encompass all aspects of the Company's activities including such areas as Sales, Design and Client Service.

By adopting our QMS on all aspects of the Company, Project Centre aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Ensure a clear understanding of customer requirements;
- Ensure projects are completed to programme and within budget;
- Improve productivity by having consistent procedures;
- Increase flexibility of staff and systems through the adoption of a common approach to staff appraisal and training;
- Continually improve the standard of service we provide internally and externally;
- Achieve continuous and appropriate improvement in all aspects of the company;

Our Quality Management Manual is supported by detailed operational documentation. These relate to codes of practice, technical specifications, work instructions, Key Performance Indicators, and other relevant documentation to form a working set of documents governing the required work practices throughout the Company.

All employees are trained to understand and discharge their individual responsibilities to ensure the effective operation of the Quality Management System.



## APPENDIX A – POLICY FRAMEWORK

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;
- Tackling climate change by promoting sustainable transport;
- Creating safer and healthier communities and promoting healthier transport alternatives;
- Promoting greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society;
- Coordinating parking policies with transport policies to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the road network consistent with environmental objectives;
- Promoting and sustaining town centre economies by providing sufficient car parking in town centres to maintain economic vitality without encouraging unnecessary car use;
- Providing affordable parking to promote and sustain the economic vitality of town centres, whilst safeguarding the revenue income that the car parks provide for the Council;
- Encouraging the shared use of parking, particularly in town centres and as part of major proposals;
- Supporting the provision of additional parking at stations;
- Optimising the supply of conveniently located short stay spaces where they can best serve the needs of shoppers and other visitors;
- Locating long stay spaces in off-street car parks or less central areas, subject to the safeguarding of residents' parking needs;
- Regularly reviewing parking charges and setting these at levels that cover operating costs and influence short and long stay demands consistent with sustainability objectives;
- Improving the effectiveness of on-street parking enforcement, maximising the availability of short stay spaces and preventing parking in unsuitable places;
- Improving Public car parks to ensure the delivery of an acceptable standard of service to the community and visitors;

- Ensuring the provision of sufficient cycle and motorcycle parking within car parks, town centres and new developments;
- Ensuring that users with accessibility needs are adequately catered for and provision is sufficient to meet current needs and possible future needs;
- Ensuring that the parking strategy takes account of future development plans and is flexible enough to respond to changes in need resulting from such development;
- Identifying and providing for the needs of different business sizes and types and major employers;
- Identifying and providing for the differing needs of rural and urban areas;
- Working with partners to ensure the provision of an affordable, efficient, flexible and coordinated approach to all aspects of parking enforcement and management.

## **APPENDIX B – STRATEGY AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND KEY AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**1 Continue to operate a co-ordinated enforcement service for both “on street” and “off street” situations whilst seeking to maximise efficiency where possible and adopt closer working with partners to provide a consolidated and flexible approach to all aspects of parking provision and management**

Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Enforce on street car parking regulations to deliver a reduction in anti-social and dangerous parking, and to maintain suitable traffic flows;
- b) Explore appropriate controls, whether this be simple limited waiting or disc parking, in car parks operated by MSDC and their partners, but which currently fall outside of the remit of off-street parking enforcement;
- c) Through consultation with the parishes, review the waiting periods in car parks subject to limited waiting and/or disc parking. In tandem, review on-street waiting periods in partnership with WSCC with the aim of meeting the needs of the community and providing more efficient enforcement;
- d) Review current on-street limited waiting periods in town centres and villages in the context of facilitating efficient enforcement and providing for the needs of local businesses and residents;
- e) Support the provision and begin enforcement of any new Controlled Parking Zones following the outcome of WSCC consultations and reviews;
- f) Work with WSCC to review bay designations as part of CPZ reviews and proposals to ensure the needs of the community are adequately met;
- g) As part of CPZ reviews, consider the relationship between on-street limited waiting bays and traffic movements to minimise vehicle conflicts and facilitate traffic flow;
- h) The introduction and subsequent enforcement of on-street charging in some locations as part of ongoing CPZ reviews and consultation by WSCC;
- i) Continue to review the in-house operation of car parking enforcement on an annual basis.

## **2 Adopt appropriate off-street tariffs, which serve economic, environmental and traffic management aims through fair and flexible charging and payment methods**

### Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Implementing per minute charging with a 20 minute minimum charge;
- b) The introduction of £1 charges in long term car parks for up to 4 hours parking at weekends to assist in the distribution of parking demand;
- c) Carry out a review of charges should any new CPZs be introduced;
- d) Implementing differential charging in car parks as part of future tariff reviews;
- e) Adopt coordinated reviews of on and off-street charges with West Sussex County Council;
- f) The removal of registration input in long term pay and display car parks along with a more rigorous approach to PCN appeals;
- g) The introduction of pay by phone to supplement pay and display;
- h) Promote Pay by Foot as preferred payment method in new multi-storeys in conjunction with Parking Guidance Information systems;
- i) Carrying out a trial of card payment in long term car parks;
- j) The long term potential for introduction of digital enforcement;
- k) Review future off-street charging regimes with Town and Parish Councils.

### **3 Continually assess and review demand, capacity and customer requirements with the aim of providing a sufficient supply of quality parking both now and in the future**

#### Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Carry out an assessment of on and off-street parking capacity within 6 months of changes to existing Controlled Parking Zones or the introduction of new ones;
- b) Introduce regular review of on and off-street capacity in partnership with WSCC to assist in determining capacity requirements and future tariffs;
- c) Continue to collect customer satisfaction data on a regular basis;
- d) Providing free parking at MSDC staff car parks in Haywards Heath on Saturdays;
- e) Consult with other organisations/businesses over similar schemes;
- f) Carry out a feasibility study regarding car park decking in Haywards Heath should the town redevelopment scheme not be forthcoming;
- g) Continue to contribute to Local Transport Groups, The British Parking Association, The Southern Region Parking Managers Group and West Sussex Parking Forum;
- h) Ensure that the town centre redevelopment delivers an upgraded and increased car parking stock, with additional multi storey car parks in each of the three towns and considers current and future parking demand through detailed developer funded studies at an early stage;
- i) Contribute to the travel planning exercise being carried out by rail operators and monitor any changes in parking patterns which may result;
- j) Explore opportunities to acquire land adjacent to car parks in East Grinstead or Haywards Heath with the aim of increasing the capacity of surface car parks.

**4 Work with partners to ensure that parking issues are fully considered in the development of Local, Regional and other strategic transport policy affecting Mid Sussex and that current policy relating to parking is considered in all aspects of development, parking provision and parking management**

Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Support the implementation of car clubs and associated on-street parking as part of new residential developments in CPZs;
- b) Review planning policy to ensure that adequate car parking provision is a planning policy consideration for new development, and enable, where appropriate, Section 106 agreements to include contributions to car park improvements where development will affect town centre parking demand;
- c) Improvements to cycle parking and other sustainable transport initiatives to be sought through Section 106 agreements;
- d) The protection of car parking income to be considered in any agreements relating to town centre redevelopment;
- e) The use of shared space parking be supported and encouraged as part of new retail and leisure developments;
- f) Engage with rail operators to provide additional parking at stations and support the current travel planning exercise currently being undertaken;
- g) Engage with public transport operators to improve public transport provision and support any proposals in respect of new public transport interchanges;
- h) Participate in the Local Transport Forum for each town and ensure car parking interests and opportunities are sufficiently represented in the Local Development Framework or any relevant documents to emerge during the strategy period;
- i) Encourage local businesses to develop Travel Plans and consider the offer of discounted season tickets to encourage car sharing or other initiatives;
- j) Encourage alternatives to car use in town centres through the Local Development Framework etc.;
- k) Work with West Sussex County Council to provide a coordinated and consolidated approach to Parking Management and regularly review Parking Management Plans through contribution to relevant local and regional groups;

- l) Continue to work with West Sussex County Council and the police to ensure access to car parks minimises traffic conflict with pedestrians and other vulnerable users and to secure other transport improvements, e.g. integrated bus interchanges etc, to further the objectives of local, regional and national policy objectives.

**5 Continue to support rural car parking in the District in partnership with local parish councils and to establish ways in which the operational costs of these car parks could be recovered.**

Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Assist parishes in identifying areas where additional parking can be supplied and support proposals within policy guidelines;
- b) Through consultation with the parishes, review the waiting periods in car parks subject to limited waiting and/or disc parking, in tandem with a review of on-street waiting periods in partnership with WSCC, with the aim of meeting the needs of the community and providing more efficient enforcement;
- c) Consulting with parishes over the potential transfer of responsibilities in respect to the operation of rural car parks;
- d) The partial disposal of Imberhorne Lane car park, East Grinstead;
- e) The disposal of The Wilderness, Lindfield to the adjacent landowner for retention as a public car park;
- f) Establish ways in which operational costs of rural car parks could be recovered.

**6 Carry out all aspects of car park management and enforcement to an acceptable standard and continuously review facilities and services to ensure standards are maintained within the resources available**

Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Continue to improve the Council's car parking stock towards the Park Mark Standard;
- b) Implement short, medium and long term programmes for the repair and maintenance of the Council's car parks from the car parks budget and the Repairs and Renewals Reserve;
- c) Evaluate and, if appropriate, implement any maintenance or remedial works resulting from the comprehensive survey of Martlets Multi-Storey car park;
- d) Continue to undertake regular monitoring of car park cleanliness and maintenance to agreed standards;
- e) Contribute to the crime reduction targets in the Community Safety Strategy and monitor levels of crime and social misbehaviour in car parks, controlled parking zones and general on street car parking;
- f) To continue the provision of electric car charging points into the car parks within the 3 main town centres.
- g) Review Town Centre Signing and provide additional signing at key locations including "Additional Parking" signs;
- h) As appropriate provide additional signing to identify free weekend parking at MSDC offices and other locations following consultation with potential partners;
- i) Consolidation of town centre and village direction and parking signing in partnership with WSCC;
- j) Updating and augmenting available information on the MSDC website and facilitating electronic payment of off-street season tickets;
- k) Encourage developers to provide Parking Guidance Information and associated Variable Message Signing following Town Centre redevelopment.

## **7 Provide adequate facilities for blue badge holders and non car users and continuously monitor demand to ensure current and future needs are met**

### Key Areas for Consideration:

- a) Regularly monitor the demand for disabled spaces in town centres;
- b) Provide additional bays in key car parks subject to demand as part of ongoing maintenance programme;
- c) Work with WSCC and relevant stakeholders to identify need and potential locations for additional on-street disabled parking bays as part of CPZ reviews or otherwise;
- d) Review current on-street disabled provision to ensure bays are up to current standards;
- e) Regularly monitor cycle parking utilisation as part of Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) patrols;
- f) Provide additional cycle parking in car parks should demand increase significantly;
- g) Seek developer funded contributions for new cycle parking and facilities;
- h) Identify areas with Town and Parish Councils / Town Centre Managers and Shopping Centre Operators for additional cycle parking should demand be identified;
- i) Retain motorcycle provision at current levels in most car parks;
- j) Provide motorcycle parking in Heath Road as part of maintenance programme;
- k) Monitor levels of motorcycle demand over the strategy period;
- l) In partnership with WSCC identify any potential areas for on-road motorcycle parking provision in town centres as part of CPZ reviews or otherwise;
- m) Continue to implement the policy for the use of car parks other than for car parking such as farmers markets, contractors' compounds in support of public projects and health support services such as blood donation and health screening.