

Bedford's Parking Strategy (2011 - 2021)

November 2010



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Illegal, inaccessible and inconsiderate parking can lead to congestion and delay on the network. Similarly over provision of parking can also lead to congestion as more people are encouraged to drive into the town centre. In addition, the provision of appropriate parking standards is a key element in influencing mode choice and overall parking demand. Parking supply therefore needs to reflect the balance between encouraging economic activity and providing a pleasant environment for shoppers, businesses and visitors.
- 1.2 This Parking Strategy seeks to address the environmental objectives and benefits to be derived from promoting increased pedestrian and public transport trips and discouraging unnecessary car based trips, whilst at the same time being sufficiently flexible in the application of controls and standards to encourage regeneration and enhance economic activity.

2.0 National Context

- 2.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004 sets out the statutory network management duty for all local highway authorities and determines the enforcement mechanisms that can be used by local authorities in order to effectively achieve this.
- 2..2 There are also parking policies set out in Planning Policy Guidance on Transport (PPG13) and Planning Policy Statement on Housing (PPS3). Further information relating directly to Town Centre parking can be found in Planning Policy Statement on Town Centres and Retail Development (PPS6).
- 2.3 Bedford Borough operates the national Blue Badge Scheme under the provisions of the Traffic Management Act 2004 which enables disabled people to park in places where other drivers are not permitted to ensure that they have access to public facilities.

3.0 Local Context

- 3.1 Current off-street parking provision is predominantly located in the town centre in the form of formal surface and multi-storey car parks, which are mainly owned and operated by the Borough Council. There are however a significant number of private off-street parking facilities over which the Council has little control. The adjacent residential areas are covered by on-street controlled parking zone (CPZ) treatments, including shared use of available kerbspace between residents and paid for shorter stay use.

- 3.2 Bedford currently has one operational bus based park and ride site at Elstow with 486 parking spaces.
- 3.3 Parking controls are currently in the form of charges and/or time limits as a method of managing demand and enforcement of these is undertaken in-house by the council.
- 3.4 The current policy is for the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) to seek to be self-financing. To achieve this regard needs to be had to on and off street parking tariffs, the cost of off street season tickets and the charges levied for on street parking permits. The current tariffs are available via the council's website.

4.0 Vision, Key Aims and Approach

4.1 The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a comprehensive framework for determining parking provision in Bedford.

4.2 The following vision is proposed for parking:-

'To effectively use parking controls and resources to stimulate regeneration and local economic activity whilst also supporting the LTP3 objectives in promoting sustainable travel choices.'

4.3 By providing parking and having controls in place the Council aims to:-

- Minimise the use of vehicles in the busiest and congested areas at what experience and research shows to be the most appropriate times;
- Provide sufficient short-stay parking facilities to support retail, commercial and leisure activities;
- Reduce the risk of road accidents;
- Safeguard the needs and requirements of residents, businesses and visitors;
- Reduce congestion;
- Encourage the use of public transport including Park & Ride;
- Preserve and improve the infrastructure and the general environment;
- Enhance pedestrian and cycle mobility;
- Effectively manage available on and off street parking.

4.4 The strategy seeks to deliver more effective and cost efficient use of existing assets and resources by realising greater value from present usage, particularly in relation to short stay parking.

5.0 Delivery Action Plan

Item	Task
1	Prepare new proposals for the application of parking standards to new developments based on a zonal approach.
2	Prepare Contributions Policy to support application of maximum parking standards in new developments.
3	Keep under review alternative operating arrangements for parking including internal, external and shared service options.
4	Review and update parking payment methods including pay by phone and automated card payment systems for parking penalty payments.
5	Review CPZ coverage in relation to local needs and the new zoning proposals for parking standards (Item 1 above).
6	Establish methodology to address local parking issues e.g. for schools, hospitals, industrial estates, village centres, verges etc.
7	Review overall level of parking supply in the town against projected demand to 2021.
8	Review charging policy and levels for Council operated car parks and the CPZ in order to achieve the Vision and Key Aims listed in Section 4 within the overall constraint of budget neutrality.
9	Review levels of permit issue and price in the more congested areas of the CPZ.
10	Provide, subject to affordability, a second Park & Ride facility to the north of the town.

6.0 Resources and Partnership Working

- 6.1 In view of the current budgetary constraints and likely future pressures, it is imperative that the net results of any actions taken under this Strategy are at least budget neutral.
- 6.2 In the field of parking there are opportunities to work efficiently through the sharing of facilities such as payment methods, ticket processing, data management for traffic orders and this needs to be explored with potential partners both inside and outside of the Council.