The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031

Living and Sustainable Streets for Stevenage

1 Foreword

When I attended The Barclay School back in the 1960s, my father used to park his Triumph Herald outside our house in Green Street. We were a "one-car" family in those days. The railway station was a ten minute walk away in Julians Road and the small station car park which could accommodate 50 cars was located opposite the old ESA furniture factory in Fairview Road.

I reminisce about those days with great affection. The population of Stevenage was about 60,000 and the pace of life seemed much slower and less frenetic.

Fifty-five years later and the population of Stevenage has increased by almost half. The current railway station has car parking capacity for over 450 vehicles, whilst within a five minute walk from the station another ten car parks can hold an incredible 2,850 vehicles. Bumper to bumper, that's the equivalent of almost four football pitches of car parking – all within the confines of the Stevenage town centre.

However, car parking is a serious, emotive issue.

7.6 million homes in the UK have at least two cars. In the East of England (including Stevenage), the average is 1.38 cars for every household.

The New Towns Act of 1946 failed to anticipate the rise of private car popularity. Consequently, when the Stevenage Development Corporation built our town, it neglected to reflect the extent of present-day car ownership and how or where people prefer to park their car (i.e. within sight and easy reach of their front door).

As a Co-operative Council, Stevenage strongly believes that communities must be at the heart of the decisions we make. We want to hear from our residents how they feel parking problems and street management could change to better meet their needs. How do our residents feel about neighbourhood parking spaces or controlled parking zones? Are they worried about where to leave their works van, or because their neighbour's van takes up a lot of space? Do parked cars affect their morning walk, or their decision on whether to cycle to the local shops?

This Strategy, and the actions that it sets out, seeks to empower and inspire communities to make behavioural changes and to lead the implementation of projects in their neighbourhoods, that will encourage them to make better use of our streets – our living streets.

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Executive Member, Economy, Enterprise & Transport

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2 Introduction

Stevenage was largely built during a period when planners predicted that in future there would be "a great flood of vehicles"[1] and sought to prepare accordingly with an efficient and capacious road network. However, only limited parking was provided for in residential areas and modern levels of car ownership and use put great pressure on the town's streets.

Since 2004, when it applied for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers, Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) has had a Parking Strategy to guide how those powers are used, but in that time its capabilities have changed. Although SBC no longer has the range of highway powers devolved from Hertfordshire County under its Highways Agency Agreement it did in 2004, it retains limited powers to undertake highway improvements such as parking bay construction. These powers are likely to be extended in the future to enable SBC to help provide for new technologies such as Electric Vehicles (EVs) to support their wider adoption.

Following the previous Parking Strategy's adoption a rolling series of reviews was undertaken looking at different parts of the town and introducing parking restrictions to address hazardous or obstructive parking, and to prevent parking on the verge or footway. These were very large projects and could take years to complete, with the last of them not yet complete when work was begun on this new strategy. This final review is being undertaken in a more piecemeal fashion, to allow more rapid results where concerns are greatest.

The town is also actively regenerating and growing. As well as redevelopment of the New Town Centre, local centres are being renewed, and new housing developments are coming forward as proposed in the *Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031.*

In this context, SBC's transport strategy, *Future Town, Future Transport* identified the need for a new Parking Strategy to be prepared.

This Parking Strategy must address how parking is managed to support local residents, businesses and employers, whilst also considering the need to transition away from private petrol or diesel fuelled vehicles to more sustainable modes.

Parking is a derived demand resulting from vehicle travel, which is in turn a derived demand arising from spatially separated activities. Management of parking must therefore consider what alternative ways of travelling are available.

The existing transport system strongly favours motor vehicles, which thanks to their convenience are the mode of choice for a great many people. Cars, vans and taxis accounted for 83% of passenger kilometres in 2018. However, reducing reliance on motor vehicles is seen as desirable, as transport contributes more to national greenhouse gas emissions than any other sector with 55% of this coming from cars and a further 15% from vans. Making different transport choices can also have a significant impact on an individual's health and wellbeing.

At the same time, Stevenage is growing, with its population passing 88,000 in 2017 compared to 76,000 at the time of the 2004 Strategy. Simultaneously the typical number of cars per household in the East of England had risen, going from 1.30 per household in 2011/12 to 1.38 by 2016/17, or about 1% a year. With neither the financial resources nor the physical space available to build significant additional

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[1] Crowther et al., 1963, p.2

parking, encouraging a modal shift away from the car becomes not only a desirable objective but a practical necessity.

This strategy will therefore also include parking-related options to help individuals to choose appropriately from a variety of modes of transport rather than defaulting to the car, which will then have to be parked, whilst recognising that for some journeys it will be the most appropriate choice.

By doing so it will help to develop streets that are comfortable and social spaces where people feel at home and communities come together. This is concept commonly known as "Liveable Streets" but which SBC calls "Living Streets" reflecting the aspiration for streets to be not just liveable but positively alive.

3 Policy context

3.1 National Policies

National policy directions and concerns affecting parking have been considered in preparing this Strategy, in particular those summarised below.

3.1.1 The Department for Transport

The Department for Transport (DfT) is primarily responsible for setting national transport policy, which includes parking, and sees its objectives as being to: "

1. support the creation of a stronger, cleaner, more productive economy
2. help to connect people and places, balancing investment across the country
3. make journeys easier, modern and reliable
4. make sure transport is safe, secure and sustainable
5. prepare the transport system for technological progress and a prosperous future outside the EU
6. promote a culture of efficiency and productivity in everything we do"[2]

The national policy document dealing directly with on-street parking issued by DfT is *The Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions* ("The Statutory Guidance"). This does not guide Councils as to what their policies should be, but makes it clear that Councils that are Parking Authorities are required to "design their parking policies with particular regard to:

- managing the traffic network to ensure expeditious movement of traffic, (including pedestrians and cyclists), as required under the Traffic Management Act 2004 Network Management Duty;
- improving road safety;
- improving the local environment;
- improving the quality and accessibility of public transport;
- meeting the needs of people with disabilities, some of whom will be unable to use public transport and depend entirely on the use of a car; and
- managing and reconciling the competing demands for kerb space"[3]

and cautions that they "should not undermine the vitality of town centres"[4] or seek to achieve financial targets.

The Road to Zero sets out DfT's ambition of at least 50% of new cars and 40% of new vans being ultra low emission by 2030, while the government has announced an aim of ending the sale of conventional cars by 2035. This transition may create significant demand for EV charging facilities on-street or in public car parks that would have to be managed through controls on parking, particularly in areas where residents have little or no private parking.

Whilst The Statutory Guidance does not suggest what approaches Councils should take in managing parking, DfT's stated policy positions firmly support measures to encourage other modes.

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[2] DfT, 2019 (A)
[3] DfT, 2016, p.7
[4] Ibid.

The *Cycling and walking investment strategy* states an objective of doubling cycling by 2025, and also increasing walking. It emphasises the health benefits of active travel and recognises that parking can have an effect on individuals' choice of transport mode. This was also identified by the House of Commons Transport Committee in *Active travel: increasing levels of walking and cycling in England.* Factors influencing the decision to drive, walk or cycle may include not only the availability of parking for motor vehicles, but the presence of inconsiderate motor vehicle parking and the availability and suitability of cycle parking.

3.1.2 Other Government Departments

As well as following the direction set by DfT, parking policy should also support wider national policy objectives. In recent years successive governments have made strong commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including a requirement of the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce emissions to 50% of 1990 levels by 2025, the declaration of a Climate Emergency in June 2019, and a commitment to zero net emissions by 2050 in the Queens Speech of December 2019. Given the vehicle emissions noted in the introduction above, parking management clearly has a role to play in achieving this.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has an interest in the management of parking by Councils as the government body responsible for overseeing local government, and issues the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) which sets out planning policies for England and how these should be applied. This states that "Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:… the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and … patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places."[5]. These impacts of transport and parking are evidently as significant in existing streets as in new developments.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has also been concerned to ensure that parking policies support the local economy, commissioning *The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our highstreets*. This suggested that unrestrained parking can negatively impact local businesses, and that parking needs to be managed in order for them to thrive.

Health is another key governmental concern, and is affected by transport emissions as highlighted in the *Clean Air Strategy* produced by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). At the same time Public Health England has set out in *Everybody Active, Every Day* that "one in two women and a third of all men in England are damaging their health through a lack of physical activity. It is an unsustainable situation, and one that is costing an estimated £7.4 billion a year. If current trends continue, the burden of health and social care will destabilise public services, and take a real toll on quality of life for individuals and communities"[6]. This inactivity is attributed in part to "Over-reliance on cars and other motorised

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[5] Ibid., p.30
[6] PHE, 2014, p.4

transcript… Traffic, not pedestrians, dominates most public spaces"[7], underlining the need for this strategy to support and encourage active travel.

3.2 Local Policies

Local policies and concerns relevant to this strategy originate both from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), in its role as the local Highway Authority and Traffic Authority, and from within Stevenage Borough Council. These have been considered in preparing this Strategy, in particular those summarised below.

3.2.1 Hertfordshire County Council

HCC's fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) covering 2018-2031 highlights the scale of population growth expected throughout the county, and considers that the "response to growth cannot be to just build more roads and encourage more and more car use… A combination of policies and improvements will be required to tip the balance in favour of non-car modes, and it will be to everyone's benefit that by 2031 we have evolved our transport system to be less dependent on the car."[8]

As part of this, LTP4 highlights the need to "constrain car use through parking charges and supply"[9] and that "Other areas have successfully encouraged higher levels of walking, cycling and passenger transport use by restrictive car parking policies... Local evidence exists from analysis conducted… on the difficulties of achieving travel behaviour change in the absence of car parking constraints."[10]

Specific policies in LTP4 are also relevant to this Strategy and will inform its approaches.

Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy (TUH) sets out in what order the needs of different modes should be considered and employed in considering the Network Management Duty. It forms the basis of the Parking User Hierarchy (PUH) that is to be used in preparing any new on-street parking management proposals.

Policy 2: Influencing land use planning and Policy 3: Travel Plans and Behaviour Change have the potential to significantly contribute to parking management, and will be referred to and promoted to relevant stakeholders when appropriate.

Policy 4: Demand Management is of particular relevance, setting out that:

> The county council considers greater traffic demand management to be essential in the county's urban areas in the next five years to achieve modal shift and improve sustainable travel provision. This can only currently be achieved efficiently and effectively through parking restrictions and charging applied to on-street, off-street and potentially at workplace parking. The county council will work with the district and borough councils and other key stakeholders to develop locally appropriate strategies.[11]

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[7] Ibid, p.8
[8] HCC, 2018, p.4
[9] Ibid., p.7
[10] Ibid., p.29
[11] Ibid.

This emphasises the role of parking management in restraining demand to achieve the modal shift aspired to in both local and national policies, which must shape the Council's approaches going forward.

Policy 5: Development Management sets out principles around new developments, including levels of parking provision and allowing for EV charging, car clubs and autonomous vehicles, as factors affecting rates and types of car use. This strategy will seek to provide where possible for consistent approaches in existing streets to those in new developments in order to allow residents to be treated fairly and to benefit from similar opportunities.

Policy 6: Accessibility emphasises the need to ensure key destinations are easily accessible, particularly for disadvantage groups and by sustainable modes. This strategy will include approaches to support access to key destinations, both to facilitate access by sustainable modes and to ensure that those who are unable to choose such modes are able to park to access services.

Policy 7 Active Travel – Walking, and Policy 8: Active Travel: Cycling call for measures to specifically support those modes. At times parking is likely to be relevant to this, whether by physically obstructing them or by creating a more hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Approaches in this strategy will seek to address these impacts to support active and sustainable travel. Policy 8 also calls for provision of secure cycle parking, which SBC will pursue within this strategy.

The *North Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan* (not yet adopted) does not engage directly with parking, but does again emphasise that in future although "targeted improvements to some roads will continue to be required, this approach is no longer sustainable as it can have long lasting, negative impacts on the environment and local communities. Instead, there needs to be a focus towards making journeys by sustainable modes of travel like walking, cycling and public transport, easier and more attractive to people."[12]

3.2.2 Stevenage Borough Council

Stevenage's transport strategy, *Future Town, Future Transport* (*FT,FT)* was adopted in 2019 and sets out "SBC's approach to delivering sustainable transport and better living conditions locally"[13]. As part of this *FT,FT* identified the need for a new parking strategy to be prepared.

FT,FT identifies four key themes, all of which are relevant to this strategy:

- Connectivity – loss or management of parking may be needed to improve connections for non-car modes;
- Living Streets – reducing car-domination of the streetscape often forms part of "approaches that enhance… street[s] as places to live"[14] and loss or management of parking may be needed to "[r]eallocate road space to promote multi-modal transportation uses"[15].
- Active and Healthy Travel – parking can form an important part of the attractiveness of the car as a convenient mode of transport, and changes to

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[12] HCC, 2019, p.3
[13] SBC, 2019 (A), p.2
[14] Ibid., p.2
[15] Ibid.

car parking may be needed to encourage travel by active modes, together with other measures such as provision of cycle parking.

- Green Travel – supporting and increasing the use of EVs may require interventions by SBC to provide for them, for instance by installing EV charge points.

FT,FT specifies that this new Parking Strategy will "promote demand management and the reduction of parking in residential streets"[16] and notes that "increase in car use in Stevenage has led to a reduction in use of the pedestrian and cycle network, and an increase in parking problems on residential streets… When the new town was developed, in some areas it was envisaged residents would be happy to park their cars to the rear of their properties or in garage courts, but, ease of access and visibility benefits, means that parking in front of homes is the preferred choice. This has resulted in congestion on local streets and an uninviting environment for residents."[17] *FT,FT* also notes that "There is, at present, a lack of good quality and secure cycle parking in the town centre. Additionally, there are not always secure cycle parking spaces in people's homes and places of work. Without these facilities there is a fear that bikes will be damaged or stolen when parked, and this discourages cycle journeys."[18] In looking more widely than at motor vehicle parking only, this new parking strategy will seek to æmeliorate this situation as it is seen that "Smaller scale improvements such as… increasing and securing cycle parking, and promotional campaigns can be sufficient to have a real effect on the use of the network."[19] The *Stevenage Cycle Strategy* also notes the importance of cycle parking to enabling cycling.

Although seeking to promote other modes *FT,FT* recognises that "for particular trips the private vehicle will continue to be the most logical mode"[20] while suggesting that novel approaches such as car clubs, and new technologies, may change car ownership and parking expectations in future. This strategy will seek to provide for such future developments. One such development is increasing interest in and demand for EVs and the need for supporting infrastructure, and as anticipated by *FT,FT* the parking strategy will seek to support this.

These changes would support the SBC's efforts to reduce carbon and other emissions across the town in line with the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency at its extraordinary meeting on 12 June 2019.

During the preparation of this Strategy, the process of adopting the Parking Standards SPD also allowed councillors to raise comments and concerns about on-street parking management. These included:

- From the Executive Committee:
  - Ensuring external funding is sought where possible, for instance to support the installation of EV charge points; and
  - Ensuring appropriate management of parking places for disabled car users.
- From the Scrutiny Committee:

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[16] Ibid., p.5
[17] Ibid. p.9
[18] Ibid., p.20
[19] Ibid., p.20
[20] Ibid., p.24

- o The need for on-street parking to be effectively controlled/managed in new developments for the Parking Standards SPD to be meaningful, ideally prior to first occupation;
- o The need to coordinate the provision of disabled parking and EV charging infrastructure;
- o Suggesting the possibility of varying parking charges for different vehicle types;
- o Suggesting that commercial vehicle parking in residential areas should be prevented;
- o The need to ensure that any surplus parking income contributes to measures to promote modal shift; and
- o Noting that parking constraint is key to encouraging modal shift, and that parking control is vital to addressing climate change.

3.3 Covid-19 Recovery

This strategy was largely drafted during the first half of 2020, under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has underlined the need for changes to how we travel and for greater support for alternatives to the private car, but has at least in the short term made some of those alternatives less attractive. Public transport capacity fell dramatically to allow passengers to distance from one another, whist car clubs are reported to have suffered a huge decline in demand.

This has led to much greater recognition of the role walking and cycling can play as modes of transport, and to reduce obesity and inactivity offering significant health benefits.

The *Grimsey Review: Build Back Better Covid-19 Supplement for town centres* calls for a recognition "that towns and cities must no longer be designed around the car"[21] and for making "the 20-minute neighbourhood a central principle… to encourage people to travel less, buy locally and be able to get all the services they need within a short walk"[22].

Steps in this direction have been made rapidly in recent months, reflecting in practice what has been known in theory for many years. Millions of pounds have been offered in government funding to support local authorities in improving walking and cycling infrastructure, and HCC and SBC have actively partnered to apply for funding and make changes.

The DfT has issued long awaited new guidance on providing protected infrastructure for cycling (LTN1/20), and stated that government funding for schemes will be conditional upon their meeting these high standards that will make cycling a real option for a much wider variety of people. DfT is also consulting on updates to the Highway Code giving more protection to pedestrians and cyclists and placing duties on road users based on the risk they pose to others.

Stevenage's existing network of cycleways and footpaths already provide better facilities than are found in most towns. However, levels of walking and cycling are no

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[21] Grimsey et al. (2020) p.8
[22] Ibid.

higher than the national average. This may be attributed to the deterrent effect of parking-dominated residential streets in the town, and the mentality fostered by an historic car-centred approach to transport nationally. Yet according to a Yougov poll, 81.2% of those they surveyed in the UK agreed that action should be taken "to curb air pollution by reserving more public space for walking, cycling and public transport"[23].

This strategy's aims and approaches are aligned with the emerging policy directions to deal with the fallout from Covid-19 and support the development of the less car-dependent new normal that most of the public want.

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[23] Posaner et al. (2020)

4 Objectives

Having considered the relevant existing policy positions and known concerns, four broad objectives have been determined for managing parking in Stevenage.

These are:

- To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking;
- To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift;
- To manage necessary or desirable parking; and
- To support the town's Zero Carbon ambitions.

In setting these objectives SBC seeks to combine traditional approaches to parking with recognition that modern parking management is about more than where cars are stored. Parking affects everyone who uses a street, not only drivers. Poor parking management can mean pedestrians are prevented from walking safely along the street where they live, that public green space is spoiled, or that ordinary people don't feel safe to cycle to their local shops.

As a Council, SBC wants to create Living Streets that don't only support car parking and movement but provide "places that our community can enjoy and be proud of"[24] and at the same time "[r]educe the carbon footprint of Stevenage's travel movement and improve air quality"[25]. This Strategy through its objectives and the approaches to pursuing them, particularly the adoption of a Parking User Hierarchy to help prioritise different modes of transport and reasons for parking (see section 5.2 below), will shape how parking management helps to achieve those aims.

4.1 To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking

It is an essential part of the Traffic Management Act 2004 Network Management Duty that due regard is had to both improving safety and securing the expeditious flow of traffic. Where parking is unambiguously unsafe or obstructive, SBC may have no choice but to act on this duty and put controls in place to prevent parking.

This does not mean that SBC will always seek to remove parking that creates a perception of danger or delay for drivers.

Sometimes it will be appropriate to allow apparently "hazardous" or "obstructive" parking to continue. The perception of danger may improve safety through increased caution more effectively than would be achieved by removing the parked vehicle, whilst mild "obstruction" caused by parked cars helps to moderate traffic speeds and can improve safety overall.

It must also be understood that "traffic" means not only motor vehicles but people travelling by any mode of transport. So for example while a motorist might favour being allowed to park on a footway, and even request the creation of parking spaces partially or entirely on the footway, as this would secure the flow of traffic for motor vehicles on the carriageway, it would have the opposite effect for pedestrian traffic

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[24] SBC, 2019 (A), p.2
[25] Ibid., p.3

as well as placing pedestrians at risk as cars were driven onto the footway or if they were forced to walk in the carriageway. It is therefore unlikely that this is something that SBC would take forward.

4.2 To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift

It is a clear expectation of this strategy's parent policies that we must restrain the supply of parking to improve the quality of the public environment, support the shift to other modes of transport and discourage further growth in car use.

This may be achieved through active measures such as placing time limits or charges on parking, or passively by declining to build additional parking in areas where there is a desire or perceived need for more to be provided.

This is not to say that SBC's approach will be "anti-parking" or "anti-car", but that the need for and appropriateness of parking, and the benefits and costs of alternatives, will be considered when managing and reconciling the competing demands for kerbside space whether through parking controls or when considering parking bay construction requests or other measures.

4.3 To manage necessary or desirable parking

Recognising that there are trips for which the car will continue to be the most logical mode, SBC will seek to effectively manage necessary or desirable parking.

For some individuals with physical disabilities there may be no viable choice other than using a car, and SBC will endeavour to ensure suitable parking is provided to ensure that they can access destinations, services and their homes.

Customers or workers travelling by car can be vital to many local businesses and residents unable to commute by other modes may depend on being able to park a car at home.

A Parking User Hierarchy will be adopted as part of this strategy to help prioritise the use of kerbside space for parking where there is a genuine need for it, depending on both user and vehicle type. Alongside this the viability of alternative modes will be promoted to reduce this need in future.

4.4 To support the town's Zero Carbon ambitions

Innovations such as new fuels and autonomous vehicles, and new forms of mobility such as electric scooters, have the potential to change the face of transport during the period of this strategy. Achieving modal shift to healthier modes of transport and away from the private motor car is expected to go hand in hand with changes to the highway network to prioritise other modes rather than being centred on the car.

SBC's approach to parking management will support this, as reducing car dependency has an important role to play not only in public health but in combatting climate change. Controls on parking will form a helpful part of SBC's response to

climate change, together with parking provision for more sustainable modes of transport.

Although what will be needed is not predictable with certainty, and there are likely to be legislative changes, SBC will seek to take a dynamic stance and to update its approaches, controls and practices to place itself at the cutting edge of new developments so as to continue to manage parking effectively and to achieve its other objectives.

5 Approaches

5.1 Planned programme of projects

Requests for changes to parking arrangements are received by SBC daily, but making changes is subject to a lengthy and onerous process whether making a new Traffic Order subject to extensive consultations and approvals or building more parking spaces subject to planning consents and safety audits. At the same time only limited resources are available to carry out the necessary work.

In order that work can be carried out effectively, there will be a planned Programme of parking projects. These will vary in scale, and the general makeup of the Programme will depend on the nature and scale of projects undertaken. The Programme will seek to strike a balance between helping residents, businesses, and others, and to give all parts of the town fair opportunity in having their problems or concerns addressed. Projects included may be the result of requests from the public or from stakeholders, or on SBC's initiative.

The content of the Programme will be set before the start of the financial year by officers subject to the approval of the Portfolio Holder, who shall also approve any updates, alterations or additions in the course of the year. Guidance as to likely inclusions, possible strands of work and the achievable scale of the Programme can be found in Appendix I.

Records of requests from the public and from stakeholders will be kept, so that they can be considered for inclusion in the programme when resources allow.

5.2 Transport and Parking User Hierarchies

LTP4 sets out the hierarchy of road users as follows:

> ### Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy
>
> *To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:*
>
> - *Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel*
> - *Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)*
> - *Passenger transport user needs*
> - *Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs*
> - *Other motor vehicle user needs*[26]

In considering how to prioritise space for parking SBC will have regard to this hierarchy, giving due consideration to different types of "other motor vehicle user" and that how space should be prioritised will vary depending on its setting. To assist with this consideration, a more detailed Parking User Hierarchy (PUH) will be employed when considering those other motor vehicle user needs as set out in Table 1 below. This follows on from LTP4's TUH and in the PUH, as in LTP4, the wants and needs of other users will be considered before those of motorists.

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[26] HCC, 2018, p.45

The PUH recognises the need to consider different settings, and provides for three broad types of location: residential areas, "short stay" destinations such as local shops and "long stay" destinations such as employment areas. It is recognised that some locations will not fall neatly into one category, and in those cases a balance must be struck considering the makeup of the area to support a mixture of uses.

Within the PUH greater priority is also given among motor vehicle users to parking for disabled car users, who may be unable to choose alternative modes of transport, and for less polluting vehicles such Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs).

Table 1: Parking User Hierarchy

Order of Conside-ration	LTP4 Policy 1	In residential areas	At short stay destinations (e.g. local shops)	At long stay destinations (e.g. employment areas)	Priority
1	Reduce the need to travel	Can parking demand be reduced?	Can demand be restricted using limited waiting and/or parking charges?	Workplace Parking Levy?	HIGH
2	Pedestrians	Do parked vehicles discourage walking or interfere with pedestrian facilities? Are pedestrians' needs adequately met? Continuous wide footways, dropped kerbs etc.	Do parked vehicles discourage walking or interfere with pedestrian facilities? Are pedestrians' needs adequately met? Continuous wide footways, dropped kerbs etc.	Do parked vehicles discourage walking or interfere with pedestrian facilities? Are pedestrians' needs adequately met? Continuous wide footways, dropped kerbs etc.	
3	Cyclists	Do parked vehicles discourage cycling or interfere with cycling facilities? Are cyclists' needs adequately met? Is communal secure cycle parking needed (e.g. Bikehangers or lockers)?	Do parked vehicles discourage cycling or interfere with cycling facilities? Are cyclists' needs adequately met? Is cycle parking needed (e.g. Sheffield stand cycle hoops)?	Do parked vehicles discourage cycling or interfere with cycling facilities? Are cyclists' needs adequately met? Sheffield stands provided? Is communal secure cycle parking needed (e.g. a bike shed)?	
4	Bus users	Can buses pass freely and stop at stops? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Can buses pass freely and stop at stops? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Can buses pass freely and stop at stops? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	
5	Motorcyclists	Is there good junction visibility? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Is there good junction visibility? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars? Has dedicated motorcycle parking been provided?	Is there good junction visibility? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars? Has dedicated motorcycle parking been provided?	MEDIUM
6a	Other Motor Vehicle (OMV): Cars	Is parking needed for disabled car users? Provision based on local demand.	Provision for disabled car users based on local demand and national guidance.	Provision for disabled car users based on local demand and national guidance.	

Table 1: Parking User Hierarchy					
Order of Conside-ration	**LTP4 Policy 1**	**In residential areas**	**At short stay destinations (e.g. local shops)**	**At long stay destinations (e.g. employment areas)**	**Priority**
6b	OMV: Cars	Is parking needed for ULEVs? Provision based on supporting local demand and transition.	Is parking needed for ULEVs? What ULEV provision would help businesses and the local community? Limited provision suited to short stay for EVs.	Is parking needed for ULEVs? Provision based on national proportion of registered ULEVs.	
6c	OMV: Cars	Is parking provision for residents substantially less than SPD levels? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Is there sufficient short stay parking for non-residents? (e.g. shoppers)	Is there sufficient long stay parking for non-residents? (e.g. workers)	
6d	OMV: Cars	Can parking for residents' visitors be accommodated?	Should long stay parking for non-residents be accommodated? (e.g. workers)	Should short stay parking for non-residents be accommodated?	
6e	OMV: Cars	Is there a need to provide for short stay parking for non-residents?	Is parking for residents needed?	Is parking for residents needed?	
6f	OMV: Cars	Is there a need to provide for long stay parking for non-residents?	Parking for residents' visitors is low priority	Parking for residents' visitors is low priority	
7	OMV: Light Commercial Vehicles	No special provision to be made	Loading provision only	Car Parks and loading only	
8	OMV: Coaches and Heavy Commercial Vehicles	Banned during night time and weekends	Loading provision only	Loading provision only; designated parking on Argyle Way.	LOW

5.3 Integration of on and off street parking management

Management of on-street parking will be coordinated with the management of off-street parking taking account of the availability of both. When considering the best use of on-street parking supply, off-street and private parking availability to relevant road users will be taken into consideration.

This will particularly be the case in town centre areas where it is anticipated that, given its convenience, on-street parking will be at a premium and lower-priority parking users should be encouraged to use off-street parking instead.

This approach has been broadly successful in the past, and it is expected that the relationship between on and off street parking management shall be developed more closely in future.

5.4 Measurement

Parking is an emotive subject for many people and it is easy to make purely qualitative judgements.

In order to manage parking SBC will seek to take measured approaches. The first stage in any project will be to investigate the problem or request, and seek to quantify the situation. This may mean conducting surveys of parking pressure or turnover, and/or of residents' and others' views on parking problems or solutions, in order to decide if changes should indeed be proposed and if so what.

Data-led approaches will also be used to monitor and improve ongoing parking management, including the effectiveness of parking enforcement and how parking charges shape demand for paid-for parking.

5.5 Consultation and engagement

Changes to parking are subject to legal processes, which will necessarily shape how SBC consults on changes to parking and managing parking. However, as a Co-operative Council, SBC will encourage feedback and contributions from the general public when investigating possible alterations as well as seeking comments once proposals have been prepared. This will help SBC to ensure that parking projects are completed openly and taking into account as many different needs and preferences as possible.

At the same time, it must be recognised that there are limitations on what is possible and practical. Fulfilling public desires will not always be achievable, whether due to legal or financial constraints, available resources or the physical space itself. SBC's management of parking will take into account the public's views but must balance this with these considerations and with local and national policy objectives.

When consultations are undertaken, this will normally be by direct written communication which allows everyone a fair and equal opportunity to respond and enables the measured consideration of their comments and any necessary investigations to be conducted. Key consultation documents will be posted on the Council's website and social media may be used to encourage people to view and comment on uploaded material. Public meetings, which disenfranchise those who are unable to attend, will not normally be held.

5.6 Publicity and soft approaches

Active management of on-street parking is largely limited to the creation and enforcement of formal controls on parking, such as placing yellow lines at a junction, or the physical creation of more parking spaces.

These are costly and onerous undertakings, and are not always the most appropriate response, while members of the public may see them as disproportionate or a poor use of resources.

At a national level, behaviour change in relation to seatbelt wearing and drink driving has been successfully promoted through publicity campaigns. SBC will consider similarly using publicity to deter inappropriate parking and encourage modal shift to avoid the need for parking.

SBC has had some success in deterring unsociable parking through informal/unenforceable painted markings such as "KEEP CLEAR", and will continue to use such measures where appropriate.

5.7 Budgets, fees and charges

In line with The Statutory Guidance SBC does not regard raising revenue as an objective of CPE, and while attempting to forecast revenue for the purpose of responsible financial management does not set any targets.

Pay-and-display parking fees are set to encourage turnover of parking, which improves parking availability. This benefits drivers looking for a space to park in and supports local businesses and services by facilitating access. It also encourages motorists to think about their decision to drive and consider using other modes of transport. The elasticity of parking demand in response to price changes will be monitored to help predict the effect of parking prices and enable them to be set at an effective level to achieve these traffic management purposes.

Charges for parking permits and visitor vouchers similarly encourage motorists to consider their decision to keep a car. Permit fees are set on a sliding scale imposing higher costs for parking permits where a household keeps multiple vehicles, reflecting the disproportionate amount of street space used by those households and serving to discourage excess vehicle ownership.

While many residents feel that they should be provided with parking permits for free and that they should not be charged to park in their street, the Council has to consider fairness to all residents. Where permit parking schemes exist or are introduced, if there were no charges for parking permits and visitor vouchers then the costs of operating the scheme would effectively fall on every resident in Stevenage regardless of whether they benefit from it or even own a car. It is considered fairer that the costs of excluding other drivers from parking should be borne by the motorists who benefit from this exclusion and gain the opportunity to park through charging for the permits or visitor vouchers they use. Requiring that parking permits and visitor vouchers are charged for also serves to restrain demand for "residents' only" permit parking controls in residential streets.

Permit/voucher fees are therefore set at a level that seems likely to allow permit parking to be self-funding. However, for the avoidance of doubt or confusion there is no target income level for permit fees.

Charges are also applied for supplying discretionary services relating to parking to private individuals, such as placing advisory "H-bar" Driveway Access Markings to diagram 1026.1 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) highlighting the presence of a dropped kerb, in accordance with SBC's powers under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Income from these sources and from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is first spent on parking management, including the costs of employing staff and maintaining parking facilities and the necessary signs and lines to allow enforcement. It is also spent on undertaking CPE which (contrary to popular misconception) does not cover its own costs and is not "profitable", and on undertaking the Programme of Parking Projects. Together the incomes and expenditures from managing on-street parking form the Special Parking Account (SPA). Should there be any surplus funds once these costs have been accounted for, this can only be spent in line with the requirements of Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).

This sets out that any surplus in the SPA can be used only to make good any deficit when the SPA made a loss during the preceding four years, meet the cost of providing or maintaining off-street parking; or:

> if it appears to the local authority that the provision in their area of further off-street parking accommodation is unnecessary or undesirable, the following purposes—
>
> (i) meeting costs incurred, whether by the local authority or by some other person, in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services,
>
> (ii) the purposes of a highway or road improvement project in the local authority's area,
>
> (iii) in the case of a London authority, meeting costs incurred by the authority in respect of the maintenance of roads maintained at the public expense by them,
>
> (iv) the purposes of environmental improvement in the local authority's area,
>
> (v) in the case of such local authorities as may be prescribed, any other purposes for which the authority may lawfully incur expenditure

Any surplus on the SPA will accordingly be used, once any recent deficit has been made good, to pay for:

- highway and environmental improvements to encourage modal shift and sustainable travel;
- supporting passenger transport services;
- maintaining off-street parking; and
- where the criteria set out in this strategy are met, providing off street parking.

It is intended that the everyday actions arising from this Strategy would be funded from existing budgets, a portion of which will be ring fenced for introducing measures to promote modal shift and sustainable transport. Larger individual projects or

service growth would be subject to ad-hoc capital funding bids or future requests to agree additional revenue expenditure. Such spending will be the priority for expenditure of any surplus on the SPA.

Where interventions require capital bids to be made, funding will be sought from external sources where the opportunity exists, including from the County Council, central Government, or other bodies, for example through the OLEV On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme to fund the installation of electric vehicle charging facilities.

5.8 Enforcement

Experience shows that, in the absence of effective enforcement measures, unfortunately a selfish minority of motorists will disregard both the law's general expectation that they will park safely and any specific controls such as yellow lines that have been introduced to guide them in doing so.

Since being granted the necessary powers in 2005, SBC has successfully delivered CPE to manage parking on the highway. While The Statutory Guidance states that "The objective of civil parking enforcement should be for 100 per cent compliance, with no penalty charges"[27] the reality is that growing vehicle numbers over time have necessitated more parking restrictions being introduced and required increasing enforcement leading to more PCNs being issued.

There have also been changes in the times at which enforcement is needed. Complaints about insufficient enforcement on Sundays and in the evenings have resulted in changes to patrol patterns to supply an effective service throughout the week. Throughout the period of this Strategy the numbers and timing of patrols will be kept under review to ensure they are appropriate. This could mean retiming or adding patrols as new parking controls are introduced or removing them as compliance improves and they are no longer needed.

The format of patrols will also be reviewed and improvements be sought over time to ensure that they are carried out where possible by the more sustainable modes of transport.

In enforcing parking restrictions, SBC will aim to even-handedly uphold the law while treating all motorists with fairness and respect. SBC will fairly and reasonably consider any challenges to PCNs where the motorist believes they should not be paid.

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[27] DfT, 2016, p.8

6 Specific issues

6.1 Parking for disabled car users

As highlighted by the Statutory Guidance, some people with disabilities "will be unable to use public transport and depend entirely on the use of a car"[28] and for these motorists parking is less of a choice and more of a necessity than for others.

It is for this reason that parking for disabled car users is ranked most highly among motor vehicles in the Parking User Hierarchy, and national legislation requires that exemptions are made from many parking restrictions for drivers who have a Blue Badge.

To further assist disabled car users, SBC will seek to ensure there is sufficient parking for them at known destinations such as the town centres and neighbourhood centres at least at a level in line with the latest government guidance and higher where there is sufficient demand. This parking will be suitably located offering greater ease and convenience than general parking, and if needed may be protected from abuse by other drivers. Consideration will also be given to the accessibility of disabled parking bays, including the provision where appropriate of dropped kerbs.

SBC will assist with the provision of disabled bays for residents where needed within permit parking areas or on SBC land, whilst the provision and management of disabled bays on the public highway outside permit parking areas will be a matter for the highway authority (HCC). Where SBC provides disabled bays to assist residents this provision will normally be subject to a similar expectation regarding the proportion of local parking provision to be used for disabled bays to that specified by HCC.

6.2 Supporting sustainable transport

6.2.1 Parking and pedestrians

Parking on the verge or footway causes environmental and infrastructure damage and damage to vehicles. It frequently inconveniences pedestrians, in particular those who use wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs and can place them in real danger by forcing them into the carriageway. This makes walking less attractive as a choice contrary to the objectives of LTP4.

Verge and footway parking has been illegal in London for more than 40 years and successive governments have indicated an intention to roll the ban out nationwide. However this has not happened to date and as a result Stevenage has been amongst the first local authorities to implement local traffic regulation orders to prohibit it. These have been rolled out throughout most of Stevenage with the exception of Old Town, Symonds Green and Woodfield wards. There is little evidence of demand for it to be rolled out on an area-wide basis to the three remaining wards but there are some locations where it is seen to present an issue and others may arise in future.

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[28] Ibid., p.7

Where residents request it, SBC will be willing to investigate the introduction of verge and footway parking bans in specific locations to address this.

Parking also impacts pedestrians when vehicles are left across lowered kerbs, making it more difficult to cross the road – particularly for those who use wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs. SBC is able to enforce against such parking under Section 86 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and will continue to do so to help prevent cars causing difficulty for others.

6.2.2 Parking on cycle routes

Protected routes for cycling play an important role in helping people to feel cycling is safe and successfully encouraging people to cycle. Stevenage has an excellent cycleway network which is largely segregated from motor traffic. Cars are generally prevented from parking on the cycleways by posts at the entrances for which the highway authority (HCC) is responsible. Driving on the cycleways is illegal and can only be enforced against by the Police.

Entrances to the cycleway network are generally served by a lowered kerb, and parking across them can make routes less attractive and the network harder to access. SBC is able to enforce against such parking under Section 86 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and will continue to do so to help prevent cars causing difficulty for others.

The creation of new or improved cycle routes is a transport priority for the council, and may require the loss of on-street parking. This could be to allow for an on-carriageway cycle lane to be put in place, or due to narrowing of the carriageway to create a separate cycleway. Although these are likely to be HCC projects, SBC shall not oppose the loss of parking in such circumstances.

Should other measures to create and support cycle routes and deprioritise motor vehicles, such as "filtering" a street by placing bollards or similar to prevent through traffic except for pedestrians and cyclists, be put forward then SBC shall not oppose the loss of parking in such circumstances.

6.2.3 Cycle parking

The ability to securely park a bicycle at home or at the destination can be an important consideration in deciding whether cycling is a viable mode. In order to support the viability of cycling as a mode, SBC will:

- consider measures to facilitate home cycle parking for residents who would otherwise struggle to keep a cycle at home, such as secure outdoor cycle lockers;
- seek to ensure there is suitable cycle parking at known destinations such as the town centres, neighbourhood centres, and railway station, including where possible "long stay" sheltered cycle stands;
- take into account the diversity of cycles when installing cycle stands, to ensure there is suitable provision for non-standard cycles;
- seek to ensure that cycle parking is prominently placed in suitable locations offering greater ease and convenience than general car parking;

- consider signs or other measures to improve public awareness of cycle parking and ensure cycle parking is easy to find;
- consider the provision of shelter from the weather to improve the attractiveness of cycle parking; and
- support local businesses and employers to provide suitable, secure cycle parking at their private premises.

6.2.4 Support for public transport

Parking on bus routes can cause delays or diversions to, and reduce the attractiveness of, passenger transport services.

To address this, where parking causing obstruction to buses is reported to SBC as an issue by a local bus operator, by HCC or by the Intalink Enhanced Partnership, or if they confirm that they consider it an issue when it has been reported to SBC by a member of the public, SBC will, as appropriate:

- put in place a Bus Stop Clearway to prevent parking at a bus stop; and/or
- consider for inclusion in the Programme of Parking Projects investigating further parking restrictions that may be needed.

Demand for parking can be reduced by making other modes more attractive to the public. For public transport this could mean new services being offered, or offering increased frequency or longer hours on existing routes; it could also mean faster journey times, better on-board passenger accommodation, or improved waiting facilities such as bus shelters. SBC shall be supportive of improvements such as these and others, and shall not oppose the loss of parking where needed to provide them.

6.2.5 Electric vehicle and other Ultra Low Emission Vehicle parking

EVs and other ULEVs offer a more sustainable alternative to Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles.

SBC shall investigate options to support the uptake of ULEVs, including seeking to provide EV charging at known destinations such as the town centres and neighbourhood centres, and once provision is in place to expand it in line with demand. This provision may be placed to offer greater ease and convenience than general parking (though at a lower level of ease and convenience than parking for disabled car users), and if needed may be protected from abuse by other drivers.

The greatest utility is afforded to EV drivers by providing charging infrastructure at the locations where they would normally park long term. Drivers who are unable to charge their vehicle at home are more likely to want to charge whilst parked when they are at work. Priority will therefore be given to providing EV charging where it can support long-stay parking as well as or instead of short-stay parking.

SBC will aim to encourage provision of private workplace charging through the Planning system for new commercial applications and by advising employers on the availability of government grants.

SBC will aspire to help to provide affordable options to residents who would otherwise be reluctant to own an EV because they lack off-street parking, in

coordination with HCC and with national funding schemes. This may include provision of EV charging on SBC land and/or the public highway.

SBC may aspire to offer similar solutions or support for other ULEVs using novel fuel types with similar characteristics should they emerge during the period of this strategy and dependent on the legislative framework.

6.2.6 Car clubs

SBC has operated a car club in the town centre since 2016, which as well as helping to provide a pool of low emission vehicles for SBC staff use during the hours of operation enables town centre residents who only occasionally use a car to avoid needing to own and park one. SBC has committed in its Workplace Travel Plan to support the existing town centre car club using electric cars until at least 2024-25, with an aspiration to expand in 2022-23 (subject to funding).

Should a car club operator wish to offer its service in other parts of the town to facilitate reduced residential car ownership, SBC will be willing to discuss any requests they wish to make and will consider putting in place measures such as reserved parking places to enable them to operate. The introduction of further car club facilities could help residents across the town to benefit from reduced car ownership, lessening demand for parking and allowing the use of street-space for other purposes. If there should be competing requests, all else being equal preference will be given to car clubs using ULEVs over ICE vehicles.

6.2.7 Restricting car ownership

The Council's Parking Standards SPD indicates the level of car ownership that is considered appropriate and acceptable for different property types, but has no effect on extant properties.

Consideration will be given to using permit parking controls to restrict levels of car ownership at each residential property in the town to those set out in the Parking Standards SPD. This would of necessity include limits on the number of permits allowed at each address depending on the amount of off-street parking available to it, and planning controls on the ability to create additional off-street parking. It would be necessary to extend some form of charging to non-residents who parked in the town to prevent the controls being abused.

It would also be desirable to include pollution-related incentives such as differential pricing to encourage the uptake of less-polluting vehicles in general and ULEVs in particular.

6.3 Parking in residential areas

6.3.1 Requests for "residents only" permit parking

Residents frequently take issue with parking perceived to be by non-residents, normally attributed to commuters. They often feel that such parking affects their quality of life, and ask that measures are put in place to limit parking to residents only.

The only legal mechanism available to enable residents to park without interruption by non-residents is to put in place permit parking controls.

Such controls place costs and limitations on all residents and their visitors, and will only be introduced where it is shown that there is both:

- a genuine lack of parking for residents as a result of an external source of parking demand; and
- that there is strong support from residents.

Requests

Permit parking schemes will only be considered where, within a geographic area that could viably and practicably operate as a permit area, 20% of residents have independently requested it.

Survey

Where this criterion is met and a project to investigate permit parking is added to the Programme of Parking Projects, the investigations will include a survey of all residents' views on whether they support permit parking's introduction, if they would be content to pay the permit fees, and what days/times they would wish any permit scheme to operate. Formal proposals would only be prepared if at least 65% of responses, including 50% of actual addresses, favoured permit parking and were willing to pay the necessary costs. Any proposals arising from this would take into consideration residents' preferred days and times of operation and stated concerns.

Consultation

If proposals are prepared and public consultation undertaken on specific proposals, these would only be implemented if the consultation responses demonstrate the same level of support as the survey or greater (it being assumed that the views of those who do not respond to the public consultation remain unchanged from when they were surveyed). Even if the same level of support is met, this does not guarantee that the proposals would be implemented as the final decision must depend on full consideration of any objections received.

Effects of restricting car ownership

If measures are brought in to restrict car ownership throughout the town as set out in 6.2.7 above, the need for pre-existing "residents only" permit parking areas will be reviewed and they may be withdrawn or modified. The existence of town-wide restrictions would not exclude the possibility of additional controls to limit parking to residents of a particular locality only.

6.3.2 Alternatives to permit parking

Where residents have concerns about non-resident parking pressure in a residential area, alternative measures may be considered such as "commuter ban" single yellow lines preventing parking during a short period in the middle of the day.

It must be recognised that such controls also apply to, and would prevent parking by, residents and will not be suitable in some locations such as where residents lack off-street parking and have no alternative to parking on the street. Such controls would only be introduced with support from residents.

The viability of such controls will also depend on the number and timing of similar restrictions, as a large number of concurrent but brief periods of restriction would not be practical to enforce. Timings should therefore vary from location to location and not be standardised.

6.3.3 Commercial vehicles in residential areas

The parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas is a source of annoyance to some residents, whether due to the greater space taken up by a large van compared to a car in areas that experience high levels of parking pressure, or because they find them unsightly.

For other residents, being able to park their works vehicle is necessary for them to earn a living either as an independent tradesperson or as the firm employing them requires them to take a works vehicle home.

At present there is a town wide ban on parking commercial vehicles with a maximum authorised mass of 5 tonnes or more and vehicles able to carry 12 or more passengers between 8pm and 7am Monday to Friday and throughout the weekend. Following the adoption of the 2004 Parking Strategy, options for further limiting commercial vehicle parking were explored but no viable alternatives were found.

Given the concern that this continues to cause for some residents, the provision of secure off-street parking for vans will be investigated and possibilities for management of commercial vehicle parking will be kept under review should opportunities present themselves or the legislative framework change. Any measures to manage commercial vehicle parking will consider not only the views of those residents who are aggrieved by commercial vehicle parking, but the effect on residents who are dependent on it.

6.3.4 Requests for parking construction

Residents are often concerned about not having enough parking near to their homes. Although SBC has no responsibility or obligation to improve the highway to resolve parking problems or provide additional parking facilities (and doing so is liable to encourage car ownership and use) it will receive requests for parking construction from residents.

There may be locations where parking pressure, due to lack of capacity, causes severe difficulties for residents, and is a contributory factor in causing hazardous, obstructive or inconsiderate parking, making parking construction a valid choice.

The Parking Standards SPD indicates the level of parking provision that is considered appropriate by SBC, and is periodically updated. Where the amount of parking provision in a location (including both on and off street parking) meets or exceeds the level set out in the most recent adopted Parking Standards SPD, it has to be considered adequate for motorists needs and will not be added to.

Where the Council considers that this is not the case, and that there is an overriding argument for providing more parking, it may investigate the construction of new parking spaces. Such construction shall be subject to identifying and securing funding and if on the highway to approval by the highway authority (HCC). If such spaces are provided at SBC's instigation, the council will also seek to introduce

commensurate spend an equal amount to introduce measures to support uptake of other modes of transport.

If following investigation SBC considers it necessary to build parking facilities in a location it will commit to budgeting an equivalent value of spending on introducing measures to promote the uptake of sustainable transport. If SBC carries out parking construction on behalf of HCC or another third party a contribution to fund measures to promote the uptake of sustainable transport will similarly be sought.

The Council will plant one tree for every parking space built. Should any trees have to be removed to build parking spaces three new trees will be planted for each tree that is lost (or such higher number as may be set in SBC's Tree Planting Policies in future). Parking spaces will not be built if it would result in unacceptable tree loss, for example of an ancient oak or of a mature historic hedgerow in good condition, or other high value trees.

6.3.5 Land sales and easements

SBC will not sell land or allow new easements across its land for the purpose of allowing residents to create parking, except in cases where the existing parking provision (including both on and off street parking) falls below the level set out in the most recent adopted Parking Standards SPD.

Land sales and easements will not generally be permitted where they would result in a loss of communal parking. Where a land sale or an easement is otherwise granted for the purpose of constructing private parking a sustainable transport contribution will be required equivalent to the value of all construction works involved.

6.4 Destination parking

6.4.1 Hospital parking

Parking at the Lister Hospital site is owned and managed by the NHS Trust. However due to an excess of demand over supply hospital-related parking also has an impact on the surrounding streets. This may be by visitors to the hospital or by hospital staff.

In order to facilitate short stay parking by outpatients and by visitors to patients, SBC has provided limited waiting bays along Coreys Mill Lane and in North Road, and with rising demand may add to this in future subject to the environmental commitments made in section 6.3.4 above. These parking spaces are subject to pay and display controls to encourage drivers not to park for longer than they need to and thereby maximise the parking capacity, while fees are set at a low level to encourage short-stay drivers to prefer them to parking on the hospital site so that on-site parking is available for those needing to stay for longer periods.

These controls may be varied or suspended, or exceptions made, during times of crisis where extraordinary circumstances create a need to do so in support of essential services such as enabling NHS staff to get to work during a pandemic.

On residential streets in the area, hospital related parking contributes to parking pressure from non-residents, which can cause distress and annoyance for residents.

This shall be dealt with in the same manner as non-resident parking in other residential areas and from other sources as detailed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.

6.4.2 School Parking

School parking gives rise to brief periods of high demand at the start and end of the school day as children are dropped off and picked up. This can lead to obstructive parking and safety concerns, as well as inconvenience for residents.

HCC has spent and continues to spend considerable resources in seeking to ensure safety at these times, including both promotion of other forms of transport and the introduction of parking controls. SBC supports this with special attention to parking enforcement outside all of the over thirty schools in the town including attendance outside at least one school every day during term time. Every school in the town is patrolled at least once each month, depending on the severity of its issues and the availability of patrolling staff.

SBC will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on schools in the vicinity and will be supportive of future projects by HCC to manage school travel to improve its safety and sustainability.

6.4.3 Customer parking

The ability of customers to visit businesses is important to the success of the local economy. Where this appears to be hindered at customer destinations, such as the neighbourhood centres, SBC will consider measures to facilitate customer parking such as time limited waiting to prevent spaces being occupied all day by commuter parking.

Customers should have the option to travel by a variety of modes, and SBC will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on them, and seek to support their transition to other modes of transport including both public transport and cycling as indicated in sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.4 above rather than providing for car parking only.

6.4.4 Servicing activity

Servicing activity, from the delivery of goods to visits by tradespeople, is essential to both businesses and residents and is often reliant on motor vehicles due to the weight and bulk of goods or supplies.

There are however growing trends in urban areas towards delivery of some of these services by other modes, such as micro-consolidation and the use of cargo-cycles (which could be well supported by Stevenage's cycleway network).

SBC will take into consideration the servicing needs of businesses and residents when making new parking proposals. SBC will be supportive of parking changes to support more sustainable methods of servicing, for example assisting demand for cycle deliveries by providing for cargo-cycle parking at key locations.

6.4.5 Local workers

Many people working in Stevenage rely on their car to be able to get to work, and while they should be encouraged towards using other modes of transport this may not be viable for them for compelling personal reasons such as caring responsibilities, or because of the absence of suitable services or infrastructure. Where workers must commute by car off-street parking in employers' car parks or public car parks is expected to be the norm.

SBC will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on local workers, particularly where the expectation of their parking off-street cannot be fulfilled, and will seek to support their transition to other modes of transport including both public transport and cycling as indicated in sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.4 above.

SBC may, working with HCC, consider the implementation of a Workplace Parking Levy to support transition away from car dependency by local workers.

6.4.6 Longer distance railway commuters

Parking pressure in some locations in the town is attributed to longer distance railway commuters, apparently seeking to avoid parking charges at the railway station. This not only causes annoyance for residents, but can limit opportunities for local workers to be able to park. Provision of parking for such commuters shall be considered the lowest priority, and should be discouraged from taking place on street. The railway station is well served by connecting bus services and the walking and cycling network, and is well supplied with parking for both cars and cycles, and its users should be encouraged to make use of these facilities.

6.4.7 Match day parking

On days when Stevenage Football Club plays home matches this can attract large numbers of vehicles to park in the area. Although motorists are encouraged to use the Fairlands Valley Car Park, whether due to excess demand or because drivers are unwilling to queue for parking/to leave the car park, or due to delinquency, parking frequently overspills into surrounding residential streets. This can lead to nuisance, obstructive and potentially hazardous parking.

Measures to address this non-resident parking in residential streets may be pursued as set out in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 above.

Should the Football Club seek planning consent for new stands or an increased crowd capacity, developer contributions may be sought to mitigate any increase in impact of match day parking on the area. This could include funding for the creation, implementation and operation of match day parking restrictions, sustainable transport improvements to encourage and support the use of alternative modes of transport, or other measures.

6.5 Placemaking and Living Streets

SBC aspires to bring forward specific "placemaking" and Living Street projects, through its Co-Operative Neighbourhoods programme, in addition to this Strategy's overall approach to create more Living Streets when making changes to parking. These would be expected to work collaboratively with residents to improve their local

environment and reduce the domination of the streetscape by cars, making them into nicer places to live. At the same time this would encourage more sustainable travel to both improve people's health and combat climate change.

Such schemes can include reducing or preventing through traffic, creating shared spaces, and changing how parking is managed to ensure it does not dominate entire streets. This does not necessarily mean simply taking parking away, but could involve other measures such as provision of alternative parking for larger vehicles such as vans that have a bigger visual impact so as to create a greater sense of space.

Changes to parking controls are anticipated to be needed to support achieving this and support for CMN projects shall where needed form part of the Programme of Parking Projects.

6.6 Regeneration

Regeneration will help to reshape Stevenage during the life of this Strategy, including both the redevelopment of the New Town Centre and renewal of some neighbourhood centres. This gives the opportunity for reduced car dependency, and the parking provision in redeveloped areas will be determined and managed as part of the development process.

Changes to parking controls are likely to be needed to support redevelopment as streetscapes change and this shall form part of the Programme of Parking Projects.

6.7 New developments

For the Parking Standards SPD to be meaningful it is essential in new developments that informal parking is prevented from happening in locations on the street that are not intended for parking. Otherwise the SPD would not limit the volume of parking, only cause it to take place in unsuitable locations. While design measures may help to deter some inappropriate parking, they can also serve to increase the severity of inappropriateness when it does occur. Pursuing parking controls to prevent this imposes a cost on the Council as a direct result of the development taking place. Developer contributions will therefore be required when planning applications are made, to fund the pursuit of formal Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) controls on parking to prevent problems from occurring and ensure that the Parking Standards SPD is effective.

S106 funding for parking controls must be payable in full prior to first occupation to allow for RPZ controls to be implemented at the outset to prevent the gradual spread of on-street parking. Developers will also be required to commit to cooperate with the Council to enable the timely installation of necessary traffic signs to give restrictions effect should the road in question remain in their ownership when those restrictions come into force. Such early implementation of parking controls will help to ensure that Living Street designs are effectively upheld from the start.

Where it appears necessary and appropriate planning conditions, covenants or other measures may also be sought to deter or prevent the creation of additional off-street parking after the initial development has been completed.

6.8 Discretionary services

Discretionary services may be offered through the SBC's capabilities under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, in support of its transport objectives.

In relation to parking, this currently comprises placing advisory "H-bar" Driveway Access Markings to diagram 1026.1 of the TSRGD highlighting the presence of a dropped kerb. This service will be kept under consideration to ensure that it continues to offer fair value for both residents and the Council.

Additional services may be brought forward in future, where there is evidence of demand or the potential to assist residents or businesses.

This could include for example allowing private contributions to be made to fund the installation of EV charge points by SBC for public use, or installation of cycle parking though SBC contracts to help businesses provide facilities for their employees and visitors.

7 References

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