

Parking & Access Strategy



2020-2030



Winchester
City Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Winchester's high job density and compact, historic layout combine to produce traffic levels and problems beyond that which would normally be associated with a place of its size. Our market towns can face similar problems with competition for the available parking spaces. This Parking & Access Strategy addresses on and off street parking, charging, management and improvements through investment in car parks, cycle parking, including in car parks, and investment in some important bus services to improve access. Geographically, it covers Winchester (which for clarity we refer to as 'Winchester town') and the market towns and villages of New Alresford, Bishop's Waltham, Wickham, Whiteley and Denmead. It provides a framework for decision making and investment in the period 2020 – 2030 with a planned review in 2025.

Principles:

1. Addressing the key issue of the climate emergency and supporting the delivery of the Winchester Movement Strategy;
2. Comprehensive coverage for key areas across the district;
3. Clarity - by providing a framework for decision making on managing parking availability, charging, and future investment.

2.0 BACKGROUND POLICY

Climate Emergency Action Plan 2019

In June 2019 Winchester City Council committed to the ambition of making the activities of Winchester City Council carbon neutral by 2024, taking into account both production and consumption emissions (scope 1,2 and 3 of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol, GHG) and the district of Winchester carbon neutral by 2030.

The Parking & Access Strategy supports the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan through pricing and provision of facilities that encourages the use of low and no emission vehicles.

City of Winchester Movement Strategy (WMS)

It is a joint policy between Hampshire County Council and Winchester City Council that sets out the agreed vision and long term priorities for travel and transport improvements in Winchester over the next 20 to 30 years.

As well as the new Parking & Access Strategy a number of other work streams have been identified within the Movement Strategy;

- Park & Ride Strategy
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- Quality Bus Partnerships
- Bus Station Relocation
- Freight and Deliveries
- One-Way System and Public Realm Review
- Travel Planning

A key output of this work is to inform and guide future Park & Ride provision for Winchester, including looking at new locations, such as to the north of the city and expanding existing sites.

The key objective of the Movement Strategy is to reduce the level of traffic in the city centre. This is supported by the Parking & Access Strategy through encouraging long stay commuter parking outside of the city centre and use public transport, walking or cycling the last part of the journey. The strategy will allow for the subsidy of some bus services to support the evening economy by using a proportion of evening parking revenue to support evening bus services to/from local villages to support the local economy. It also proposes to use a proportion of Sunday parking revenue to support Sunday Park & Ride and improved Sunday services. It also, for the first time, seeks to integrate cycle parking into the council's overall Parking & Access Strategy.

The WMS does consider measures which go further in terms of management, such as introducing a workplace parking levy to act as a further traffic demand management tool, should core initial elements of the Movement Strategy not succeed in reducing city centre traffic.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the council's Parking & Access Strategy is:

To provide a sufficient number of suitably located and managed parking spaces to sustain the long term economic, social and environmental well being of Winchester town and district.

In order to do this it will:

- Manage parking through charging to ensure efficient parking and traffic management
- Use parking assets to the best advantage through pricing, promotion and information
- Maintain investment in parking and traffic management in order to support an efficient, effective and modern service
- Actively promote alternatives to driving into the centre – such as cycling, walking and bus services

Reasoning and justification

The main reasons and justification for this strategy is to address issues around access and mobility for all, enhancing air quality in Winchester, helping to deliver the Carbon Neutrality Plan and Winchester Movement Strategy objectives and to ensure fairness and equity for residents, visitors and businesses.

4.0 CAR PARKING & ACCESS STRATEGY

4.1 Availability and Management of Parking

In Winchester, parking supply in the city centre has reduced in recent years and extra Park & Ride capacity has been provided. Further reductions in central car parks are in the pipeline over the next few years in relation to development proposals.

The council has purchased a site at Bar End (Vaultex) to provide further parking which is within walking distance of the city centre and can also be linked to the Park & Ride buses.

One of the actions within this strategy is to extend Park & Ride bus services to include Sundays and to extend services by an hour during weekday evenings. This will incur extra cost to the council but this would be met by associated new parking charges in the central car parks on Sundays and evenings, at the end of the current contract in 2024 we will seek to change to alternative fuel and/ or hybrid Park & Ride buses.

We will improve communication, especially in and near car parks, to encourage the use of Park & Ride, outer ring car parks, walking, cycling and bus services – highlighting the savings and other benefits of alternative methods of accessing the centre.

Further reductions in city centre car parking over and above those already in the pipeline will be progressed as we get more clarity over the provision of additional Park & Ride services and spaces and the impact of other measures to encourage alternative methods of accessing the centre.

Pedestrian signing and promotion of Park & Ride car parks in terms of routes to and between key destinations and their suitability to access such destinations is crucial if cross town traffic movements are to be reduced and park and stride and park and pedal behaviours encouraged

Where capacity can be created elsewhere and within the central car parks alternative economic uses will be explored.

Blue Badge parking will be protected to ensure convenient and central parking for disability groups. Disabled parking provision will remain a high priority and we will consider where additional on-street disabled parking can be provided in conjunction with a review of the free half an hour parking areas.

There have been issues raised regarding the operation and management of the Winchester Residents Parking Scheme in relation to equity and potential misuse of permits. This will be reviewed particularly in relation to larger vehicles, use of cleaner vehicles, the number of permits issued and visitor permits. The aim of such a review would be to ensure fairness and to manage the limited amount of space available. We will also seek to progress towards more efficient ways of managing and administering the scheme through virtual and on line systems/ processes.

In order to ensure that the new measures proposed in this strategy are effective we will increase enforcement to ensure it's efficient and effective and strengthened in some areas.

4.2 Pricing / Charging for Parking

Car parking charges are an important part of this strategy and will be used to change behaviour, influence choice of vehicle technologies and to manage parking demand in the interests of business, residents and the environment. Pricing needs to be mindful

of the car park charges in the *surrounding towns and cities* to ensure Winchester remains competitive – as well as the cost of bus services.

Whilst maintaining and enhancing the ‘three ring’ * see below (central, inner and outer zones) approach to pricing changes to parking charges/ management to support the objectives of this strategy include;

- Introduction of Sunday parking charges in Winchester’s central ring of car parks to help manage demand and encourage car parking to take place in outer car parks alongside some investment in bus services. The inner ring of car parks will remain free on Sundays.
- Introduction of evening parking charges in Winchester central car parks along with investment to support evening bus services. The existing residents’ off peak parking permit will be adjusted to allow continued parking for residents
- Introduction of incentivised charges to encourage cleaner vehicle types for on and off street parking
- Inflationary increases to all off-street parking charges on a regular basis in line with other similar towns and Cities
- Increased Park & Ride charges to help support growth in services
- Phased removal of Park & Ride discounts in liaison with users
- Removal of car parking discounts in some car parks
- Increases to resident’s on-street parking permit charges in line with Hampshire County Council requirements.

***Central Zone Car Parks:**

The Brooks, Middle Book Street, Colebrook Street, Guildhall Yard, Friarsgate, Jewry Street, Cossack Lane, Upper Brook Street, St Peters, Tower Street and Gladstone Street

Inner Zone Car Parks:

Chesil, Durngate, The Cattle Market, Worthy Lane, Coach Park, River Park Leisure Centre.

Outer Zone Car Parks – Park and Ride:

Barfield and St Catherine’s
South Winchester
Pitt

Enforcement of parking restrictions remains a high priority. A review of the existing enforcement issues will be undertaken alongside a review of opportunities for and the support of expanding the existing Controlled Parking Zone scheme. Additional resources to support enforcement will be provided.

Management of on-street parking is a county council function which is delegated to the city council through an Agency Agreement. Public off-street parking is a city council function. The two are best managed together. On-street Pay & Display parking will be fully integrated into the existing 'three ring' principle.

In order to cover the increasing costs of maintaining the lining and signing of the on-street residents parking scheme Hampshire County Council require the cost of residents permits, which have not been increased since 2006, to increase over 3 years setting first permit charges at £30 in April 2020, £40 in April 2021 and £50 in April 2022. We continue to seek county council agreement for more pricing flexibility to reflect issues such as environmental impact.

4.3 Investment in Parking Facilities / Equipment and Services

Investment will be required throughout the coming ten years and is being considered in relation to:

- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in line with the council's EV charging strategy both on and off street
- Equipment and/ or technology to allow differential charging for cleaner vehicles (Emission Based Pricing) and smart payment options
- Alternative fuel / Hybrid buses for the Park & Ride services
- Communication of advantages to parking outside of the city centre
- Extensions of Park & Ride bus services longer into the evenings and on Sundays funded from the revenue from Sunday and evening charging
- Provision of new car parking at Bar End to enhance Park & Ride and park and walk options
- Provision of pedestrian and cycle signage between the Park & Ride sites and city centre
- Provision of coach parking at Bar End to reduce cross town coach movements
- Maintenance of signing and lining for the residents on-street permit scheme
- A review of the cycle parking locations, number and quality within the city will be undertaken as part of the Winchester Movement Strategy. Reallocation of car parking spaces to cycle parking could be considered where demand is identified and the location deemed suitable.

4.4 Market Towns – Parking and Access Plans

Consideration will be given to the management of parking in the growing community of Whiteley and for New Alresford, Wickham, Bishop's Waltham and Denmead – this may include changes to pricing and regulation and possibly increases in capacity if other measures cannot address the identified issues to align better with the operational requirements of local businesses and services.

Parking & Access Plans will be developed in these areas in conjunction with Town / Parish Councils.

The strategy sets target dates for the following actions which will be undertaken in conjunction with Town / Parish Councils and local groups.

- Development of a Parking & Access Plan for Alresford. Work will start on this during 2020. Discussions are underway with the Mid Hants Railway regarding the station car park and its future management.
- Identification of additional parking opportunities and associated Parking & Access Plan for Whiteley. Work will start on this early in 2020
- Development of a Parking & Access Plan for Bishop's Waltham
- Development of a Parking & Access Plan for Wickham.
- Consideration of the needs of Denmead in conjunction with representative groups.

In undertaking this work with our market towns the following considerations/ issues will be addressed

- Suitable and appropriate enforcement
- Demand and availability of parking
- Improved provision for bicycle parking – including linkage with major bus routes
- Investment required for equipment and EV charging points in line with the council's EV charging strategy both on and off street
- Extent and suitability of traffic regulation
- Maintenance of signing and lining for the residents on-street permit scheme
- Equipment and/ or technology to allow differential charging for cleaner vehicles (Emission Based Pricing) and smart payment options