



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 11 DECEMBER 2024
Subject	MID-POINT REVIEW OF CAR PARKING STRATEGY
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Councillor Tim Sumner – Executive Member for leisure and major Projects Email: tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing – Interim Executive Director of Resident Service Group Email: jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Susan Hughes, Business Manager for Support and Advice Email: susan.hughes@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide a mid-point update on the progress of the recommendations arising from the 'Review of Car parks' report approved by Executive in October 2023.
Annexes	Annex A – Data report 18 January 2024 – 28 August 2024 Annex B – Condition Survey Council Car parks
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: I. Note the content of the report.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Putting Residents First● Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Assistant Director Resident Services, Director of Finance (Publica), Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I.1** West Oxfordshire District Council parking strategy was approved in 2016 and covers the period up to and including 2031.
- I.2** A review of car parks was carried out in 2023 to ensure that the current strategy still meets the needs of the district considering changes to parking behaviour, post COVID.
- I.3** A report was presented to the Executive on 11 October 2023 summarising the findings of the initial 'review of car parks'.
- I.4** This report summarises the midterm progress on the recommendations agreed in the report of 11 October 2023.
- I.5** Recommendations of the report dated 11 October 2023 were agreed as listed below.
 - a) Agree that a further review in 2024 of Guildenford car park supports the best use of council assets to identify parking issues and capacity levels. As per paragraph 3.5 of the report.*
 - b) Agree to delegate the decision to approve the costs associated with undertaking a further review of Guildenford car park to Assistant Director for Resident Services Group in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects.*
 - c) Agree that a further review in 2024 of Hensington Road car park would support best use of council assets once the impact of charging on street by Oxfordshire County Council has been assessed as per paragraph 3.9 of the report.*
 - d) Agree to change the restriction time in Zone G of Woolgate to 12hour maximum stay as per paragraph 3.30 of the report.*
 - e) If changes to stay times are agreed (as per recommendation d), delegate the decisions following outcome of the legally required consultation to the Assistant Director for Resident Services Group in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects*
 - f) Approve expenditure up to £8,000 to improve car park signage from the Support from either UKSPF funding or Council Priorities Reserve.*
 - g) Agree in principle that condition surveys on Council Car parks should be considered further to establish the condition of Council assets as per paragraph 5.2 of the report.*

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The content of this report covers the period of 18 January 2024 to 28 August 2024. Data gathered in the report for the Guildenford car park has been obtained using a car park counter, recording all activity in and out of the car park.
- 2.2** The data is displayed in a detailed report (Annex A) and demonstrates the levels of spare capacity within the car park. The data confirmed that on average at least 4 cars parked in Guildenford car park overnight, the data collected using a car park counter has been cross checked with a manual count occasional to ensure accuracy.
- 2.3** Data gathered in this report for the Hensington Road car park has been obtained by a manual count of occupancy. This is due to the layout of the car park with multiple entrances and exits and additional parking on the side of Union Street, that would not have been captured with the use of a carpark counter.

- 2.4 This data is displayed in a detailed report (Annex A) and demonstrates levels of spare capacity in the car park.
- 2.5 This executive report details the completion of the changes of the restriction time in Zone G of the Woolgate car park to permit long stay. (para 3.24)
- 2.6 This executive report details the completion of the replacement signage to the car parks and additional way finding signs.
- 2.7 Annex B provides a summary of the condition surveys on West Oxfordshire District Council car parks carried out to safeguard Council assets.
- 2.8 This report summarises the actions taken to date following ongoing engagement with customers and Town and Parish Councils.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Guilford Car park Burford

- 3.1 As per recommendation A, agreed in the executive report of 11 October 2023, a further review of the car park is underway to establish usage levels.
- 3.2 Traffic counters are installed at the entrance and exit of the car park and a sensor counts when a car enters and leaves, providing the Council with accurate information on capacity levels.
- 3.3 The review is due to conclude on 31 January 2025 when the Council will have a full year of data gathered to include periods when tourism and visitors to Burford are at their highest.
- 3.4 A customer survey to gather feedback from our customers was live from 15 January 2024 to 26 February 2024, 187 customers responded during this period, of which 19 were business owners and 168 were visitors/others.
- 3.5 The majority of customers 34%, indicated that their purpose of visit was to carry out the activity of shopping, with 21% informing us that they were visiting the car park for leisure/exercise purposes. The remaining categories and percentages can be viewed in the full data report (Annex A).
- 3.6 The majority of visitors to the car park are relatively local, travelling 10 miles or less to visit the car park. 6% of visitors were from 10 miles plus. Please note this was during the period of January – February when tourism is lower.
- 3.7 The majority of customers informed us through the survey, that they parked for up to 2 - 3 hours, visiting on a weekly/monthly basis.
- 3.8 23% of customers, when asked what their key concerns was, have indicated that they would like the Council to provide more car parking spaces, followed by 10% wanting to see improvements to the visibility of the bay markings and line painting.
- 3.9 The average occupancy data shows that from midnight to 7am there is minimal usage of spaces being occupied. From 8am to midday the car park usage increases, with Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays being the busier days. The busiest period recorded was between the hours of 9am and 3pm. The detailed usage data demonstrates an increase in usage during the week from mid-May,

whereby capacity levels are reached during the week and at weekends most frequently between 10am and 1pm.

- 3.10 The parking industry measure of 85% is a used indicator to identify that when a car park reaches this level of occupancy that customers will start to drive around the car park in search of a space, the data demonstrated that on average, during the period of January 2024 – August 2024 this marker is exceeded on Friday, Saturday and Sunday between the hours of 10am – 2pm on Friday and 8am and 3pm on Saturday and Sundays.
- 3.11 The detailed table of occupancy levels indicates that the car park is often at capacity and above the national parking indicator of 85% spaces occupied.

Hensington Road, Woodstock

- 3.12 As per recommendation D, agreed in the executive report of 11 October 2023, a further review of the car park is underway to establish usage levels.
- 3.13 Usage levels at Hensington Road car park in Woodstock are being obtained by the method of a manual count with a member of staff manually recording the data. This car park is not suitable for an automatic traffic counter due to the layout.
- 3.14 The observations of the car park are carried out over two consecutive weeks on a Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. This is followed by two weeks of no data being gathered and the process is repeated.
- 3.15 The first week is an early shift, with 5 sets of counts. Walk arounds are at regular intervals between 8am and 3.30pm. The second week is a later shift, with 5 sets of counts between 12.30pm and 8pm.
- 3.16 The review is due to conclude on 31 January 2025 when we have had a full year of data gathered to include periods when tourism and visitors to Woodstock are at their highest.
- 3.17 A customer survey to gather feedback from our customers was live from 15 January 2024 to 26 February 2024, 205 customers responded during this period of which 16 were business owners and 189 were visitors/others.
- 3.18 The majority of customers 34%, indicated that their purpose of visit was to carry out the activity of shopping, with 27% informing us that they were visiting the car park for leisure/exercise purposes. The remaining categories and percentages can be viewed in the full data report (Annex A).
- 3.19 The majority of visitors to the car park are relatively local, travelling 10 miles or less to visit the car park. 17% of visitors were from 10 miles plus. Please note that this was during the period of January 2024 – February 2024 when tourism is lower.
- 3.20 The majority of customers informed us through the survey, that they parked for up to 2 - 3 hours, visiting on a weekly/monthly basis.
- 3.21 When asked what their key concerns was, 40% of customers have indicated that they would like more car parking spaces made available, followed by 10% wanting improvements to the ease of manoeuvrability within in car park.

- 3.22** The available occupancy data shows that the car park has high occupancy rates through the duration of the study it has exceeded the 85% capacity level throughout between the hours of 10am and 3pm, with weekdays being busier. The usage decreases significantly in the late afternoon and evening. Overall, Saturdays show higher percentages of occupied spaces throughout the day.
- 3.23** The Summit at Blenheim Palace from July 17-19, 2024, has led to road closures and increased police presence, affecting our survey on Hensington Road, Woodstock.
- 3.24** Oxfordshire County Council implemented on street charging in Woodstock in April/May 2023. Since this date, we have noted a minimal increase in usage at our Hensington Road car park.
- 3.25** The Hensington Road comparison pre and post on street charging in Woodstock, shows a minimal increase in usage; details are shown in the table below.
- 3.26** Officers carried out manual weekly counts Jan, Feb, Mar and Apr in 2023 and 2024. The below table shows the average number of spaces being used per month in 2023, (before the charging started on street), and 2024 once the charges had become established. Both sets of data show high usage of the car park.

	Numb er of availa ble bays	Jan- 23	Jan- 24	+/-	Feb- 23	Feb- 24	+/_	Mar- 23	Mar- 24	+/-	Apr- 23	Apr- 24	+/-
Stand ard bays	99	86	96	10	92	94	2	92	93	1	89	92	3
disabl ed bays	4	3	2	-1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
EVCP bays	12	4	4	0	2	5	3	2	4	2	4	4	0
Total space s in use	115	93	102	9	96	100	4	96	98	2	95	98	3
% of space s filled		81%	88%	7%	83%	87%	4%	83%	85%	2%	82%	85%	3%

Other Car Parking Matters

- 3.27** A trial permitting long stay in Zone G at Woolgate car park, recommendation D of the executive report 11 October 2023 has been concluded following its success. Actions have been completed, changing the stay times in Zone G of Woolgate car park to permit 12 hour stay.
- 3.28** Condition surveys of the car parks has been completed as per recommendation F of the executive report 11 October 2023.

- 3.29** A summary of the condition survey can be found at annex B. Only operational car parks have been included in the summary. The property team have reviewed the report and noted no immediate works required for the continued safe operation of the car parks. A final works schedule and budget request will be addressed during the annual budget setting review with finance.
- 3.30** Following an assessment of the car park signage, and customer feedback, a replacement programme upgrading the signage has been completed. Recommendation F of the Executive report 11 October 2023. The signage is now larger making them easier for customers to locate and with clearer print.
- 3.31** 64 new signs have been supplied and installed by a contractor costing £6,183 funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, improving the car park signage across the district.
- 3.32** 15 smaller navigational signs for the Woolgate car park in Witney will be installed by the end of September 2024.
- 3.33** In addition to the above, there have been several actions taken because of direct feedback and engagement with Burford Town Council regarding Guildenford car park.
- 3.34** Guildenford car park is susceptible to flooding as it is located next to the Mill stream. This has now been fully assessed by our flood risk team and a solution to install a sump, to remove the standing water to drain the flood water has been proposed. This will provide a low-cost solution to accelerating the drainage of flood water and ensure the car park remains accessible for as long as possible, however no solution has been found to alleviate flooding altogether.
- 3.35** Research into creating alternative parking solutions through acquiring additional land are ongoing, no viable options have been found to date. The desire to extend the current car park is not feasible, given that planning approval would be required to do so. Previous enquiries on this matter have resulted in this option being declined due to the proximity of the church and given that the additional land to the rear of the car park is designed to alleviate further flooding.
- 3.36** Assessment on the current landscape of the car park has been carried out, to establish if some of the hedging and green spaces within the car park can be used to create additional car parking spaces. This is not an option the Council can progress, as the landscaping was conditioned to remain in perpetuity as part of the planning application for the previous car park extension.
- 3.37** Assessment on alternative local car parking options to utilise unused car parking space e.g. schools etc. Has taken place, however this poses a risk to the Council in respect of Health and Safety, Insurance, and security of the buildings.
- 3.38** Following customer feedback through our survey, that improvement work to the line visibility of the bays is required, a line painting programme is being rolled out with completing expected by year end.
- 3.39** Further work to remove unnecessary edging kerbs to prevent trips and falls is also scheduled to be carried out, again in line with the condition survey.
- 3.40** Give way marking on the entrance/exit to the car park is faded. The Council has liaised with Oxfordshire County Council who have completed this work as part of their maintenance programme.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Up to and including August 2024 the position is that both Guildenford and Hensington Road car parks are fully occupied during peak times, with little capacity.
- 4.2 A further report will be presented once the period of review concludes at the end of January 2025 with the findings of the review and proposal of any recommended amendments and updates to the West Oxfordshire District Car park strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of a sump to reduce the impact of flooding is estimated to be £600 - £800 which will be financed through the car park maintenance budget.
- 5.2 A summary of the condition survey can be found at annex B. Only operational car parks have been included in the summary. The property team have reviewed the report and noted no immediate works required for the continued safe operation of the car parks, except the white line painting in Guildenford car park (3.38). A final works schedule and budget request will be addressed during the annual budget setting review with finance.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report. However, a failure to follow procedure, meet statutory deadlines or standards in some services may expose the Council to legal challenge and/or financial liability.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 There no associated risks identified in association with this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 There are no unacceptable adverse effects on the protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act 2010. There are no changes proposed to the provision of disabled parking bays in the car parks.
- 8.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and documented with the Executive report of 11 October 2023.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There have been no climate and ecological implications identified in association with the recommendations of this report.
- 9.2 The parking and assets teams will work closely with the Climate team throughout the car park strategy to ensure any climate and ecological implications are managed correctly.

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 10.1 There are no options for consideration at present, the report is for noting.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 The following documents have been identified by the author of the report in accordance with section 100D.5(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and are listed in accordance with section 100 D.1(a) for inspection by members of the public:

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- 11.2 These documents will be available for inspection at the Woodgreen Council Offices during normal office hours for a period of up to 4 years from the date of the meeting. Please contact the author of the report

(END)