

ANNEX B - CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Huntingdon –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- that general parking supply (the amount of parking available) is little changed since 2002
- at times of peak demand, there has been an approximate 4% increase in total demand (this is similar to predicted traffic growth levels)
- at times of peak demand, on and off-street parking were utilised at around 90% (effective capacity)
- Saturday parking is less pressured, although on-street parking is fully utilised
- With the expected loss of car parking at Pathfinder House and associated car parking with development at Princes Street Phases 1 & 2, including at the Library (now part-closed), this will place an immediate short-term problem on available public parking. On the assumption that the majority will transfer to public car parks, this will push peak hour parking demand well above the 'effective capacity' and close to or above the absolute number of spaces available
- Some form of increased parking provision was very popular amongst stakeholders, whilst recognising that limited space available would necessitate other options being explored. Such parking is recommended to meet short-term needs
- An 'Expansionist' approach to parking provision is suggested in the short-term whereby extra parking would be provided to meet the excess demand. In the longer-term, a 'Balanced' approach is recommended whereby pricing mechanisms would be introduced to control car parking. Over a 10-year period, this recommends maintaining short-stay parking charges at current levels, subject to inflation, but introducing a long-stay charging regime as follows;
 - Baseline (2007) - £1.50/day
 - Baseline plus 5 years - £3.00/day
 - Baseline plus 10 years - £6.00/day

SDG consider that this would bring charges in line with public transport costs and introduce a travel demand regime

- Without a short-term provision of additional parking, this will have immediate effects of people being unable to find a parking space and this will spread to longer periods of the day
- To address immediate needs, three Options are suggested;
 - Option 1 – Within ring-road. Provide an additional 165 spaces. Recognising land and space constraints, decking options are recommended, such as at Sainsbury's or Princes Street
 - Option 2 – Outside ring-road (new or existing sites). To explore provision at Bridge Place (Depot) and/or Brampton Road to the north of the railway station. The latter site would have to be achieved with a partnership agreement with the landowner and subject to a permit regime to restrict the use by rail commuters. West of Town Centre is also seen as a possible area short-term, subject to landowner negotiations and also as part of the longer term strategy for parking in this area. Also suggested that Mill Common be moved from mixed long/short-stay to short-stay only in order to re-balance overall provision
 - Option 3 – Provision at distance from town centre. Park & Ride is a popular suggestion amongst stakeholders but unlikely economically viable for Huntingdon at present. Needs to be supported by public transport improvements and a more restrictive parking regime within town centre. Might also be difficult to find appropriate site/s accessible or attractive to all. Need for a major transport corridor study to identify demand
- Quality is seen as high in all areas. Signage to car parks is seen as poor and haphazard. Improvements may be necessary to maximise usage and reduce parking space search
- Control/enforcement of parking is perceived by stakeholders to be poor, particularly due to rail commuters using town car parks and levels of on-street parking. The introduction of long-stay charges may necessitate on-street restrictions being explored to ensure that any long-term demand management approach does not shift parking onto residential streets

2) St. Neots –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- 50% more parking is available on-street in 2006 than 2002
- although not directly comparable to 2002 data (Friday) demand for parking 2006 (Thursday) is very high (96% off-street, 76% on-street)

- Saturday parking demand has increased by 40% over 2002 levels
- at times of peak demand on Thursdays, parking was fully utilised just above effective capacity. Parking availability is lower on Thursdays due to the loss of parking space at Market Square
- pro-rata use of Thursday figures indicate that parking demand will still be at effective capacity levels for other weekdays
- some form of limited expansion would be popular with stakeholders in the immediate short-term but normal demand is such that spaces may go unused. Possible Park & Ride schemes dominated the stakeholder agenda
- An 'Expansionist' approach to parking provision is suggested in the short-term whereby extra parking would be provided to meet the excess demand. In the longer-term, a 'Balanced' approach is recommended whereby pricing mechanisms would be introduced to control car parking. Over a 10-year period, this recommends maintaining short-stay parking charges at current levels, subject to inflation, but introducing a long-stay charging regime as follows;
 - Baseline (2007) - £1.50/day
 - Baseline plus 5 years - £3.00/day
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SDG consider that this would bring charges in line with public transport costs and introduce a travel demand regime

- Some stakeholders recognised that some form of pricing control may be necessary in the future to help control demand. The need for a more aggressive pricing policy was recognised by some, particularly with short-stay being made more attractive
- To cater for peak market-day demand, a small increase of 50 spaces would be necessary. However, peak demand only exists for a few hours per week, so it is recommended that it would be uneconomic to provide further spaces to meet such demand
- Without a structured approach, it is outlined that in the longer-term to 2026 it would become increasingly difficult to find available land to match demand with supply
- The report recognises that given the character and layout of the town, that there are very few attractive sites for car parking leaving three Options;
 - Option 1 – Increase parking within the town centre by 50 spaces. Given land constraints, decking options are recommended at Tebbutts Road. Cambridge Street is seen as

a further option, albeit further from the town centre. Re-designation of car parking is a further option

- Option 2 – Increase parking outside the town centre – Given the compact nature of the town, and mostly under-capacity town centre sites, there are no other obvious edge of or beyond the town centre sites. Riverside is not seen as an ideal option for expansion due to its location. There is currently no available site on the south-side of the town centre leaving Cambridge Street as an only possible option
- Option 3 – Provision at edge of town. Park & Ride is seen as a popular future option amongst local stakeholders. These need to be on the edge of an urban area utilising land of low amenity value and introduced in tandem with demand management techniques in the town centre and supported by public transport improvements. Unlikely to be economically viable or attractive to users at present. Stakeholder concern that long-stay town centre parking is provided to the detriment of short-stay needs, particularly at Tan Yard and Priory and possibly, Tebbutts Road. Re-designation to short-stay only would allow any additional parking provision at Cambridge Street to be long-stay
- Quality is seen as high generally but signage is in need of updating. It is considered that it is difficult to identify which car park to use for unfamiliar visitors. Improvements to reduce parking space search and to make the town more visitor friendly would assist
- Control/enforcement of parking is seen by stakeholders to be poor. Avoidance of charges at the railway station and lack of available spaces is seen as a specific problem

3) St. Ives –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- That general parking supply is little changed since 2002
- Demand is highest within car parks on a Monday in conjunction with market days and at its peak, is at 93% of effective capacity. On-street levels are at 74%
- At other times, demand is significantly lower than effective capacity
- Demand has been assessed by adding an allowance of 50 spaces to the town centre to cater for possible restrictions on the Flood Arches

- Saturday parking is less pressured and below effective capacity
- Assuming a transfer of spaces from the Flood Arches to public car parks, it may be necessary to consider a limited expansion of parking supply by around 30 spaces, although a more balanced approach is recommended
- Stakeholders in St. Ives, more than any other towns, indicated that there was a desire to encourage different travel choices than the car
- Park & Ride associated with the Guided Bus project presents a degree of uncertainty to SDG projections. At the time of the Study, it was uncertain how this would be managed and how parking may be available to town centre visitors. Stakeholders also felt that a degree of all day parking was already taking place at Cattle Market by commuters to other destinations
- If parking at the Park & Ride site were to be available, SDG consider that a progressive demand management policy should be adopted to preserve the character of the town and that it would not be necessary to consider additional parking for the town
- Market Hill parking was seen as having the potential to be removed once the effects of Park & Ride are known with the possibility to pedestrianise the area
- As with Huntingdon & St. Neots, it is recommended that short-stay charging is kept at current levels but that long-stay charging is increased over a period of time to match public transport levels. This would match journey costs to Cambridge and other destinations and also influence those who may currently be parking in the town centre and travelling to Cambridge;
 - Baseline (2007) - £1.50/day
 - Baseline plus 5 years - £3.00/day
 - Baseline plus 10 years - £6.00/day

SDG consider that this would bring charges in line with public transport costs and introduce a travel demand regime. While this is a similar arrangement to that recommended for Huntingdon & St. Neots, it is strongly suggested that the pricing structure must be set with regard to the eventual pricing structure for the Guided Busway. It is also recommended that long-stay charging levels in the town centre must be significantly higher than the park & ride site and that in the early years of operation a constant review will be necessary to assess the effects on town centre parking demand

- Quality is seen as generally high. While signage directs drivers to the correct car park, there is little guidance for visitors on the most appropriate car park to use. Given that the road layout and limited access makes the town difficult to navigate, particularly the unfamiliar driver, a well-thought out and improved signage system could reduce parking search and local congestion
- Control/enforcement is not seen as an issue given that supply and capacity are not a problem. Given the introduction of park & ride, it is not seen that illegal parking is likely to be a future issue

4) Ramsey –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- That general parking supply is little changed since 2002 although its usage profile has altered significantly given changes to the charging regime. Off-street parking is now more heavily used than on-street parking
- The small size of the two car parks makes the identification of a time/day of peak demand difficult to specify
- Taken as a whole (on and off-street), parking is well below the effective capacity although free off-street parking is fully utilised at times of peak demand, usually 09.00 to 14.00 on the busiest weekday. On the opposite side, there is very significant spare capacity for available on-street car parking
- Despite the above data, there was a strong focus from stakeholders on the availability of off-street car parking and despite the availability on significant on-street spaces, it was felt that some measures were needed to provide more off-street provision
- Discussion on this topic was particularly relevant to any proposed loss of off-street parking at New Road in association with adjacent redevelopment at 'The Grand'. While the loss of 23 spaces does not alter the overall conclusion that there is significant availability within the town centre, it will add further pressure to off-street availability
- While the recommendation process remains that there is sufficient overall parking now and in the future, consideration needs to be given as to whether off-street provision needs to be maintained. Stakeholders were of the opinion that off-street provision was very necessary and that they were against charging for parking within the town. There was a recognition that there may need to be some distribution of demand to ensure better use of on-street parking

- General observation was noted that parking on the High Street caused some obstruction to two-way traffic and that parking at its junction with Great Whyte blocked sight-lines causing a potential safety risk. Some additional parking on Great Whyte caused problems in relation to the traffic signals. On this basis, it is recommended that consideration be given to removing parking on High Street between Great Whyte and School Lane
- If New Road off-street parking is lost and consideration is given to replacement off-street parking, then stakeholders felt very strongly that land opposite Mews Close car park should be used for additional car parking. Stakeholders stated that this land was given for car parking purposes during the 1970's and that it should be used for this purpose.
- The location of this site is well related to the commercial centre of Ramsey and given the usage profile of the existing car park, users appear to regard the location as convenient. The site is currently overgrown and extremely unattractive and a well-designed high quality car park could improve the surrounding area. Initial scoping work indicates that around 35 spaces could be provided, including 3 spaces for the disabled. This would adequately replace any lost at New Road and provide a small additional amount of off-street provision
- The perceived parking problem is caused by the imbalance of people using the most convenient location to park and not the under-utilised areas of Great Whyte, particularly at its northern end. It is recommended that uncontrolled parking is re-designated into short and long stay areas with Mews Close car park and on-street parking on the southern end of Great Whyte designated short-stay up to 4 hours. Under-utilised areas to the northern end of Great Whyte should be designated long-stay in excess of 4 hours
- There are no recommended changes to parking charges. While nominal charges have applied in the past, there is a strong local view that Ramsey must be treated differently from other towns given its relatively remote location, public transport and local economy issues. Given the adequacy of supply to meet demand now and in the future, there is no strong need to introduce charging
- Quality of off-street car parking is seen as being of high quality and it is recommended that this is maintained
- Control/enforcement appears to be a local problem within Mews Close with illegal parking outside parking bays. As detailed above,

it is recommended that this is overcome by the introduction of short and long-stay measures