

## 8 Future Strategy and Options

### 8.1 Strategy

- 8.1.1. Following the extensive data collection and analysis exercise it is possible to quantify the scale of predicted demand (as set out in previous sections) and formulate an overall strategy. The high level strategic aim is **'...to manage the predicted demand to support the vitality of the town for residents, business and visitors...'**

It is proposed that the predicted demand will be managed by:

- Maximising use of existing parking stock
- Increasing capacity
- Promoting alternative travel choices

A combination of these measures will assist in ensuring that the strategic aims are delivered.

- 8.1.2. Therefore, the proposed strategy seeks to utilise a mixture of existing, proposed and planning/marketing measures to accommodate a possible future uplift in parking which serves residential, business, tourism and retail.
- 8.1.3. To achieve this the Council have assessed and reviewed a number of measures, options or policies which could support and provide the necessary uplift in parking required to facilitate the likely demand in the future.
- 8.1.4. The review has sought to assess all possible options including those previously reviewed by the Council historically, but also a number of new opportunities to seek to create both short and long term opportunities.
- 8.1.5. The schemes have also been assessed in terms of location in terms of the key approach routes to the town, seeking to position the measures around the town allowing both local and regional trips to utilise these facilities and where possible reduce the level of traffic seeking to enter the main town centre area.
- 8.1.6. With the removal of the northern park and ride facility as an option, the schemes have focused on the east, south and north of the town for the short to medium term options seeking to limit the increase in parking within the centre of the town.
- 8.1.7. Additionally, it should be recognised that the parking strategy will be delivered in parallel with a range of independent, but supporting initiatives, that seek to reduce congestion; improve air quality and offset the predicted future parking demand. These include:
- improvements to the Imperial Road / St. Leonards Road junction to reduce congestion (funding is currently allocated in the approved capital programme and design work is in progress)
  - a long-term desire to remodel the Clarence Road / Imperial Road / Relief Road roundabout to reduce congestion and improve air quality (funding for this initiative forms part of the 'refresh' bid submitted to 'SEERA')
  - financial support and promotion of local bus services
  - promotion of rail services

- promotion of joint ticketing arrangements (for example; joint admission / rail tickets for Legoland)
- securing of travel plans through the planning process

8.1.8. The next section seeks to summarise the options considered.

## 8.2 New Parking Opportunities

8.2.1. The following section seeks to promote opportunities for increased parking provision of the parking capacity of Windsor either through new builds, use of current not previously considered opportunities or expansion of existing facilities.

### Centrica

8.2.2. Centrica is a private business in the North West of Windsor, located off the A308 Maidenhead Road. Their car park has a capacity of approximately 150 spaces with an opportunity for an additional 120 spaces. This could be offered for use as a public car park for use at weekends only. It is planned that a park & ride service will be operated from the car park to Peascod Street. Initial discussions have proven encouraging and further discussions and legal agreements are being considered. Figure 1 shows the location of the Proposed site and Figure 2 shows the likely route of a shuttle service.

### King Edward VII Hospital

8.2.3. King Edward VII hospital is an NHS run hospital in the South East of Windsor, located of St. Leonard's Road. The car park has a capacity of approximately 200 spaces, which has been offered for public use at weekends only. It is planned that a park & ride service will operated between the car park and Peascod Street Initial discussions have proven encouraging and further discussions and legal agreements are being considered. Figure 3 shows the location of the proposed site and the likely route of a shuttle service.

### Windsor Racecourse

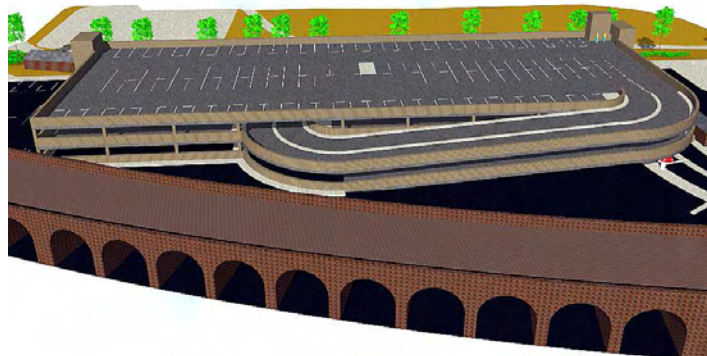
8.2.4. Windsor Racecourse is located next to Centrica off the A308 Maidenhead Road. The racecourse owners have agreed in principal to allow the use of the land adjacent to the A308 to become a park & ride. At present the land is covered in grass and is therefore unsuitable to be parked on and it would take time to prepare the land so that it is suitable to be used as a park & ride. It has been agreed with the owners that the car park would be available during the week and at weekends creating 200 to 400 spaces. Figure 2 shows the location of the proposed site and the likely route of a shuttle service.

### Increased On-Street Provision

8.2.5. Windsor currently has approximately 1936 spaces available on-street, with the majority only available to residents at specific times. Included within the stock are a percentage allocated to business and pay and display. With an ever increasing population demand for residential parking is growing, hence the Councils recent changes to traffic orders to provide additional on street provision. In the future additional spaces may be required. As such consideration of relocating the business or pay and display to other locations maybe an option for review.

### Alexandra Gardens

- 8.2.6. A new car park has historically been considered for Alexandra Gardens to increase the current capacity of 204 spaces to approximately 400 - 500 spaces. This has been the subject of a number of previous studies as shown below,



### Private Business Parking

- 8.2.7. The Council and PBA highlighted a number of private businesses within the urban area of Windsor who have dedicated parking in excess of 25 spaces which could be utilised for evening or weekend parking by either residents or public respectively.
- 8.2.8. A number of discussions have been made with these organisations and further discussions with other possibilities are still to be finalised, but at this stage there are no formal agreements for use of private parking, within the exception of the Castle Hotel, which already operates its car park for public use.
- 8.2.9. The aim of the Council is, through negotiation, to continue to pursue these options in the future.

### Home Park Car Park

- 8.2.10. Home Park Car Park is an existing car parking located in the North East of Windsor, off King Edward VII Avenue. The car park currently has 145 spaces (4 of which for disabled use). A park & ride service currently operated by Courtney Coaches from the Home Park to St. Albans Street between 0700 and 1900, Monday to Friday only (excluding Bank Holidays).
- 8.2.11. In the medium term it is planned that Home Park Car Park will be extended to allow for extra capacity. The car park is currently over capacity during parts of the day and therefore the extra spaces would satisfy the demand. This could provide an additional circa 100 Spaces. Figure 4 shows the proposed extension.
- 8.2.12. The provision of the additional spaces will result in a reorganisation of the car park operation and will provide additional spaces for use by the public 7 days a week.

### Bachelors Acre Underground Car Park

8.2.13. The option for a new underground car park at Bachelors Acres under the current park area, has been discussed over many years, to date this option has been included as a long term aspiration only due to both anticipated planning and financial restraints, however subject to design this could facilitate between 200 to 400 spaces.

### River Street and Castle Car Park – Redevelopment

8.2.14. The Council are aware of historical discussions with the operator of the Castle Car Park and as such have included this as a possible long-term consideration, if the site is forth coming for development.

### Supportive Transport Measures

8.2.15. The measures above seek to provide additional spaces, many of which are edge of town, park and ride facilities. The Council is committed to these types of facilities and as such would propose to implement a range of improvement measures and bus priority at key locations on the supportive routes to and from the town centre.

8.2.16. The parking strategy will be delivered in parallel with a range of independent, but supporting initiatives, that seek to reduce congestion; improve air quality and offset the predicted future parking demand. These include:

- improvements to the Imperial Road / St. Leonards Road junction to reduce congestion
- a long-term desire to remodel the Clarence Road / Imperial Road / Relief Road roundabout to reduce congestion and improve air quality
- financial support and promotion of local bus services
- promotion of rail services
- promotion of joint ticketing arrangements (for example; joint admission / rail tickets for Legoland)
- securing of travel plans through the planning process

## **8.3 Improve Existing Parking Opportunities**

8.3.1. The following section seeks to utilise current facilities and offer an opportunity for increased capacity for a range of users and provide both weekday, weekend and night time increased provision. These options are seen as possible.

### King Edward Court

8.3.2. King Edward Court is a privately owned car park in the centre of Windsor. The car park has 926 spaces a present but is not fully occupied during the evening/ night. This car park lies in the centre of the town and as such is a prominent location for serving night time usage. Hence the Council seek to open discussions with the operators as to measures to increase evening usage, through publicity or a discount charging policy for night time usage.

### Home Park Car Park

- 8.3.3. It is considered that the existing park & ride service could be extended into the evening to make the car park more accessible/ useful during the evening period especially for businesses.

### Coach Park

- 8.3.4. The current coach park has been an integral element of the tourist operation in Windsor providing a central location for day-trippers to Windsor. Over the past few years the coach park has been the subject to changes in use, with alternate methods of access to the town and a switch to half day and overnight stays which reduce the demand for the coach park.
- 8.3.5. In December the Council open up the coach park as an overflow car park to cater for the Christmas demand. This option could be extended to the summer period and as such consideration is being given to a rationalisation of use in the summer which may offer additional capacity in the peak tourist's months, while not compromising the operation of the coach park at its peak demands.

### Windsor Dials

- 8.3.6. The current car park is utilised at Weekends by the public, however its location is perceived restricted to use due to the route to the town centre and as such does not make it an attractive option for the public.
- 8.3.7. During the planning process for the office development, the Council, proposed a pedestrian bridge link from the top of the multi storey car park across to the railway viaduct and a direct pedestrian link into the rear of the central station retail area and the rear of the town.
- 8.3.8. As part of this review, this scheme needs to be revisited and progressed. This will not provide additional parking provision, but would make this facility more attractive for weekend, with a secure route to the town.

### East Berks College

- 8.3.9. The main college campus is currently utilised for weekend parking by the Council, however the College also control an overflow parking area for around 50 spaces which is accessed off the current entrance to the Inter Continental Hotels building accessed via Alma Road. This facility could provide additional evening and weekend parking for residents and possibly the public throughout the year in addition the spaces could support additional parking in the summer months outside of school terms.

### Rail based Park and Rides

- 8.3.10. A review of the Waterloo/Staines line stations were undertaken assessing the viability of using the current car parks as a mini park and ride operation promoting the train as an alternative to the car and reducing car trips into the town centre. The review concluded that the majority of stations had no significant capacity to support a scheme and that any scheme would have to consider a new/extension to a current car park.
- 8.3.11. The review concluded that the only opportunity would be at Datchet Station, however access and the need to pass through Datchet were considered to an issue hence the scheme has not been pursued. Figure 5 summarises the data collected at each station.

## On Street Review

- 8.3.12. The Council have over the past 12 months been reviewing the current on street parking provision with Windsor within the context of the implementation of decimalised parking, which gave control for enforcement to the Council directly.
- 8.3.13. This review has to date resulted in an additional 170 spaces being created within the urban area of Windsor, which is made up by providing additional parking bays and the removal / conversion of double yellow lines to single yellow lines. The review is on going as such a further 60 - 70 spaces will be implemented prior to the end of 2008. The on street provision will be continually reviewed by the Council on a yearly basis.

## **8.4 Information and Publicity**

- 8.4.1. The following options seek to not increase parking provision within the Town, but better manage the current stock and seek to direct users to the most suitable and available spaces for convenient access to the locations they seek within the town.

### Travel Information Signs – Windsor Relief Road

- 8.4.2. The use of large-scale travel information signs on the relief road offer the Council the opportunity to direct and manage the traffic seeking to access the town centre and other major facilities such as Lego land and Windsor Racecourse.
- 8.4.3. The signs can be utilised for a vast array of message services, travel, parking, incident and event messages can be provided on a regular basis and can influence those not local to the area as to their options for access. These coupled with additional publicity on facilities can allow the Council to direct key users such as visitors to alternative locations other than town centre car parks.

### Car Park Variable Message Signs

- 8.4.4. The Council are seeking to update and improve the current VMS system in Windsor as part of the strategy. This would allow the Council to replace part of the old system and assess the most practical way forward. Indeed a review of the current system is underway and will be utilised to progress this aspect of the strategy in any event of the other schemes.

### Publicity and Promotion

- 8.4.5. The ability to promote in advance of local or tourists visiting the site is significant in that the council can seek to manage movements and direct users to the key car parks or park and ride locations which meet their specific needs and direction of approach. This will be imbedded in an overall town centre publicity campaign which sorts to cover all sustainable modes.
- 8.4.6. Within the Tourist Review, over 30% sought to view the RBWM website prior to visiting the Windsor, hence this coupled with printed and downloadable guides to parking in the town centre could be a key initiative and should be implemented in parallel with the other measures.
- 8.4.7. This traditional approach for publicity and promotion needs to be significantly enhanced and other more involving measures such as branding should be considered to promote the P&R services. This could include such measures as colour coded buses, which are designated to the individual P&R sites, hence not only making it clear for users, but promoting the facility across the town and seeking to attract new patrons.

- 8.4.8. This publicity can be further enhanced with discount ticket sales or group ticketing promotions all of which will seek to brand the P&R facilities as a more convenient and cost effective option than simply parking in the town centre.
- 8.4.9. The publicity of access to the town, must be an all encompassing document seeking to promote all modes and not just focus on the car parks, it should include bus, rail, walking and cycling, not only with respect to the benefits to the environment, but also the individuals, improvements in health, a financial saving using the alternatives and a lowering of their own individual carbon footprint.
- 8.4.10. The promotion of Windsor has to be a fully coordinated and an encompassing promotion seeking to cover all aspects. In light of this the publicity/promotional exercise should in no way be focused on car parks alone as this will only be one element. The Council may seek to stagger the promotions subject to delivery of schemes, but each element must be considered within the overall promotion and then seek to convey the simple message of how you can visit Windsor by all modes and the benefits of each.

#### Information by Technology

- 8.4.11. As mobile phone, computer and satellite navigation information technology increases the ability to use these facilitate to assess capacity, route and even offer the ability to pre-book spaces could be considered in the future.

#### Review of Static Signs

- 8.4.12. The current stock of static signs are historical and although updated as necessary are in some cases old and therefore as part of the VMS review, these will also need to be replaced and amended accordingly.
- 8.4.13. A key decision by the Council is "how the car parks are to be named", as part of this review and replacement strategy. At present the car parks are not individually named, but noted as short/long stay, hence in terms of way finding a specific car park this is restricted by the current naming policy in place.
- 8.4.14. If the Council are seeking a more branded parking strategy seeking to target specific users to specific car parks then there needs to be a review which considers replacing the limited Short/Long stay signs with specific car park names.

### **8.5 Planning Policy**

- 8.5.1. The Council are considering a number of possible planning policies which could be considered by the Council in the future and which could through the relevant processes be included in forth coming policy changes which will seek to either restrain additional demand specifically with on street parking, but also offer an opportunity in providing additional spaces in key areas.

#### Permit Policy

- 8.5.2. The Council are instigating a new permit policy linked to new or conversion of old residential developments within Windsor.
- 8.5.3. The policy is being enforced by Planning and Highways Development Control and is included within the Planning Conditions set by the Council on the development.

- 8.5.4. In principle the new policy limits the number of resident permits to 1 per unit in the case of new builds, where there was previously no residential land use, such as a previous employment or retail land use.
- 8.5.5. In the case of house conversions to flats or apartment, where the conversion is internal with the structure of the house intact, the Council are limiting the number of permits to the allocation previously held by the original property and as such not providing additional permits for the additional properties created through the conversion.

#### Privately Owned Car Parks Policy

- 8.5.6. The Council are considering a new policy/condition/informative which allows the Council to require new or conversion of current developments of primarily employment land use in the town centre to be required to allow their on site parking to be utilised by residents or the public at night or the weekends when traditionally these car parks will be empty.
- 8.5.7. The Council would seek to achieve this aspiration in partnership with the developers, but the initial discussions have raised issues such as security, abandoned vehicles and vandalism, which will need to be addressed.
- 8.5.8. The Council would be required to manage these car parks out of office hours, hence the likely capacity will be car parks in excess of 25 spaces and their location will also be influence on the decision to proceed.

## **8.6 Pricing Structure**

- 8.6.1. The ability to define a pricing policy which supports the use of certain car parks either inked to long or short stay or location is a mechanism that the Council may wish to consider.
- 8.6.2. In parallel the Council may seek to promote additional incentives such as reduced rate season tickets in car parks on the periphery of the town centre, so as to remove those commuters from the main retail and tourist car parks, hence maximising the provision at peak times for those generally on a short stay or one off visit to the town, allowing closer access to the facilities they seek to visit or access.

## **8.7 Olympics**

- 8.7.1. The 2012 Olympic and Para-Olympics games are being held in London. The existing Eton College Rowing Centre at Dorney Lake will be used during the Olympics to host rowing and flatwater canoe/kayak and adaptive rowing events. Dorney Lake is approximately 3km from the centre of Windsor. The venue can hold up to 27,000 spectators plus officials and operational staff.
- 8.7.2. The current access to the venue is via the B3026 from Eton to the East and Slough from the North. The proposed park & rides at Centrica and Windsor Racecourse can be used to cope with the influx of spectators.
- 8.7.3. A temporary pedestrian bridge could be built linking the park & rides to the venue. Figure 6 shows the location of the proposed park & rides and Dorney Lake.
- 8.7.4. The Olympic Delivery Authority are working in partnership with the Borough to secure funding to support these schemes and specifically the bridge link to the facility from the Racecourse/Centric and are currently working up a detailed proposal and scheme with the ODA, to cover this aspect and all modes of transport that will be needed to support the games.

## 8.8 Way Forward

- 8.8.1. The section above seeks to set out the range of options considered within the study and offer a summary of the options/measures or strategies which could be utilised to support the Town Centre Strategy.
- 8.8.2. Inevitably the projects all have a time element and as such the following section will seek to characterise those projects which are considered viable and seek to include them in a simplified implementation programmed as summarised below,
- Short term - next 12 months (end of 2009)
  - Medium Term - 12 to 36 months (2010 to 2013)
  - Long Term - in excess of 36 months (2013 plus)

Working Draft