Parking Strategy and Action Plan

October 2014

LONDON BOROUGH OF
BEXLEY

Introduction

1.1   This document is the culmination of the Council's Strategic Parking Review. It sets out an overarching strategic aim for parking, supported by objectives and detailed policies with an action plan for the next three years. It seeks to tackle parking matters of most importance to residents and businesses based on a comprehensive investigation of parking issues in the borough, incorporating public consultation and the latest parking research and best practice.

1.2   As a result, the document does not seek to cover all aspects of parking in detail or to report on specific operational matters or performance. A full picture of how the Council manages its parking assets, its income streams, enforcement performance etc. is provided in the Council's Annual Parking Services Performance Report and other sources.

1.3   This strategy will set the direction of the future development of parking in the borough ensuring a consistent and well-founded approach which meets the needs of local residents and businesses.

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Parking Strategy

The Strategic Aim of Parking

2.1   The strategic aim of parking will be:

> **To improve all aspects of the quality of life of residents while helping local businesses flourish**.

Strategic Parking Objectives and Policies

2.2   The following section sets out the proposed objectives which will achieve this aim. Each proposed objective also has an associated parking policy which sets out in greater detail what the Council will do in practice to deliver that objective. The subsequent action plan then provides details of individual initiatives and cross references these to the relevant objectives.

Corporate Objectives and Statutory Requirements

> **Objective 1:**
> Parking will be a positive tool to support wider social, environmental and economic objectives for the borough as well as meeting statutory requirements

2.3   The Council delivers a large number of important statutory services and shared corporate objectives and the above objective acknowledges this.

2.4   The Council's new priority objectives for the period 2014-18 are:

- Priority One: Growing a thriving economy

- Priority Two: Living long, fulfilling and independent lives

- Priority Three: Providing Value for Money

2.5   As an issue, parking can typify the potential conflict between these different priorities and the Council often has to try and strike an appropriate balance between competing demands.

2.6   There are also a number of legal requirements related to parking and there will be increasing pressure to meet these in the most efficient and effective way. However, in making choices about the future direction of parking, continuing compliance with the law will be a key consideration.

2.7   Over recent years, parking in Bexley has seen significant change both in how it is delivered and the context within which it operates. Operational changes have been made with the aim of helping the Council meet its overall objectives. However, there is a clear perception among stakeholders that an appropriate balance has not been struck between competing objectives. In particular, feedback suggests that detailed operational changes have not been seen to be properly aligned with wider social and economic aims such as the health of our town centres and equal access to services for all.

2.8   It is clear that any change needs to be seen to have considered all implications before it is progressed and to have been brought forward with the aim of making positive things happen in line with what the Council is trying to do elsewhere. Parking should, therefore, seek to ensure that what it currently does or plans to do, secure the broadest benefits and minimises any disadvantages.

Parking Policy 1

In undertaking all its parking functions, the Council will ensure that they meet statutory requirements in the most efficient and effective way and contribute positively to all the Council's identified objectives. This will be achieved by:

a)   continuing actively to consider the consequences of changes in the operation of parking on the Council's statutory duties and identified corporate objectives;

b)   ensuring, where possible, that any adverse impacts are addressed through changes in proposed projects and initiatives; and

c)   taking positive steps to make sure an appropriate balance is struck between competing objectives when conflicts arise and that where disadvantages remain they are minimised

Prioritising Local Residents and Businesses

Objective 2:
As far as possible, the needs of local residents and businesses will be prioritised over other parking requirements.

2.9   If the parking service is to ensure it is fully aligned with corporate objectives and the strategic aim for parking set out above, its primary focus must be the needs of local residents and businesses. That does not mean to say that other customers are to receive an unacceptable service, nor does it mean that parking practices should be inherently unfair. All customers should receive a high basic level of service.

2.10   However, the evidence has shown that residents make up the majority of the customer base for Council-operated parking and that in doing so their main purpose is to support local businesses through shopping and leisure activities. They provide most of the parking income as well as contributing to local services and infrastructure generally through Council Tax. Residents also make up the majority of the local employees using Council car parks although non-residents who work in Bexley are also important to the borough's economy. These groups do, therefore, reap the most benefit from local parking facilities. However, they also contribute the most to the success of the borough as a place.

2.11   Consultation responses clearly signalled that there is strong support for the prioritisation of residents and local employees in the operation of the parking service, and that residential areas, town centres and local shopping parades should also be favoured. This prioritisation can be done in two main ways; either through the control of demand for parking through changes in price or the control of supply through changes in the number of available spaces for different users in different locations.

2.12   The rewarding of long established customers or frequent users of a service is a common approach in commerce and promotes the creation of a positive relationship as well as continued brand loyalty. This approach can be seen in parking as in other areas with private parking providers such as supermarkets operating their facilities so as to best serve their particular customers.

2.13   If a similar approach were taken by the Council, it would serve to underline the importance placed on local parking to cater for local need as well as helping to redress the balance, particularly in town centres, between different parking demands. Moreover, within town centres, where the evidence shows that privately operated parking dominates supply, it is important that the Council remains competitive so as to ensure custom and traffic is not overly concentrated onto particular sites with resulting disadvantages for the town centre as a whole. As well as modifying the operation of its own car parks to address the issue, the Council can also look to control aspects of new privately run public parking operations, such as the tariff structure and charges, through the planning system by way of planning conditions and/or legal agreements so that the overall parking offer is coordinated.

2.14   The effectiveness of this general approach has been illustrated by the success of the Bexley High Street car park pilot scheme in changing parking patterns in the area to the benefit of the wider town centre. The scheme looked to achieve a better balance between commuter (long stay) and shopper (shorter stay) parking. The car park was becoming full with rail commuters parking all day, leaving few spaces for shoppers during the day, and impacting on local businesses. To help redress the balance the car park was split into two zones: one for both long and short stay parking; the other for short stay parking only. A trial period followed between September and December 2012, where the effects of the changes were closely monitored. The results of the pilot scheme suggest that the long stay users were displaced to other car parks and the level of turnover of spaces in the High Street car park increased due to greater short stay use by shoppers. The changes have subsequently been made permanent.

2.15   If the supply of and demand for parking is to be changed to favour particular groups and locations such as town centres, contrasting approaches, such as reduced provision and/or higher charges, could also be considered in other locations where parking is not as important to residents or the local economy. Consultation responses particularly focussed on parking at railway stations and schools as a relatively low priority compared to other uses. In the case of railway stations, there is evidence that in some locations there is a large component of out of borough usage which provides little benefit to the local economy and may also inconvenience residents. With schools, the issue is predominantly one of nuisance to nearby residents at dropping off and picking up times resulting from inappropriate parking.

2.16   The issue of school parking is a key one, particularly in the context of population growth and increasing school rolls and, although respondents do not wish the Council to prioritise parking in these locations, the Council will have to act positively to ensure these issues are effectively dealt with. As well as prioritising enforcement around schools, and encouraging considerate behaviour, the Council will seek opportunities to work with individual schools to ensure they are, wherever possible, providing and/or promoting appropriate off street parking in the area and engaging with staff, pupils and parents to change travel habits.

Parking Policy 2

The Council will seek to prioritise the parking needs of local residents and businesses through:

a)   the nature and operation of its parking charges and services;

b)   the approach it takes to the allocation of parking facilities and the creation of new or modification of existing parking restrictions; and

c)   the management of new privately operated public parking where appropriate.

Providing the Right Parking

Objective 3:
To provide the right type and quantity of parking in the right place, at the right time, at the right price and of the right quality for the Council's customers.

2.17   In terms of what is the right quantity, some types of parking, such as bicycle and electric vehicle parking, are provided with the main aim of encouraging the use of more sustainable means of transport. As such they are not necessarily supplied to meet an identified demand but to provide additional choice to make it easier for people to change their travel habits. This can sometimes lead to tensions if car parking already in limited supply is seen to be given over to uses for which there is perceived to be little or no demand.

2.18   The amount of car parking that is actually needed (rather than demanded) in an area is a key issue in the parking debate. Too much car parking will encourage people to use their cars and, where car ownership and use is high, such as in Bexley, this is more likely to cause congestion, delays, safety concerns and pollution. Parking space that is simply not used for long periods of time is a waste of valuable land that could be put to more beneficial use or increases the cost of new development, preventing it from coming forward at all. There will also be limits to how much parking can actually be provided in an area, particularly in an urban environment where limited land availability and competing land uses means that rationing of parking space is a necessity.

2.19   Conversely, inadequate amounts of car parking could dissuade or prevent people from using important local services, particularly where there are limited public transport options, again a particular issue in Bexley. This will lead to both economic and social problems as businesses struggle to attract customers, people become unable to access important services and new developments fail to find occupiers as lack of parking makes the new facilities less saleable. Inadequate parking can also cause local congestion and safety concerns as people compete to find spaces or park illegally or inappropriately when proper spaces cannot be found.

2.20   The Council therefore has to strike an appropriate balance between these competing pressures and ensure that a reasonable and adequate amount of parking is provided at all times having regard to its parking aims, objectives and priorities which include social, economic, environmental and resource considerations. Once the right balance has been identified, it should be achieved through a mix of different approaches including planning uses in an area in such a way as to reduce reliance on the car, creating realistic opportunities for sustainable travel and managing the demand for parking in a reasonable way.

2.21   The demand for parking can be directly managed in two main ways: by increasing or decreasing price or by increasing or restricting supply. The price the Council charges for its parking spaces is made up of two main components: the unit cost of providing the parking space (creating, maintaining and enforcing the space) and the uplift in price over and above this to ensure the space is used as it should be. As mentioned above, the Council has to ensure that its parking facilities are used in the most beneficial way. As a result it alters prices (or provides free parking in certain circumstances) to make sure that some users are dissuaded from using the parking at certain times, for too long or at all. A good example of this is the practice of making long stay parking in the middle of town centres relatively expensive, so dissuading commuters and encouraging short stay parking for shoppers.

2.22   It is therefore inevitable that in many circumstances the price of parking is more than the cost of providing it. This is one of the reasons that the parking service generates additional income each year; an issue which is considered more fully under Objective 4 below.

2.23   The Council can affect the supply of parking by reducing the number of spaces it provides in an area, restricting the times during which spaces can be used or restricting the amount of time users can park in a space. This can be an effective way of changing parking patterns in an area, as illustrated by the Bexley High Street car park parking pilot scheme mentioned above.

2.24   The quality of car parking also has an effect on demand. If the parking is of low quality then people will be dissuaded from using it and what appears to be an adequate supply within an area becomes a shortage, with resulting impacts on local residents and businesses. Quality can encompass elements such as safety, accessibility and convenience.

2.25   As well as using these methods for its own parking, the Council can influence new privately-run public parking provision through the use of its planning powers. Planning policies can set out parking requirements for new development and how these are calculated and can also control to an extent, through planning conditions and/or legal agreements the pricing and operation of these facilities where it can show that this will have broader benefits for an area. This will ensure that private provision can be better aligned with the Council's own approach and minimise competition between facilities which can disrupt efforts to create the right balance of parking in an area.

2.26   'Pop-up' parking, where schools, churches or private sports clubs offer their car parking to the public at certain times, often with a charge for charitable purposes, is becoming increasingly popular and is a good solution when an area is under particular parking stress such as during a nearby public event. Planning permission is unlikely to be required for this activity if it remains relatively infrequent and/ or there are no associated works involved. In these cases the Council will have little or no control of these facilities if they arise. However the Council is generally supportive of 'pop-up' parking and offers help and advice on their setting up and operation subject to it not causing unacceptable harm to the area.

2.27   The appropriate balance of parking in Bexley will be affected by its particular local conditions. As indicated above, parking is important to Bexley for a range of reasons including its relatively poor public transport accessibility with little prospect of significant future improvement, its high car ownership and usage, its existing patterns of land uses and relatively liberal parking standards in nearby areas such as north Kent which could draw future development opportunities away from Bexley. As a result, the Council's approach will look to provide its residents and businesses with comparable levels of access to goods, services and opportunities as elsewhere and this will result in comparatively more parking than would be sought in other areas.

2.28   Surveys suggest that the borough does generally have available spare capacity in the Council's car parks. However, parking requirements will vary throughout the year and adequate and flexible headroom is required. The existing parking provision will also need to cater for housing and employment growth in the borough over coming years as well as shorter term changes in travel behaviour as a result of, for example, reductions in fuel costs. Moreover, there is some evidence of localised problems at certain times of the day or for certain users, which are not reflected in existing car park surveys. Therefore parking need will vary over time and the Council will take this into account in planning future provision. Nevertheless, land is a precious resource in urban areas and the Council is not the only provider of parking places. As a result, the Council will consider the appropriate level of spare capacity and ensure this is provided in a way that ensures the most efficient use of land. The Council's approach to the use of spare capacity in its car parks and other development opportunities is dealt with under Objective 4.

2.29 In terms of price and quality, the Council's charges are periodically benchmarked against neighbouring authorities' while 16 of the Council's car parks have been awarded The Safer Parking Award for achieving a series of safety standards. On-street parking is also designed to be safe and convenient, while the use of signage is kept to a minimum to avoid clutter. In this context, there is a general prohibition on footway parking in London which has been reviewed by the Council in Bexley to ensure it remains relevant and practical in all areas. This has resulted in the prohibition being lifted in a number of roads where safety and accessibility considerations suggested it would be appropriate. These issues will be monitored periodically with necessary changes made as resources allow.

Parking Policy 3

The Council will use its powers to ensure the right type, quantity, cost and quality of parking is provided in its facilities, as resources allow, and as part of any new development by:

a)   taking into account Bexley's current and future characteristics in terms of public transport accessibility, car usage and ownership, parking capacity, patterns of land uses and resulting travel behaviour;

b)   considering the realistic opportunities available to change travel behaviour within particular areas and individual developments in the context of local constraints;

c)   having regard to other parking approaches within the borough and in neighbouring authorities to ensure that individual areas and the borough as a whole remains competitive and imbalances or inconsistencies do not have harmful consequences;

d)   encouraging and supporting the responsible use of 'pop up' parking facilities, particularly for charitable purposes, subject to no harm being caused; and

e)   requiring high standards of design to ensure parking is safe, convenient and accessible.

Effective Management and Value for Money

Objective 4:
The borough's parking will be managed in the most effective way whilst ensuring value for money is secured for Council Tax payers.

2.30 This objective looks to achieve the greatest return on every pound invested in the parking service, while keeping the additional revenue generated at an appropriate level. Legislation and government guidance is clear that local authorities should not use parking as a means of raising revenue or set revenue targets, including targets for the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued. On this latter point, a high rate of PCNs would actually suggest that the Council is not managing its parking in the most effective way. It is the aim of the Council to maximise compliance with parking restrictions and minimise PCNs issued, see Objective 5.

2.31   As discussed under Objective 3, the need to set parking charges above the actual cost of parking to control the demand for spaces means that additional income will arise. Moreover, this is supplemented by PCN income generated by those who continue to park illegally, despite clear instructions and adequate opportunities to do otherwise. There are, however, strict controls as to what the Council can do with additional income generated from on-street parking and all PCN revenues, while income generated from off street parking can be used as the Council wishes.

2.32   A self-financing parking service represents good value for money for Council Tax payers as cross-subsidy from the Council's General Fund is avoided. It also means that, should additional income be generated, the Council is able to transfer money to other transport-related projects (in the case of additional net income from on-street parking and PCNs) and to the General Fund to help pay for other services (in the case of off street parking). This is also of clear benefit to Council Tax payers as it reduces the pressure for Council Tax increases.

2.33   These benefits were acknowledged and supported by respondents to the strategic parking review consultation, the majority of whom confirmed that they considered a financially viable parking service, with any additional income spent on other functions, to be appropriate. Respondents were also clear that the cost of parking should be borne by the user and not the Council Tax payer although the introduction of new charges, such as evening charges in Bexleyheath, were unpopular with respondents.

2.34   Bexley has operated a price freeze on all off-street parking charges over the last three years and for on-street parking over the last two years. The resulting level of parking income is one of the smallest across the Capital, indicating that the borough is striking broadly the right balance. However, the price freeze has meant that the Council has been unable to respond to increasing inflationary pressures on its cost base or manage demand in response to changing parking priorities and use patterns. In the medium to long term this will lead to increasing pressure on viability as well as traffic management problems in certain locations. As a result, the end of the Council's price freeze is considered necessary to the achievement of strategic policy objectives.

2.35   In identifying the detail of revised parking charge levels, which could incorporate increases and decreases in relevant prices, the parking priorities outlined in this strategy and the emphasis on benefiting residents and local businesses will be taken into account, as well as maintaining an alignment with changes in inflation and changing demand. Moreover, continued efforts to improve value for money within the parking service through improved efficiencies will be taken into account. These efficiencies can be achieved in a number of ways including the use of technology and organisational changes.

2.36   The use of modern technology has huge potential in parking. Mobile phone applications, automated number plate recognition, virtual permits, satellite technology, roadside sensors and other innovations offer vast improvements in the efficient use of parking spaces and enforcement. However, the fast pace of innovation and the high set up costs associated with this technology means that investment decisions must be carefully considered and should be appropriate to the scale of the parking service as well as relevant to the operational issues arising. Investigations into a resident card, for example, have raised issues of cost, resilience and value for money which means that its promotion is impractical at this stage. The use of technology is also affected by proposed changes to government parking legislation and guidance, especially around the use of CCTV enforcement and will need to be monitored.

2.37   Organisational change can offer efficiencies through economies of scale, innovation and/or the adoption of a more commercial approach. Options include sharing back office functions with neighbouring authorities or outsourcing some or all functions to private operators.

2.38   Bexley's parking service has made significant efficiencies through changes in working practices and the use of technology. The introduction of Phone and Pay has reduced the frequency and cost of cash collections and avoided the need to replace ageing parking meters in some locations. The move to a shared back office parking function with London Borough of Bromley has realised economies of scale and other efficiencies. Further possible changes continue to be considered to ensure ongoing improvement.

2.39   Responses to the public consultation did however raise concerns around the use of modern technology and particularly the Phone and Pay initiative. Concerns particularly centred around a lack of familiarity with technology disadvantaging some groups and the importance of offering a choice of methods of payment. The Council will review how recent changes were implemented and consider carefully how further changes in the operation of the service are developed and introduced to minimise the possibility of similar concerns arising again.

2.40   Consultation responses also clearly indicated a lack of support for outsourcing of the Council's parking service to private contractors and, as a result, the handing over of Council car parks to private parking operators is not proposed in this strategy. Moreover, respondents confirmed that the sale of parking facilities for redevelopment should be avoided, with many indicating that simply because a car park was not fully used did not mean that its role in providing parking for local shops and services or avoiding congestion in surrounding roads should be ignored.

2.41   Detailed analysis of Council car park usage does suggest that all facilities are used to a greater or lesser extent and have a clear role in serving local areas, as well as providing an alternative to on-street parking. However, as discussed above, there is also a need to use land in the most efficient way and avoid maintaining capacity which has little prospect of ever being required. In this context the Council will ensure that any excess capacity is identified and the associated land put to better use where appropriate.

2.42   Some car parks may offer important future development opportunities, particularly where they are located in growth areas and could unlock significant regeneration benefits. In these circumstances there may be opportunities to bring development forward while still preserving an appropriate level of public parking for the area. Such opportunities are best managed through the development plan process and will be addressed in the Local Plan documents

2.43   Where excess capacity is a short term issue, there may be opportunities to allow relevant Council car parking to be used for limited periods for other, appropriate functions at times when usage is low. These would have to be strictly controlled to ensure they were generally of benefit to the wider area and did not in themselves lead to parking issues. An example of such uses could be occasional farmers' markets or other promotional events within town centres.

Parking Policy 4

The Council will remain an owner and operator of public parking and will seek to maximise the effectiveness of the parking service while ensuring value for money for Council Tax payers by:

a)   continuing to develop appropriate and cost effective ways of improving the parking service particularly through the utilisation of modern technology and more efficient processes;

b)   considering the broad implications of proposed technological and other changes and ensuring that potential inconsistencies or harmful side effects are avoided or mitigated;

c)   ending the current general parking charge freeze to ensure the price of parking reflects the Council's overall parking priorities and the cost of parking provision, including improving efficiency, so that the parking function remains self-financing;

d)   ensuring that any additional income generated from the Council's parking function continues to be used to secure the maximum benefit for Council Tax payers;

e)   ensuring that, where excess capacity is identified and/or acceptable development opportunities present themselves on Council car park sites, a more efficient use of the land is pursued having regard to the car park's function in the local area and the need to re-provide adequate public parking as part of the development or in the vicinity where appropriate; and

f)   ensuring that, where temporary spare capacity is identified within Council car parks at certain times, short term use of these facilities for other purposes is supported, provided the use results in a positive benefit to the wider area and does not in itself result in other parking problems.

Customer Service, Information, Compliance and Support

Objective 5:
The Council will ensure high quality customer service and provide clear information about its approach to parking so as to make it as easy as possible to comply with parking requirements and maximise public support

2.44   Compliance is essential to the effective management of parking in the borough and is encouraged by enforcement. However, PCNs are only issued once illegal parking has taken place and potential safety and congestion issues have already arisen. It would be much more desirable to prevent the illegal parking from occurring in the first place. Effective communication and good customer service can help to achieve this by raising awareness of the legal parking opportunities within the area, how to use these properly and the consequences of parking illegally. This will not prevent all parking infringements from occurring but will help to reduce them to the minimum with resulting benefits for all highway users. It will also help reduce tensions between parking users and the Council as the number of PCNs issued is likely to fall further.

2.45   Methods of communication include clear and legible signage, leaflets, the web and advice on the ground by Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs). Excellent customer care allied with effective communication will help build a relationship with users based on understanding and trust.

2.46   As well as improved compliance, effective communication can increase understanding of:

• why the Council's parking service is carried out as it is;

• the challenges it faces in balancing competing demands;

• any operational changes which are planned to occur and why;

• the rules parking operates under (what the Council can and cannot do);

• how much parking income is generated, why and how it is spent; and

• what the key measures of parking success are, how they are measured and how the Council is doing, both over time and compared to others.

2.47   By making sure these issues are clearly explained in an easily accessible way and in an understanding and helpful manner, the Council can more effectively put the case for parking, increasing its relevance to people, and securing, if not outright support for the function, then at least a greater acceptance of its necessity.

2.48   Nowhere is this more important than in respect of parking enforcement which must not only be proportionate, scrupulously fair and consistent, but also be seen to be so. This is complicated by the fact that consistency can be interpreted at times as inflexibility. The enforcement system is designed to be able to deal with special or exceptional circumstances and PCNs are waived on a regular basis when justified. However this flexibility cannot be exercised at the time of the offence by the CEO as it could too easily lead to unfair and inconsistent outcomes. The flexibility is applied where appropriate as part of the back office function, removed from the heat of the moment and with all the facts set out. This means that flexibility when it occurs is delayed and less obvious. The 'damage' is often already done and people's perceptions already set. Effective communication of how and why the process works as it does allied with a good customer service ethos will help to break through these negative perceptions.

2.49   PCNs sometimes result because mistakes are made when they are issued. This is enormously damaging to the reputation of the Council and the need to minimise these occurrences is essential. Effective communication and customer service can help deal with correcting errors. However, it is far better that mistakes are prevented in the first place and the training of CEOs together with tough targets and penalties for the enforcement contractor will ensure better performance.

2.50   In terms of communication generally, Bexley does provide large amounts of information on parking through its website and the publication of an annual Parking Services Performance Report. Changes to parking operations are advertised and consulted upon in accordance with statutory requirements and warning notices rather than PCNs issued for a temporary period following changes in waiting restrictions. Training with regard to communications and customer service is undertaken and periodically refreshed.

2.51   In terms of enforcement, the number of PCNs issued in the borough is one of the lowest in London and successful appeal rates are very low, indicating that compliance and the accuracy of PCNs are already high. The Council's enforcement contractor is also subject to a number of performance indicators to ensure, for example, that PCN error rates are kept low.

2.52   However, public consultation responses did indicate a general concern with regard to the operation of the parking service and a desire for change despite the Council comparing well against other authorities in relation to a range of performance indicators. There was also a lack of support for recent operational changes such as Phone and Pay, despite the significant advantages of such an innovation. A range of comments were similarly received around the way enforcement is undertaken, particularly with regard to the issues of fairness, consistency and flexibility.

2.53   It is clear that the Council needs to do better at explaining parking issues and changes as well as publicising its successes. It will ensure that high levels of customer service are maintained and the good levels of parking compliance achieved continue.

Parking Policy 5

The Council will seek to maintain high levels of customer service and communicate effectively with the public regarding the parking function to maximise understanding, compliance and support by:

*   developing and implementing a communications plan for parking

*   continuing to identify opportunities to improve customer service through improved systems and staff training

*   ensuring relevant information on the operation and performance of parking is made available in a clear and accessible way

*   ensuring that appropriate performance indicators, standards and penalties are in place to encourage continued improvement.

Action Plan

2.54   To deliver the strategic aim of parking, its associated objectives and policies, a parking Action Plan has been developed. It incorporates a range of proposed projects, initiatives or operational changes which the Council will seek to implement over the next three years.

Parking Strategy Action Plan

Short Term = Within three months of finalisation of strategy and action plan
Medium Term = Within 12 months of finalisation of strategy and action plan
Long Term = Over 12 months after implementation of strategy and action plan

Action	Description	Support of Objectives					Priority	Timescales for delivery
		1	2	3	4	5		
Managing the Council's Parking Facilities								
Continued ownership and operation of Council car parks	The Council will continue to own and operate car parks within the borough	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	High	Short term and ongoing
Ensuring a sufficient level of safe and good quality parking into the future	As resources allow, the Council will periodically monitor the use and nature of its parking facilities and ensure an appropriate level of safe and good quality parking capacity to meet current and future need	✓		✓	✓		High	Medium/long term
Realising development opportunities whilst retaining parking supply	On car park sites where development offers broad benefits to the area, the Council will consider appropriate development subject to the retention of an adequate level of public parking	✓		✓	✓		High	Medium term
Parking Products and Prices								
Ending of the general parking price freeze	The Council will end the current parking price freeze and look to amend prices in line with inflation and to reflect other market conditions	✓		✓	✓		High	Short term
Universal Season Tickets	The Council will create a season ticket which would be valid in all of its car parks to increase customer choice and flexibility	✓			✓		Medium	Medium term
Resident and Visitor Permit prices	The Council will maintain the price of resident and visitor permits at their current level for a further 3 years	✓	✓	✓	✓		High	Short term
Business Permits prices	The Council will maintain the price of business permits at their current level for a further 3 years	✓	✓	✓	✓		High	Short term
Local Business Season Ticket prices	The Council will maintain the price of season tickets for local businesses at their current level for a further 3 years	✓	✓	✓	✓		High	Medium Term

Action	Description	Support of Objectives					Priority	Timescales for delivery
		1	2	3	4	5		
Half hour tariff in all parking facilities	The Council will introduce a half hour tariff in all locations to enable users to pay for a shorter time period if they wish	P	P	P	P		High	Short term
Price capped dispensation for local businesses	The Council will move its parking restrictions dispensation service for local businesses online and will cap its price	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	High	Medium term
Parking Supply								
Increased use of multi-use bays	The Council will look to introduce multi-use bays as part of on street parking schemes wherever possible to ensure an expanded and flexible supply of parking	✓	✓	✓	✓		Medium	Short term
Increased supply of short stay parking in car parks	The Council will look to increase the supply of short stay parking within relevant car parks through the use of appropriate restrictions and other arrangements eg. the moving of season ticket holders away from busy town centre car parks to less busy and less central locations	✓	✓	✓	✓		Medium	Medium term
The release of excess capacity in car parks	The Council will identify spare car park capacity that is unlikely to be required in future, with a view to identifying more efficient uses of the land	✓	✓	✓	✓		Medium	Medium/long term
Other Forms of Parking								
Policy support for pop-up, charity or occasional car parks	The Council will actively encourage public car parking provision within private car parks at times of parking stress in the local area, subject to there being no adverse impact on highway safety or amenity and will provide advice on their operation	✓		✓			Medium	Medium term
Review of parking standards in new developments	In reviewing parking standards for new development within its planning documents, the Council will, as much as possible, seek to reflect Bexley's local circumstances in order to ensure an appropriate approach is taken	✓		✓			Medium	Long term

Action	Description	Support of Objectives					Priority	Timescales for delivery
		1	2	3	4	5		
Policy support for the provision of on-site school parking facilities wherever possible	In reviewing planning policies of relevance to education development proposals, the Council will seek to secure, wherever possible, the provision of off-street parking facilities in the area for staff and parents, including dropping off facilities, to ensure parking stress around schools is minimised	✓	✓	✓			High	Long term
Review of policies on management of private parking facilities	In reviewing its planning policies, the Council will seek to control key aspects of privately run public parking facilities in new development, through planning conditions and legal agreements so as to ensure it is operated in the best interests of the area as a whole	✓	✓	✓			Medium	Long term
Communication and Customer Service								
Development and implementation of a parking communications plan	The Council will develop and implement a detailed communications plan for parking within the borough to ensure effective communication with the public and maximise understanding, compliance and support	✓			✓	✓	High	Short term
Improved access to parking information	The Council will ensure that it provides as much information as possible about its approach to parking within relevant publications	✓			✓	✓	High	Part implemented/ongoing
Maintenance of appropriate performance indicators	The Council will ensure that it continues to identify and monitor appropriate performance indicators around the delivery of the parking service	✓		✓	✓	✓	High	Ongoing
Enhanced customer service through improved staff training	The Council will continue to actively identify and implement opportunities for staff training in key areas	✓			✓	✓	High	Ongoing

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