



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Name and Date of Committee	<b>EXECUTIVE – 11 OCTOBER 2023</b>
Subject	<b>REVIEW OF CAR PARKS</b>
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Tim Sumner – Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects. Email: <a href="mailto:tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk">tim.sumner@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable Officer	Jon Dearing – Assistant Director, Resident Services. Email: <a href="mailto:jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk">jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</a>
Report Author	Susan Hughes – Business Manager, Support and Advice. Email: <a href="mailto:susan.huges@publicagroup.uk">susan.huges@publicagroup.uk</a>
Purpose	To consider proposals that promote the efficient utilisation of the Council's free off-street carparks, and support access to the District's Town Centres and smaller service centres, including the gathering of further data on carpark usage and implementation of amended stay times.
Annexes	Annex A – Current stay times by car park; Annex B – Customer insight survey results through pro-insight; Annex C – Summary of internal survey on stay times; Annex D – Equalities Impact Assessment.
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive Resolves to:  <i>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.</i>  <i>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.</i>  <i>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 3.39 of the report.</i>  <i>d) Agree to change the restriction time in Zone G of Woolgate to 12-</i>

	<p><i>hour maximum stay as per paragraph 3.30 of the report.</i></p> <p><i>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</i></p> <p><i>f) Approve expenditure up to £8,000 to improve car park signage from the Support from either UKSPF funding or Council Priorities Reserve.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Putting Residents First</li> <li>● Working Together for West Oxfordshire</li> </ul>
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. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 West Oxfordshire District Council owns 14 car parks in its District; it further manages and leases one. Parking restriction times vary across the car parks with a mixture of long, short and overnight stays.
- 1.2 All car parks operating are free of charge, with no restrictions on who can access them.
- 1.3 There are designated disabled parking bays in most of our car parks. These are free of charge with no maximum stay limit for valid disabled badge holders.
- 1.4 There are a mix of parent and child spaces, electric vehicle charging spaces and designated motorcycle spaces in the majority of our car parks.
- 1.5 The current number of car park spaces and stay times are detailed in annex A.
- 1.6 West Oxfordshire District Council parking strategy was approved in 2016 and covers the period up to and including 2031.
- 1.7 Parking behaviours have changed over recent years due to many contributing factors such as the coronavirus pandemic where people have travelled less and the impacts of customers being more environmentally conscious. The mid-strategy review is intended to ensure that the strategy continues to meet the needs of our customers, establish if current stay times are making the best use of Council assets and ensure that our enforcement activity is working to eradicate parking issues.
- 1.8 This report summarises the results from survey work undertaken from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to August 2023 on all West Oxfordshire District Council car parks to establish customers' current stay times and usage. The detail of which is included at annex C.
- 1.9 The report further details the findings from mystery shopping surveys carried out by customer data gathering professionals, to obtain customer insight on their parking behaviours and to identify who our customers are e.g., residents, tourists etc. The results of the survey are at annex B.
- 1.10 The report also details a review of our enforcement activity, to ensure that we are making best use of our enforcement resources.
- 1.11 The report summarises the review of parking permit options for residents and establishes minor improvements to car parks outside of planned repairs, such as new signage etc.
- 1.12 The report summarises the outcome of the trial to allow long stay in Zone G of the Woolgate, Witney car park. Zones A through F are either 1 hour or 3-hour maximum stays in this car park.

## **2. MAIN POINTS**

- 2.1 Most car parks offer long stay, up to 12 hours a day. This results in lower turn around in occupancy and creates reduced capacity at the popularly located car parks.
- 2.2 Four of the car parks offer short stay. (Windrush Leisure Centre in Witney, Woolgate in Witney, Marriotts in Witney and Spendlove in Charlbury.)
- 2.3 The method for surveying stay times, was carried out by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) and the Parking Office team, who carried out survey work covering all car parks on a rotational basis. The four more popular car parks were visited four times, daily, on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays; in order to establish whether a restriction on stay times should be considered to create a better flow of visitors and create capacity at the car parks that were most popular with service users.

- 2.4 Further survey work was undertaken at the remaining car parks to determine capacity. This was conducted on spot check basis, covering a wide range of days and times. Survey work covered a period of non-tourist and tourist driven periods.
- 2.5 Mystery shopping both face to face and through online survey was conducted to establish who our customers are, how far have they travelled, their frequency of travel and purpose. 684 customers responded to the face-to-face survey, with a 462 responding online. A summary of the findings by Car Park is set out below.

### **3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

#### Guildenford, Burford

- 3.1 It has 167 car parking spaces for general use, parent and child and disabled customers. It is a long stay car park, permitting overnight stays and is open 7 days of the week.
- 3.2 The summary of findings at Guildenford car park is that it is a popular car park, with a 32.75% of those surveyed face to face travelling under 10 miles, indicating that they live locally. A further 67.25% were from out of area. The average occupancy throughout the duration of the study is 61%. The car park is most popular between the peak times of 1pm and 3pm, when on average 80% of spaces are occupied. This increases during summer months when it becomes more popular with tourists, reaching 80 -90%.
- 3.3 The majority of customers using the car park are short stay, which indicates a high turnaround of customers and spaces.
- 3.4 There is additional parking available on street permitting both short and longer stay, for which there is currently no charge. Analysis of enforcement activity highlighted that the majority of enforcement was taken as a result of customers parking beyond the bay markings.
- 3.5 With capacity reaching high levels during tourist driven months, a proposal to undertake a further yearlong study to establish parking behaviours, engage with Town and Parish and County Council on any issues that arise as a result of the study. (Recommendation A and B.)

#### Alvescot Road, Carterton

- 3.6 It has 38 car parking spaces for general use and disabled customers. It is a long stay car park permitting overnight stays and is open 7 days a week.
- 3.7 The summary of findings at Alvescot Road car park is that the average occupancy overall from random spot checks highlights that occupancy is at 52% in this car park. The car park is adjacent to a supermarket in Carterton with free off-street parking. Enforcement activity was lower at this car park, where enforcement was issued due to customers parking beyond the bay markings.

#### Black Bourton Road, Carterton

- 3.8 It has 77 spaces for general use, disabled customers and electric vehicle charging spaces. It is a long stay car park permitting overnight stays and is open 7 days a week.
- 3.9 The summary of findings at Black Bourton car park is that the average occupancy overall from random spot checks on capacity levels highlights that occupancy is 47%. There is free parking adjacent to a superstore and opposite another, both have adequate off-street parking. An analysis of enforcement activity concluded that the requirement for enforcement was low at this car park, however when it was carried out it was due to customers parking beyond the bay markings.

#### Spendlove Centre, Charlbury

- 3.10 It has 39 spaces for general use, parent and child and disabled customers. It allows both long and short stays and is open 7 days a week.

**3.11** The summary of findings at Spendlove car park is that the average occupancy overall from random spot checks on capacity levels highlights that occupancy is 68%. This car park is adjacent to a supermarket and used by their patrons. Vets, community centre and medical centre have their own off-street free parking alongside this car park. Charlbury has free on street parking. Analysis of enforcement activity concluded that enforcement was low at this car park, and as a result of misuse of the disabled parking bays.

Albion Street, Chipping Norton

**3.12** It has 53 standard spaces for general use. It is a long stay car park up to 12 hours, open 7 days a week.

**3.13** The summary of findings at Albion Street is that the average occupancy overall from random spot checks on capacity levels highlights that occupancy is 85%. This car park is opposite a free supermarket car park.

Analysis of enforcement action taken concluded that although this was low at this car park, when it was conducted it was due to customers parking beyond the bay markings.

New Street, Chipping Norton

**3.14** It has 144 car parking spaces for general use, electric vehicle users, parent and child and disabled customers. It is a long stay car park, permitting up to 12 hour stays, open 7 days of the week.

**3.15** New Street car park is averaging at 72% throughout the duration of the study. The car park is most popular between the peak times of 11am -1pm, when on average 82% of spaces are occupied. It is slightly less popular than the 9am -11am and 3pm to 5pm stay times. There was little difference in occupancy levels between weekdays and weekends and the holiday period had little impact on occupancy levels. 56.91% of those surveyed face to face were residents travelling under 10 miles to the car parking indicating that they live locally and 43.09% were from out of area, over 10 miles.

**3.16** There is free on street parking in the on-street market area and alternative parking at local supermarkets. Analysis of enforcement action taken, concluded that the majority of enforcement action taken was as a result of customers parking beyond the bay markings.

Back Lane, Eynsham

**3.17** It has 82 standard spaces for general use, disabled customers, parent and child and electric vehicle charging bays. It is a long stay car park up to 12 hours, open 7 days a week.

**3.18** The summary of findings at Back Lane car park is that the average occupancy from random spot checks on capacity levels highlights 46%. This car park is in a residential area where the majority of houses appear to have off street parking. Analysis of enforcement action taken, concluded that although enforcement was low at this car park, when it was conducted it was due to customers misusing the disabled parking bays.

Riely Close, Long Hanborough

**3.19** It has 9 spaces for general use and disabled customers. It is a long stay car park up to 12 hours, open 7 days a week.

**3.20** The summary of findings at Riely Close car park is that the average occupancy from random spot checks on capacity levels highlights 83%. This car park is a small free off-street car park near a

church and a school. The area is mostly residential with free on-street parking. Analysis of enforcement action taken concluded that although enforcement was low at this car park, when it was conducted it was due to customers parking beyond the bay markings.

### Great Tew

- 3.21** It has 44 spaces for general use. It is a long stay car park up to 12 hours, open 7 days a week.
- 3.22** The summary of findings at Great Tew car park is that the average occupancy from random spot checks on capacity levels highlights capacity with 41%. The car park is in a small village with some free on street parking. There were no enforcement breaches at this car park indicating that customers were adhering to the parking rules. This car park is leased from the local Estate at £498 per annum for the purpose of managing visitors to the village.

### Marriotts Walk, Witney

- 3.23** It has 623 spaces for general use, parent and children and disabled customers. It has both long and short stay options, is open 7 days a week, levels 1 – 6 have a maximum stay of 4 hours and levels 7-8 have a maximum stay of 9 hours.
- 3.24** The summary of findings at Marriotts car park is that the average occupancy concluded from survey highlighted 43% occupancy indicating that there is capacity at this car park. Marriotts car park is opposite Woodford Way car park, which is an off-street free car park. Analysis of enforcement action taken at this car park concluded that this was as a result of Customer misusing the disabled parking bays, parking longer than permitted and parking beyond the bay markings.

### Woodford Way, Witney

- 3.25** It has 264 spaces for general use, disabled customers and electrical vehicle charging bays. It is a long stay car park, up to 12 hours a day, open 7 days a week.
- 3.26** The summary of findings at Woodford way car park is that the average occupancy concluded from survey highlighted 80% occupancy indicating that there is capacity at this car park. Woodford way is opposite the Marriotts Multi-story car park which also has capacity. Analysis of enforcement action taken concluded that it was due to customers parking longer than permitted and parking beyond the bay markings.

### Woolgate, Witney

- 3.27** It has 826 spaces for general use, Parent and Child and disabled customers. It is a short stay car park, open 7 days a week.
- 3.28** The summary of findings at Woolgate car park 85.51% of those who responded to face-to-face survey in Zone G travelled under 10 miles indicating they live locally and 14.49% from out of area having travelled over 10 miles. The average occupancy throughout the duration of the study is 74% indicating that there is capacity at this car park. Woolgate has 7 zones in central Witney.
- Zone A = 3 hours max
  - Zone B = 1 hour max
  - Zone C = 3 Hour max
  - Zone D = 3 hour max

- Zone E = 3 hour max (5 x 1 hour bays)
- Zone F = 3 Hour max
- Zone G = all day parking as part of trial (see 3.29 below)

**3.29** Alternative free parking can be found off-street at Woodford Way and Marriotts Walk. Analysis of enforcement action taken, concluded that it was issued as a result of customers misusing the disabled bays, parking longer than permitted, parking in permit bays, (service yards only), and parking beyond the bay markings.

**3.30** A trial permitting long stay in Zone G at Woolgate car park has been underway since July 2022, this is 148 spaces of the car park. The trial was initiated to support customers who work locally by permitting longer stays in standard spaces. The trial has proven successful, and proposals are now being made that the Executive adopt this as a permanent change. (Recommendation D)

#### Windrush Leisure Centre, Witney

**3.31** It has 93 spaces for general use and disabled customers. It is a short stay car park, open 7 days a week.

**3.32** The summary of findings at Windrush car park is that the average occupancy from spot check data highlights occupancy of 59%. The car park is located opposite Woolgate car park which is free. Analysis of enforcement action taken concluded that enforcement was conducted due to customers parking beyond the bay markings and in loading bays.

#### Burwell Drive, Witney

**3.33** It has 42 Spaces for general use and disabled customers. It is a long stay car park up to 12 hours, 7 days a week.

**3.34** The car park is located near residential houses, with the majority of housing having their own parking, the car park serves a small number of convenience stores. The average occupancy from spot checks was 51%, indicating there is capacity at this car park. There were no enforcement breaches at this car park indicating that customers were adhering to the parking rules.

#### Gordon Way, Witney

**3.35** It has 50 spaces for general use. It is a long stay car park, up to 12 hours, open 7 days a week.

**3.36** The average occupancy concluded from random spot checks highlight occupancy of 3% indicating that there is capacity at this car park. Gordon Way car park is surrounded by residential houses which appear to have off-street parking the car park serves the artificial turf sports pitch. There were no enforcement breaches at this car park indicating that customers were adhering to the parking rules.

#### Hensington Road, Woodstock

**3.37** It has 117 car parking spaces for general use, electric vehicle users and disabled customers. It is a long stay car park, permitting up to 12 hour stays, open 7 days of the week.

**3.38** The summary of findings at Hensington road car park is that this car park had the highest occupancy throughout the period of study 75%, with the highest stay times between 11am and 3pm. 76.47% of those surveyed travelled under 10 miles indicating that they live locally and 23.53% travelled over

10 miles, indicating that they are from out of area. Average occupancy was at its highest 87%. Between 11am and 1pm.

- 3.39** Woodstock has limited on street parking with pay and display and resident permits. There are no off-street alternatives other than Blenheim Place who have their own charged car park. Analysis of parking enforcement concluded that the majority of enforcement action taken was a result of misuse of electric vehicle parking and disabled persons parking bays. Anecdotally there is less use of the 4 disabled parking bays at Hensington Road, however our data confirms that during the course of the study, 3 out of the 4 bays were occupied and the designated number of bays falls in line with the recommended guidance from the Disabled Motoring UK. Recommendation for the report is to review capacity in a year once the impacts of charging on street by Oxfordshire County Council has been assessed, given Hensington Road has the highest occupancy levels and is further impacted by the lack of off-street parking provision. (Recommendation C)
- 3.40** Our Civil Enforcement team comprises of 3.4 FTE who carry out enforcement rotating around the car parks. 1 full time, 1, 3 days a week, 1, 4 days a week. We have 1 FTE vacant post which we are aiming to fill.
- 3.41** The majority of car parks allow long stay which results in less enforcement activity for breach of stay times.

A review of our enforcement activity across all car parks demonstrated that the majority of enforcement action across all car parks was taken as a result of customers parking outside of bay markings and misusing disabled parking bays.

- 3.42** The transfer of on-street parking to the County has reduced enforcement income since the transfer date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. In the financial year of 2022-2023 on street PCN income was £71,788 and the year of 2021-2022 it was £70,522.
- 3.43** Assessment of the condition of our car parks has indicated that signage in the car parks is in need of modernisation, with reports of signage being difficult to read and occasionally obscured by foliage. (Recommendation F)

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1** A review of all car parks has demonstrated that the majority of West Oxfordshire District Council car parks are not fully occupied, although occupancy levels do increase during the summer period, particularly in locations that are popular with tourists. Alternative parking is generally available either on street or at alternative nearby car park locations with exception of Hensington Road car park in Woodstock, which has no free alternative parking in proximity. Burford has off street car parking, and available on street parking however capacity can reach higher levels during periods when it is popular with tourists. A further review of these locations will support the Council to make best use of its assets.
- 4.2** 88.53% of our car park users who responded to our surveys, travelled less than 10 miles to park in our car parks, indicating that they live locally.
- 4.3** The option to implement a resident parking permit scheme has been reviewed as part of the mid strategy review. Issuing permits is a cost to the Council through permit distribution and back-office administration of the scheme estimated £750 per annum. Implementing a permit scheme does not guarantee customers a parking space and would not help to alleviate any future capacity issues should they arise.



- 4.4 Enforcement activity is generally as a result of customer parking beyond marked bays, misusing disabled bays and where short stay is allowed, staying longer than permitted.
- 4.5 An assessment of the signage in the car parks as confirmed that signage is not easy to read, has occasionally been blocked by overhanging trees and hedges and a refresh of signage at all car parks is required. The sum of replacing signage is estimated £8000. (Recommendation F)

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Provision of Car Parking and enforcement of its use is not a statutory service but is aimed generally to support the major service centres within the district.
- 5.2 The 2023/24 budgeted cost of the provision of Car Parking within the district is set out below. There is limited provision for maintenance activity within the revenue budgets, but significant maintenance requirements are funded as required from the general property maintenance fund identified in the capital programme. The budget for car park maintenance is anticipated to double in the next financial year due to the Council taking ownership of the Marriotts car park and the costs of associated repairs and maintenance. A recommendation for the report is that the Council agrees to consider the proposal to undertake condition surveys of its car park assets (Recommendation G) a separate report will follow if approved.
- 5.3 The income stream was impacted significantly by the withdrawal of the agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council which saw them take responsibility for on-street enforcement activity where the majority of parking breaches (and income) take place. Whilst there was an adjustment to the revenue budget the fixed costs associated with general car parking maintenance and enforcement activity meant there was a significant adverse budgetary impact on the Council.
- 5.4 The table sets out the overall cost of car parking within the 2023/24 revenue budget and shows a subset of the enforcement activity taking account of the enforcement officers and the enforcement administration service.

	All Car Parking	Enforcement Activity
Premises	£143,039	-
Transport	£1,710	-
Supplies & Services	£20,160	£10,000
Contractor Costs	£235,297	£171,559
Total Cost	£400,206	£181,559
Third Party Income	-£119,022	-£119,022
Penalty Charges	-£80,850	-£80,850
Total Income	-£199,872	£-199,872
Net Cost	£200,334	-£18,313

- 5.5 There is not sufficient capacity within the current revenue budget to replace the signs as set out in 4.5 above. It is proposed that these signs be financed from additional UKSPF funding, or the “Support for Council Priorities” earmarked reserves set aside in August 2022 in line with the priority of Business Support for Towns and Villages.
- 5.6 If changes are made to the car parks, the Parking Order process will incur internal resources and external costs due to statutory consultation and notices in the press. The external costs are likely to be in the region of £2,500 for statutory notification required in order to make the change. It is unlikely that this can be met from the current year budget and as a consequence the shortfall will be met from reserves.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Potential requirement to change the Parking Order in order to enforce stay times prescribed.

## **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 completed and shared with the Council's Director of Governance.

## **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.

## **10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 10.1 The Council could choose not to conduct a further review of Guildenford car park in Burford, however by not committing to a further review, this could leave the Council with insufficient insight on parking activity and capacity levels.
- 10.2 The Council could choose not to conduct a further review of Hensington Road car park, however by not committing to a further review, this could leave the Council with insufficient insight on parking activity and capacity levels once the impacts of on street moving to Oxfordshire County Council have been realised.
- 10.3 The Council could choose not to increase stay times at Woolgate car park in Zone G. However, this trial has been successful and has met the needs of local residents and business thus supporting the local economy.
- 10.4 The Council could choose not to replace the signage in the car parks. However, feedback has been received that the signage is not clear and easy to read, this could result in increased customer complaints when breaches occur and it not aesthetically in keeping with the Council's brand.
- 10.5 The Council could choose not to consider the proposal to carrying out condition surveys on its car parks which could result in depreciation of asset.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None for consideration with this report

(END)

