

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 9th July 2025
Subject	CAR PARKING STRATEGY 2025-2031
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment Email: Lidia.Arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing –Executive Director for Resident Service Group Email: jon.dearing@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Susan Hughes, Business Manager for Support and Advice Email: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider and agree the revised car parking strategy 2016 – 2031
Annexes	• Annex A- Revised West Oxfordshire District Council car parking strategy 2025 – 2031 • Annex B – proposed changes to stay time restriction in Woodstock, Charlbury and Burford • Annex C – Equality impact Assessment
Recommendation(s)	That the Executive resolves to: a) Endorse the revised West Oxfordshire District Council Car Parking Strategy 2025 -2031 at Annex A. b) Authorise the Business Manager (Support and Advice) to make minor amendments to the draft strategy prior to finalisation in consultation with the accountable member of the Executive. c) Adopt the Action plan in Annex A of the strategy recognising it as a working document to be updated throughout the life of the strategy as a consequence of further consultations with Towns and Parishes. d) Instruct Officers to make a variation to the Parking Order to implement a mixture of long and short stay times to better meet customer demand in Woodstock, Burford and Charlbury. Recommended splits are attached at Annex B with final exact splits to be determined by Officers in consultation with Executive Member

	for Environment e) Delegate authority to Executive Director of Resident Services in conjunction with the Executive Member for Environment to consider consultation feedback on the variations to the parking order and decide whether to make the variation to the Order in whole or in part or to abandon the proposal. f) Approve the funding to resolve the drainage and mitigate flooding at Guildenford car park in Burford at a cost estimated at £20,000. g) Delegate further minor amendments to Parking Orders to the Executive Director Residents Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment to deal with items arising from Parish and Town Council liaison meetings subject to formal Parking Order consultation requirements
Corporate priorities	● Putting Residents First ● Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All ● Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife ● Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency ● Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer, Interim Head of Legal Services, Finance Business Partner, Executive Director Resident Services, Director of Finance (Publica), Executive Member Environment

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) owns 15 car parks in its District; it further manages and leases one.
- 1.2** In 2016 the council approved a strategy for the operation of its car parks to cover the period up to 2031. Due to changes in national and local policies and customers parking behaviour since then, the council concluded that the strategy required updating to make best use of its assets and to set out plans for the delivery of its parking services to ensure they continue to meet the needs of residents, visitors and local businesses through to 2031.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1** The council's mid-term review of its Parking Strategy focused on establishing several factors.
- Have the occupancy levels within its car parks changed in line with industry predictions?
 - Has climate change impacted customer behaviours in respect of greener and active modes of transport, reducing occupancy levels within our car parks?
 - Is the delivery of parking services continuing to support the council's ambitions to support those who live and visit the district?
 - Is the parking provided helping to support and maintain a growing and vibrant economy?
 - Is the parking provided supporting the council's ambitions to tackle the climate emergency, promote a healthy environment where wildlife thrives, and air and water are clean?
 - What alternative options for increasing and decreasing parking are there considering predicted future demand?
- 2.2** Beat surveys were conducted over a period of two years using the parking industry standard of 85% and above; as a benchmark to indicate from our data gathered on occupancy levels, when the council's car parks are reaching or at capacity.
- 2.3** Customer and stakeholder engagement and surveys were conducted to understand the customer experience and gather feedback on where services could be improved.
- 2.4** All car parks were assessed to establish the condition of them, and a planned programme of repairs is included in the strategy
- 2.5** All relevant external and internal policies and plans were reviewed, and where updated, reflected in the new strategy.
- 2.6** Opportunities to create additional parking were explored with local businesses, schools and Town and Parish Councils in areas where car parking capacity was high.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** The review concluded that the strategy needed some updating following several changes since its adoption in 2016.
- 3.2** The action plan within the strategy outlining the delivery objectives for the service also needed updating and will continue to be updated throughout the life of the strategy as policies and legislation change.
- 3.3** Overall the council's car park occupancy across the district has not increased in line with the predictions in the strategy adopted in 2016, a greater focus on alternative modes of transport and better connectivity routes has contributed to this. There are, however, areas identified where spare capacity is severely constrained, these were predicted in the previous strategy

and continue to prove a challenge for residents, visitors and businesses. The car parks are Guildenford car park in Burford, Hensington Road car park in Woodstock and the Spendlove car park in Charlbury.

- 3.4 The customer feedback gathered through surveys indicated that the council's car parks are well used and popular by those who live locally and free parking is welcomed.
- 3.5 Customers use the council's car parks to carry out activities such as shopping and leisure activities helping to support a growing and vibrant economy.
- 3.6 The strategy supports the council's ambitions to tackle climate emergency, and actions to seek opportunities to create and support and modal shift and drive greener modes of transport are reflected in the updated action plan within the strategy.
- 3.7 Outdated information and reference to services no longer provided by the council have been removed, such as changes to the enforcement of on-street parking which in April 2023 moved to Oxfordshire County Council.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The council has no statutory duty to provide parking but is committed to do so to support the vitality of its towns and provide a service for residents. Future enhancements to parking provision may be delivered directly by the council but may also be provided at the local level by Town or Parish Councils or by developers and other third parties.
- 4.2 The strategy review concluded that the council car parks are a well maintained and well utilised assets, which have spare capacity district wide, with exception of Guildenford car park in Burford, Hensington Road car park in Woodstock and the Spendlove car park in Charlbury which are at capacity and full seasonally.
- 4.3 The new strategy outlines several commitments, supported in its action plan 2025-2031.
- 4.4 Additional off-street parking spaces are needed in Burford and Woodstock and the council will continue to seek and support organisations, town and parish councils to find alternative parking solutions. Changing occupancy periods is a tool available to help manage car parks with capacity challenges.
- 4.5 Diminishing levels of spare capacity in Chipping Norton and Charlbury will require careful management and observation of capacity levels over the course of the remaining strategy term.
- 4.6 The council will continue to work with Town and Parish Councils, Community Groups and businesses to enable them to enforce in car parks which are also impacted by high use and where enforcement is not currently possible due to a lack of traffic regulation order. This may require further amendments to traffic orders.
- 4.7 The strategy seeks to support the council's ambition for tackling climate change by 'driving down carbon emissions from council operations, and in so doing lead by example to inspire others to take action to collectively reduce the overall carbon emissions of the district by supporting active forms of travel including cycling and walking.
- 4.8 Free parking is to be retained in all public car parks controlled by the council, however the council needs to continue to support the promotion of sustainable transport to manage demand.
- 4.9 Our car parks are enforced well, and enforcement responds to district need. The strategy continues to ensure that enforcement practices and staff resources are utilised in the most effective way.

- 4.10** A condition review of our assets concluded that most of the council's car parks are well maintained, and customers receive a pleasant parking experience. There are, however, some areas which need maintenance and improvement, these are noted in the programme of planned repairs, which will continue to be monitored and updated throughout the term of the strategy to ensure the councils assets remain in a good condition.
- 4.11** Flood risk assessment of Guildenford car park and engagement with Town and Parish Councils concluded that further work to improve the drainage at Guildenford car park would be required to alleviate the on-going issue with flooding and subsequent loss of use when this flooding occurs.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The financial implications to the council if approved are set out as follows:

Car park	Action	Cost £
Guildenford car park Hensington Road car park Spendlove car park	Changes to the parking order to reflect the change in stay time including press notices	£750
Guildenford car park, Burford	X 2 large signs Repeater signs for clarity on stay times	£1000 £650
Hensington Road car park, Woodstock	X 1 large sign Repeater signs for clarity on stay times	£500 £300
Spendlove car park, Charlbury	X 1 large sign Repeater signs for clarity on stay times	£500 £300
Estimated Total		£4,000

- 5.2** The expenditure of £4,000 relating to the proposed changes could be met from the current revenue budget.
- 5.3** Financial implications to the Council if the recommendation to approve the funding to resolve the drainage and mitigate flooding at Guildenford car park in Burford is approved. Approximate cost of £20,000 to carry out a full assessment of options to rectify flooding issues and improve the drainage. This expenditure will be met from earmarked reserves.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The provision of off-street car parking is not the subject of a statutory duty.
- 6.2** There is a potential requirement to change the Parking Order to vary the stay times prescribed.
- 6.3** 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** If the council fails to amend stay times in the capacity constrained car parks this could lead to further deterioration in the available capacity for users and this could impact on the vibrancy of towns.
- 7.2** A failure to address the flooding issues at Guildenford in Burford will lead to continuing loss of spaces at times of high river levels.

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 are climate and ecological implications identified in association with the recommendations of this report, changes to restricted stay times, may in-turn increase footfall to the car parks in the three locations noted, however time spent by car users driving around the car park and towns seeking alternative parking will be reduced.
- 9.2** To offset these implications the action plan seeks to promote active travel, enable better access to cycle parking and continue to promote electric vehicles.

10. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 10.1** The council could choose not to adopt the new car parking strategy, this would result in the strategy remaining outdated, and not delivering services in line with wider policies, plans or customer and stakeholder needs.
- 10.2** The Council could choose not to adopt the updated action plan outlining the delivery objections for the service. This could result in the service failing to keep up to date with changes to policy or legislation.
- 10.3** The council could choose not to amend the stay time restrictions at Hensington Road car park in Woodstock, Guildenford car park at Burford and Spendlove car park in Charlbury which will result in demand for spaces remaining high.
- 10.4** The council could choose to not approve the funding to resolve the drainage and alleviate flooding at Guildenford car park, this would result in a loss of days when the car park is accessible and little alternative parking provision for residents, visitors and businesses.
- 10.5** The council could choose not to delegate further minor amendments to Parking Orders to the Executive Director Residents Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment resulting in further reports to Executive therefore lengthening the timeframe for implementation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Original consultancy report

(END)