
Thanet District Parking Policy

To: **Extraordinary Cabinet – 19 February 2015**

Main Portfolio Area: **Operational Services**

By: **Director of Operational Services**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: All wards

Summary: **That the Thanet District Council's Parking Policy outlining a strategic framework to support the management of safe parking and supporting economic regeneration is adopted by Cabinet.**

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Thanet District Council applied to the Secretary of State in 1999, for permission to carry out activities and use powers prescribed under the Road Traffic Act 1991. The Act allowed local authorities to carry out enforcement activity rather than police and regulate their own parking orders.
- 1.2 Further regulation followed and in 2004, The Traffic Management Act 2004 provided a legal framework for local authorities to operate under, in particular parts 6 and 7. Parking Attendants were renamed Civil Enforcement Officers, and were given the authorisation to use wider powers and guidance as to their conduct.
- 1.3 The Traffic Management Act 2004 also prescribes how a local authority should manage its parking service, including management of parking regulations, production of an annual report and differential penalty charges for certain offences.
- 1.4 Parking is an issue of significant concern for local residents. In a survey carried out in 2010, residents told the police that parking issues are 2nd most concerning issue in Thanet after anti-social behaviour.
- 1.5 Nearly 30% of Thanet households do not own a car, which is one of the highest rates in Kent. However, over 430,000 domestic tourist trips take place each year, with 16% of all tourist expenditure being spent on transport, including parking.
- 1.6 A parking consultation was held during the summer of 2013. When asked for their top priority when choosing where to park, the top three responses were that 51% thought that the current charges are reasonable, 35% wanted to park close to where they are going and 26% find it hard to locate a parking space. When asked what the council should focus on the top priority was the free flow of traffic, and 68% of people said that the surplus income raised from parking should be used to improve the service provided.

2.0 Aims of the Parking Policy

- 2.1 The draft Parking Policy aims to introduce an annual process of analysis and review setting priorities for the following year.

2.2 To make sure that parking management and the setting of fees and charges is fair and that they are related to supply and demand, encouraging use of parking spaces and incentivising people to come into town centres, and in addition:

- Support the economic viability of town centres and regeneration initiatives that form part of this.
- Provide a clear policy for enforcement which will allow the council to deal with parking issues fairly and consistently, ensuring an efficient and effective enforcement function.
- Seek to ensure that the provision, location and safety of public car parks are of a good quality.
- Provide a consistent and clear approach for different types of parking permits.
- Seek to ensure a clear approach towards parking for disabled persons including dealing with fraud of the blue badge scheme.
- Consider parking's contribution to environmental agendas.
- Ensure that the parking policy is consistent with the council's corporate plan and other key agendas.
- Ensure that the council meets its statutory obligations

3.0 Key Policy Issues

3.1 To help set a pricing structure on-street that will increase the turnover of spaces and tackle congestion by encouraging motorists to park off-street.

3.2 To help set off-street parking charges taking into consideration usage, with a range of fees and charges reflecting supply and demand across the district.

3.3 To ensure that a fair and consistent approach is used when enforcing parking restrictions and that it is timely and effective with regards to persistent and repeat complaints of parking issues.

3.4 Introduce any additional parking restrictions if they are necessary on the grounds of safety to residents and visitors, annually, and seek to ensure that the council's overall Traffic Regulation Order is regulated.

3.5 To look at ways in which coach parking facilities could be improved across the district with existing sites and new locations.

3.6 To assess alternative ways of using off street car parks to increase income.

3.7 To look at ways of improving the signage to car parks and informing drivers of alternative car parks.

3.8 Explore further digital solutions that could be used to make the service more cost effective and efficient.

3.9 Look at alternative means to increase shopping visits to the all of the towns.

4.0 Implementation of Policy

- 4.1 To amend the fees and charges through full council, and when agreed, advertise and amend both the on and off-street parking places orders accordingly within the legislation.
- 4.2 To review any existing or additional parking restrictions or schemes and place them before the Joint Transportation Board, including full consultation as set out in Section 1 of the Road Traffic Act 1984, and then to implement within the criteria set out by that Act.
- 4.3 To ensure that a fairer, consistent and more transparent approach is taken with all enforcement as set out by Part 6 of The Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 4.4 Use new technology wherever possible and seek out new solutions to improve the parking service.
- 4.5 To explore alternative methods that could be used to help increase the number of shoppers to support town centre regeneration.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 On-street parking and waiting restrictions are funded, managed and enforced by Thanet District Council using the decriminalisation budget.
- 5.1.2 Off-street parking is funded by Thanet District Council and any changes to the Parking Order or restrictions would have to be met within the parking budgets or by the council.

5.2 Legal

- 5.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the draft Parking Policy, although the operation of parking orders and their enforcements operates within a highly regulated framework, both within acts of parliament and operational requirements.

5.3 Corporate

- 5.3.1 The Parking Policy provides the framework for effective parking management, which primarily supports the council's strategic objectives as outlined in the corporate plan.
- 5.3.2 The Parking Policy was considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 13th January. As a result the attached draft has been amended to reflect members' comments on enforcement resources and residential parking of coaches. The issue of formal coach parking provision was raised by several Panel members, and is included as a specific action under 12.2 of the Policy. Further work needs to be done in this area to rationalise demand and maximise the use of the existing provision, together with identifying additional sites.

5.4 Equity and Equalities

- 5.4.1 Parking orders and provision take into account the needs of disabled drivers, and this is reflected in the Parking Policy

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Thanet District Council Parking Policy 2015-2020 attached to the report is agreed by Cabinet.

Contact Officer:	Robin Chantrill-Smith, Civil Enforcement Manager x7472
Reporting to:	Gavin Waite, Head of Operational Services x7840

Annex List

Annex 1	Parking Policy
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Corporate Consultation Undertaken

Finance	Matthew Sanham, Finance Manager
Legal	Stephen Boyle, Interim Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer