

Bromsgrove Parking Review December 2013

Bromsgrove District Council
Overview and Scrutiny
16th December 2013



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Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council operates 11 charged car parks and 3 free car parks and also manages the enforcement of Alvechurch Sports and Social Club car park. The Council has also taken responsibility for the enforcement of On-Street parking regulations since Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced in May 2013.



The Brief

To review the parking provision in the District covering both On and Off Street parking providing factual information relating to Bromsgrove's car parks and other authorities car parks for comparison. Consider the impacts of future development within and around Bromsgrove town centre.



The Town Centre Economy

Bromsgrove District Council has focussed on initiatives to support the town centre including major redevelopment projects and other schemes such as the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the town centre regeneration improvements.

All of these projects are intended to improve the economic vibrancy of the town.



The Town Centre Economy

Car park charges and operational parking policies are widely considered to impact greatly on the economy. Traders and politicians are quick to attribute the blame for the downturn of some town centres economies on parking provision and enforcement despite the actual reasons being multi-faceted and complex.

It should be noted that rent levels, out of town alternatives and the growth of internet shopping all impact on town centres but these issues are often ignored.



The Town Centre Economy

There are any number of different statistics that are used to judge a towns economy such as the number of vacant shops:

Bromsgrove's 2012 vacancy rate is 10.9% which is considerably lower than other centres in the region. The West Midlands average vacancy rate is 14.6%; and other centres include; Birmingham 23.8%, Walsall 26.6%, Wolverhampton 25.3% and Dudley 29.4%. The national town centre vacancy rate in the UK was 11.1% in April 2012.

Taken from Bromsgrove District Councils Town Centre Health Check December 2012.



The Town Centre Economy

There has been a number of parking announcements made by ministers and MPs this year the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, announced:

- A proposal to allow motorists to park on double yellow lines for 15 minutes.
- A limit on mobile enforcement
- Proposed the Introduction of grace and favor period of 5 minutes before parking fines are issued (Bromsgrove has already adopted this)
- Councils should offer free parking for 30 minutes near the High Street.



Town Centre Development Proposals

Recreation Road North

This car park is to be sold for development. It is anticipated that it will be used for care home or elderly residential facilities and social housing a planning application is expected to be submitted in the New Year. The date of sale is not yet known but is expected to be agreed shortly.



Town Centre Development Proposals

Hanover Street

The whole car park currently forms part of a site that is being marketed to be developed as a mixed retail/leisure development. Discussions with a developer regarding a proposed scheme have reached an advanced stage but the Council is not yet in a position to disclose details. In terms of parking, it is anticipated that any scheme approved would retain car parking spaces at similar levels to those existing currently.



Town Centre Development Proposals

School Drive & Dolphin Centre

This site has been identified together with Blackmore House for the possible development of a new leisure centre. There have been two proposals one would be to construct the new leisure facility on the Blackmore House site and create a 200 space car park where the existing leisure centre is currently sited, followed by the sale of the existing car park.

The second option would be to close the leisure centre and rebuild a new facility on the same site.



Town Centre Development Proposals

Parkside

Part of this car park is needed for junction realignment as part of the Sainsbury's development. Although there will be some loss of parking capacity during the works it is expected that the overall capacity will be maintained by altering the layout of the spaces when the junction works are complete.



Town Centre Development Proposals

Stourbridge Road

A retail scheme is proposed on a neighbouring site which may have an impact on the car park during development stage. There is currently interest in the Stourbridge Road car park site as part of the overall development from a number of parties but it is too early to say what the outcome is likely to be.



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Town Centre Development Proposals

Churchfields Multi Storey car park

This car park is BDC's most underused car park.

In considering the town centre schemes this car park has capacity to absorb many of the displaced motorists.

Following the redevelopment of the new Council Parkside Office and Library complex, one option for staff parking is to utilise the top floor levels. Consideration should be given to the fact that during freezing conditions the external levels are closed for safety reasons.



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Town Centre Development Proposals

New Road & Windsor Street

No development is planned at this time.

Recreation Road South

No developments are proposed for this car park.

Bromsgrove Station

The Council's car park has 69 spaces but it is envisaged that the future of this car park will be under review at a later stage following development of the new station and car park.



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Supporting Car park Users

Bromsgrove has a low pricing structure when compared to other close authorities and operates a flexible payment tariff via our Pay and Display machines which grants additional time when the set rates are overpaid. This is a good concession to motorists who might otherwise expect to lose money if they had incorrect coinage.

Our neighbouring authorities do not offer this concession.



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Supporting Car park Users

The Pay on Foot facility enables users to pay for the length of stay without the need to worry about overstaying a Pay & Display ticket. Users like this facility and it is considered to be a way of supporting the town's economy as it encourages users to have extended stays in the town.



Current Space Availability

Bromsgrove District Council currently provides 1390 charged car park spaces in 11 car parks within Bromsgrove and 4 "free" car parks in other parts of the district.

The charged spaces account for the majority of charged parking within Bromsgrove town and there is little private sector parking competition. Free parking is however available at a number of supermarket sites on the edge of the town and on-street close to the town centre..



Current Space Availability

At the time this review was carried out (Summer/Autumn 2013) the overall parking capacity in the town of Bromsgrove is adequate as parking spaces are almost always available in one or more car parks. Churchfields car park is rarely full despite a low all day parking tariff. The prime car parks such as Windsor Street, Recreation Road South and Parkside do have limited capacity at peak times but overall there is capacity available within the town.



Current Charges

Car Park	Up to 15 minutes	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	All day
Recreation Road South	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	£3.20	£4.00	n/a
Churchfields Multi-storey	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	-	-	£3.00
Recreation Road North	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
Parkside	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	£3.20	£4.00	n/a
Stourbridge Road	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
School Drive	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
Hansover Street	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	-	-	£5.00
New Road	40p	80p	£1.00	£2.40	£3.20	£4.00	-
Windsor Street	80p	£1.00	£2.00	-	-	-	-
Bromsgrove Railway Station	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£3.00
Dolphin Centre (Primarily)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a



Car Park Usage

Car park usage and income figures change constantly and there needs to be a degree of caution exercised in drawing conclusions from any data obtained as it is by its nature a reflection of the past and is not always a good guide to the future.

For instance the past does not take into account future changes due to development in the town.



Car Park Usage

As with many Council's across the UK income has declined over the last 3 years, which may be due to the impact of the downturn in the economy and changes in shopping habits such as online shopping.

Bromsgrove has a significant out of town shopping sector which offer free car parking on their own land namely Co-Op, Morrison's and Aldi.

Also there a number of major retail centres within a short driving distance of the town.



Car Park Usage

Excess charge notice income has reduced since 2012/13 due to a change in enforcement policy following the transfer of the service to Wychavon. At the Members request the enforcement staff were given more discretion to deal with parking contraventions by giving advice and warnings rather than issuing ECN's or PCN's.

Although this has reduced income there has been sizable a reduction in complaints about parking enforcement.



Car Park Usage

Permit sales have seen a slight decline since its peak in 2010/11. The trend is similar to that seen in Wychavon and other adjoining authorities during the same period.

Bromsgrove offer the ability to pay quarterly to make this a more affordable option for customers.



Car Park Usage

- 32% of motorist using Recreation Rd South car park paid a 40p charge for a 1/2 hour stay.
- 36% of motorist using Recreation Rd South car park paid a 80p charge for a 1 hour stay.
- 57% of motorist using the Multi-storey car park paid for 1 hour or less.
- 30% of motorist using the Multi-storey car park paid for up to 2 hours.
- Only 6.5% of motorist using the Multi-storey car park paid for all day parking.



Car Park Usage

Evening charges in Pay & Display car parks extend to 10 pm every day.

The evening charging period from 6pm to 10pm accounts for 11% of total Pay & Display income – £86,000 per annum.



Car Park Usage

Sunday parking

Car park usage is traditionally lowest on Sundays; the 2010 survey identified that only 6% of ticket sales and 5% of income is obtained on Sundays. These figures have not changed significantly.

In 2012/13 the Sunday car park income was £82,272.



On Street Parking Enforcement

Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced in the District of Bromsgrove on 30th May 2013. This has allowed a more consistent approach to traffic enforcement as staff are able to enforce both On-Street Traffic regulation orders and Off-Street parking areas owned by the District Council.



On Street Parking Enforcement

- Since the introduction of CPE on 30th May 2013 the following numbers of tickets have been issued to vehicles
-
- From 13th June 2013 until 30th September 2013
-
- On-Street 757 Penalty Charge Notices
- Off-Street 791 Penalty Charge Notices



On Street Parking Enforcement

- A comment on the new enforcement has been obtained from Inspector Sharron Canning, Bromsgrove Safer Neighbourhood Inspector.
- *"Since the civil enforcement officers have taken over dealing with parking issues from the police and traffic wardens, they have been a positive addition for the community of Bromsgrove. Illegally parked vehicles often cause difficulties and road safety issues for other road users and members of the community and the civil enforcement officers have provided both information and enforcement where appropriate".*



Case Study Wychavon

Wychavon Council has introduced at various times cost cutting initiatives in the short stay car parks that corresponded with various traffic schemes. These have been run in Pershore whilst the High Street was being redesigned along with the Evesham High Street development and now due to the Evesham Bridge Closure. The reduction in the rate from £1 per hour to 20p for 3 hours has not resulted in an increase in car park use and has therefore resulted in a considerable loss to the authority. Fortunately as this is as a result of Bridge works undertaken by the county they will be reimbursing the council for monies lost.



Case Study Altrincham

Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council

This authority has been cited as one authority which has made significant changes to its parking policy. Trafford Council covers a number of towns to the south of Manchester including Altrincham, Hale and Stretford. Officers have visited Altrincham to gain a better understanding of the changes they adopted.



Case Study Altrincham

The Council reduced its parking charges on a number of occasions and has currently settled on 10p for 1 hour, 30p for 2 hours and 70p for 3 hours in all of its towns 6 days per week. Parking is free on Sundays.

In 2009 the prices varied across the district but were £1.50 for 1 hour, £2 for 2 hours and £3 for 3 hours in Altrincham, the largest town within the borough.



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Case Study Altrincham

Altrincham's retail offer is significantly larger than Bromsgrove's and has a number of major retailers including House of Fraser, Debenhams, Next and Marks and Spencer, a large number of independent shops and a range of mid-range retailers. The town benefits from a large shopping centre in addition to the High Street and has a number of private sector operated car parks including a 700 space car park connected to the shopping centre

The Council provides less than a quarter of the off street parking.



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Case Study Altrincham

The impact of reducing the parking charges is clear to see with monthly P&D ticket sales rising from 11000 per month to an average of 35500 per month.

The Council clearly obtained an increase in use of its car parks but the success of the scheme cannot be judged by this measure alone.



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Case Study Altrincham

Reducing parking charges has resulted in a loss of income of between £250,000 and £500,000 per year for the Council and will have a 3 year cost of up to approximately £900,000.

The Council has had to fund this cost through other spending choices and use of other resources. The scheme is subject to review as part of this year's budget round as the initial funding was time limited.



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Case Study Altrincham

Apart from the cost to the Council the impact of the scheme on the town is interesting.

There is very little hard evidence of any increased spend in the towns businesses and they are unable to evidence that footfall has grown since the reduced rates were introduced.

Officers were told that retailers were not prepared to comment on any increase in retail sales following the reduction in parking charges.



Case Study Altrincham

If Bromsgrove were to adopt the Altrincham model on Recreation Road South car park based on the same car park usage rates obtained for 2012/13 the income would have been £153,207.00 compared with the actual figure that was £550,750.00 that would equate to a 72% reduction in car parking income.



Price Comparison (Altrincham)

It is difficult to predict the increase in usage that a reduction in price might give however if we were to use the same percentage increase that Altrincham experienced then our income on Recreation Road South would have been reduced by £305,231.00 this is a 55% reduction.

Transposing this percentage to the total income from parking for last year of £1,125,779.00 the authority could expect a loss of parking income in the region of £619,178.00.

