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LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

PARKING STRATEGY

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

**Local Transport Plan
Parking Strategy**

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Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Parking Strategy Objectives	2
3.0	Parking Strategy for Hereford.....	3
3.1	Introduction	3
3.2	Short term parking strategy (2012 to 2015)	4
3.3	Medium Term Parking Strategy (2015 to 2021)	5
3.4	Long term parking strategy (2021 to 2031).....	6
3.5	Hereford Parking Policy	7
4.0	Countywide Parking Strategy	8
4.1	Introduction	8
4.2	Overriding principles for parking within the Market Towns	8
4.3	Specific approaches to each of the Market Towns.....	9
4.4	Park and Share car sharing scheme	10
4.5	Countywide Parking Policy	11

Figures

Figure 1	Parking Strategy Outcomes	1
Figure 2	Hereford Parking Strategy Principles 2021 – Concept Plan	5
Figure 3	Hereford Parking Strategy Principles 2031 – Concept Plan	6

Tables

Table 1:	Off Street Parking Space Supply and Demand in Hereford	3
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1.0 Introduction

Parking strategy can play a major role in supporting the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system. The availability of parking space is a key factor in determining people's choice of mode for a particular journey. Together with improvements in alternative modes to provide the "carrot", strategies for parking supply and control can offer an important tool manage demand to encourage a modal shift away from the private car towards more sustainable modes.

This strategy acknowledges that car travel is the most important form of transport in what is one of the most rural counties in England and that parking issues are very different in different parts of the county. A particular challenge in the development of this strategy is to support the regeneration of Hereford city centre, balancing the competing demands for a sufficient supply of parking for commuter, retail, leisure, tourist and business needs whilst keeping congestion and its related problems in check. Clearly our approach for Hereford varies considerably to that in the market towns and rural areas.

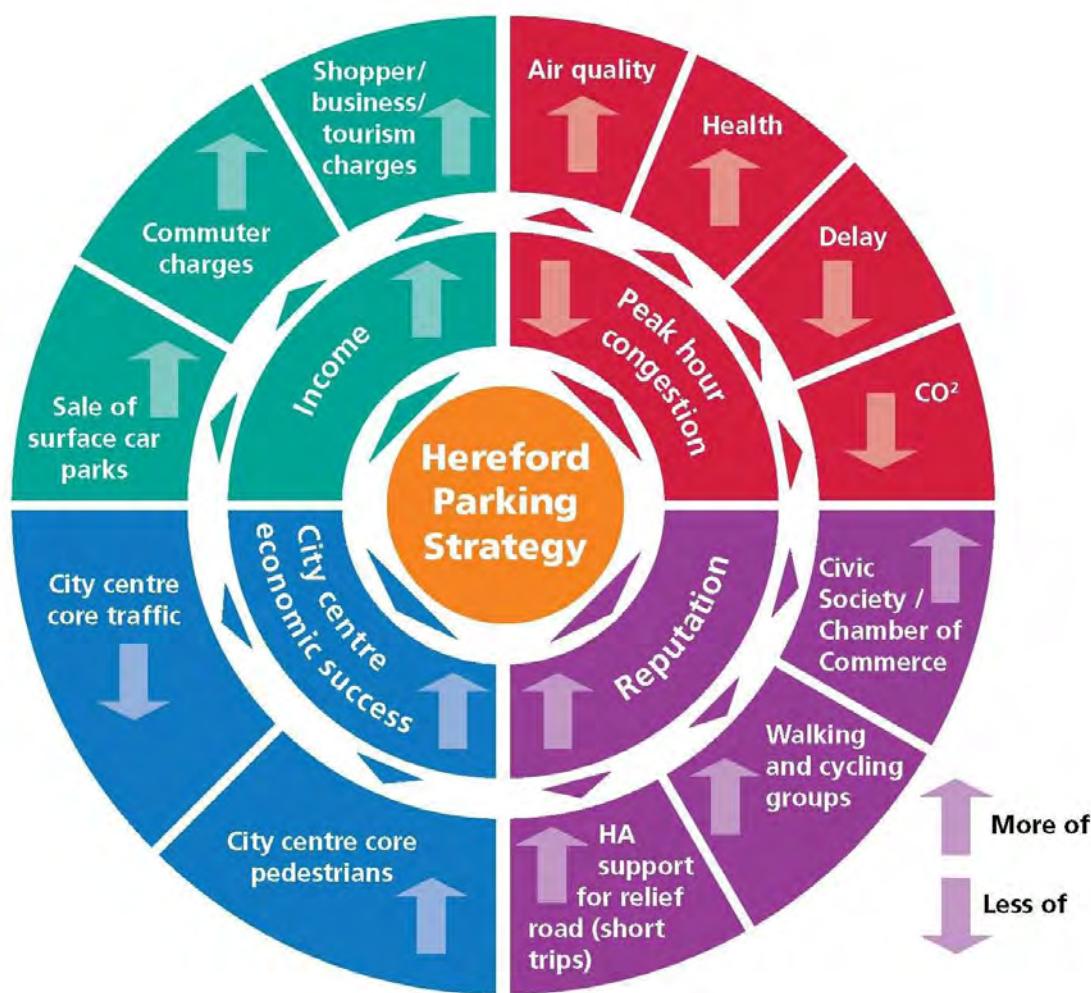


Figure 1 – Parking Strategy Outcomes

Figure 1 summarises the range of important outcomes that drive this strategy. These are the long term outcomes we need to remain focused on and they will provide a target against which the performance of the strategy can be assessed. They illustrate the key areas in which the strategy can

make a difference including reducing congestion , supporting our economy, improving our reputation and providing an income source which enables us to invest further in transport improvements.

2.0 Parking Strategy Objectives

There are a number of objectives the parking strategy must deliver if we are to work towards the outcomes set out in Figure 1:

- Maintain an adequate parking supply for long and short stay users to enable and **encourage economic growth**;
- To achieve **value for money** through the effective management of existing car parks and to maximise use of spare capacity (including assessment of the role for information technology);
- To manage long stay parking supply (for commuters) to **reduce peak hour congestion**;
- To manage short and long stay parking supply to **reduce vehicle impacts in our market towns and city centres**, retail areas and tourist attractions to encourage greater footfall and retail receipts and to improve the appearance of our streets.
- **To manage the supply and pricing of parking to encouraging the use of sustainable modes** (walking, cycling and public transport) particularly for shorter trips of less than 5km,
- **Support for our long term growth proposals in Hereford** through the delivery of longer term parking provision such as park and ride and to reduce the supply of commuter parking in the centre of the city;
- **To ensure access is maintained** in retail centres and residential areas through the effective management and enforcement of parking restrictions; and
- **Maintain a revenue stream** which will fund the on going provision of parking services and to contribute to sustainable transport provision.

Parking Charges

The Council has reviewed its car parking charges in line with the corporate charging strategy. In Hereford some long stay parking charges are substantially below those of similar centres (around £1.50 compared with £4.60) and we will introduce consistent annual increases to bring long stay charges in line with similar centres over the short to medium term. From a transport perspective, cheap all day commuter parking provides little incentive for drivers to consider alternative modes and the revenues raised from car parking help support the Council's services including transport provision.

We are also committed to work much closer with town councils to consider parking options and tariffs. Whilst we need to maintain income levels from parking we believe that town councils are better placed to determine charges in the car parks in the market towns, taking into account local needs, the local economy and traffic issues. We have already commenced this approach and will shortly introduce changes which reflect options put forward by the town councils.

3.0 Parking Strategy for Hereford

3.1 Introduction

The supply and management of parking in Hereford is a key element influencing travel patterns. All of the countywide parking strategy objectives set out above apply in the city, demonstrating the importance of parking and the role it plays in the city's transport network. The Hereford Parking Strategy will play a key role in supporting the regeneration of the city centre, reducing the impact of commuter traffic and congestion and ensuring access through effective enforcement. The strategy will also assist with the Council's aspirations to improve the townscape quality of the city through managed redevelopment of smaller car parks in the historic core and redistribution of public parking to the edge of the central area, close to key transport corridors and the eventual relocation of parking to park and ride sites outside the urban area.

One of the main aims of the parking strategy is to ensure adequate parking supply is available in the context of the likely re-development of some car parks whilst seeking to reduce congestion and its negative economic and environmental effects. Key to achieving this aim is the effective management of the available supply, some additional parking provision at existing car parks and temporary parking provision within areas of land which will be subject to redevelopment.

Detailed assessments have been undertaken to understand the current and future demands for parking taking into account the regeneration of the city centre and the likely increase in housing. We have also considered the impacts of traffic forecasts using nationally agreed datasets and the impacts of our own initiatives such as Destination Hereford to reduce demand for car travel. Supply forecasting has taken account of the loss of car parking (such as Merton Meadow) and the provision of new car parking associated with the city centre regeneration programme.

Table 1 summarises the provision of parking over the period to 2031 and demonstrates that through careful management, the Council will be able to maintain a good supply of parking throughout the period allowing for a minimum spare capacity of at least 18%. Spare capacity of around 10% is important in car parks as it reduces the amount time traffic circulates to find empty spaces.

It should also be noted that of the 5000+ publicly available parking spaces in the central only a half of these are controlled by the Council or are managed in line with the Council's charging structure. The remainder, largely comprised of supermarket and retail parking are largely outside the control of the Council (other than through the planning system). This represents a significant weakness for the strategy, and as many of these spaces are free, will undermine the strategy's ability to reduce demand for short, car based trips. For this reason, we need to work in partnership with retailers to explore how we can increase the effectiveness of our parking strategy.

Table 1: Off Street Parking Space Supply and Demand in Hereford

	Supply	Demand	Capacity
2011	2768	2109	31%
2012	2718	2089	30%
2013	2605	2214	18%
2014	3060	2269	35%
2015	3260	2269	44%
2017	3180	2417	32%
2018	3075	2452	25%
2020	3275	2522	30%
2031	4075	2907	40%

3.2 Short term parking strategy (2012 to 2015)

A programme to maintain an adequate supply of parking

We anticipate pressure on some city car parks in the short term as the regeneration of the city centre progresses. Whilst it is important to support regeneration it is also essential that we ensure that an adequate supply of parking is maintained so that people can continue to access the city centre for work, shopping, leisure and tourism.

Key elements of the programme to help maintain this level of supply and accommodate anticipated losses as a result of redevelopment comprise:

- Extending parking provision in existing public car parks;
- New parking provision within the Edgar Street Grid regeneration area;
- New parking provided at locations with sustainable transport links into the centre of Hereford (park and share and park and ride);
- A communication programme to advise drivers of new and existing spaces, aiming to match drivers with parking locations nearest to their approach to the central area and thus reducing pressure on key junctions;
- The communication programme will be coordinated with the Council's sustainable transport campaign, Choose How You Move, to encourage some drivers to adopt alternative modes;
- A further assessment of alternative provision for over-night lorry parking is required. There are around 15 vehicles per night at Merton Meadow. Alternative locations need to be identified to accommodate the displaced lorry parking; and
- Alternative coach parking has been provided at the Hereford Leisure pool car park and assessment of demand has confirmed this to be adequate.

The above programme will require both a capital and revenue resource and it will be important to ensure that appropriate funding is secured from a variety of sources including the developments and the Council's own funds. As with other development proposals, the mitigation programme and its funding will need to be secured before development takes place so that the Council can assure the interests of the travelling public.

Park and Share and Park and Cycle

The Council is developing a wide range of park and share and park and cycle parking locations around the county and on the fringes of the city. These are spaces which are available free to users and will enable more people to car share, providing convenient locations on route to main destination such as Hereford, where shares can meet and park. There is increasing interest in park and cycle which enables drivers to leave their car at free spaces outside or at the fringes of Hereford (this scheme could be extended to market towns if there is demand) and complete their journey by bike. A number of these sites would also enable park and ride on existing bus services. We have already identified around 250 spaces within this scheme and will seek to add to these in the short and medium term but our main focus will now shift to encouraging their use.

On Street Charging

In the short term, the Council is also committed to developing a scheme for on-street parking charges within the central area. Charges could help reduce some trips into the central area, alleviating traffic

at key junctions and would also provide an additional source of income to help support transport services. Feasibility will be undertaken to explore options which minimise impact on the townscape of the historic central area, enable convenient payment methods accessible to all residents and ensure the effective management of parking within the central area. It is likely that if a viable scheme can be identified that it will be implemented in the medium term.

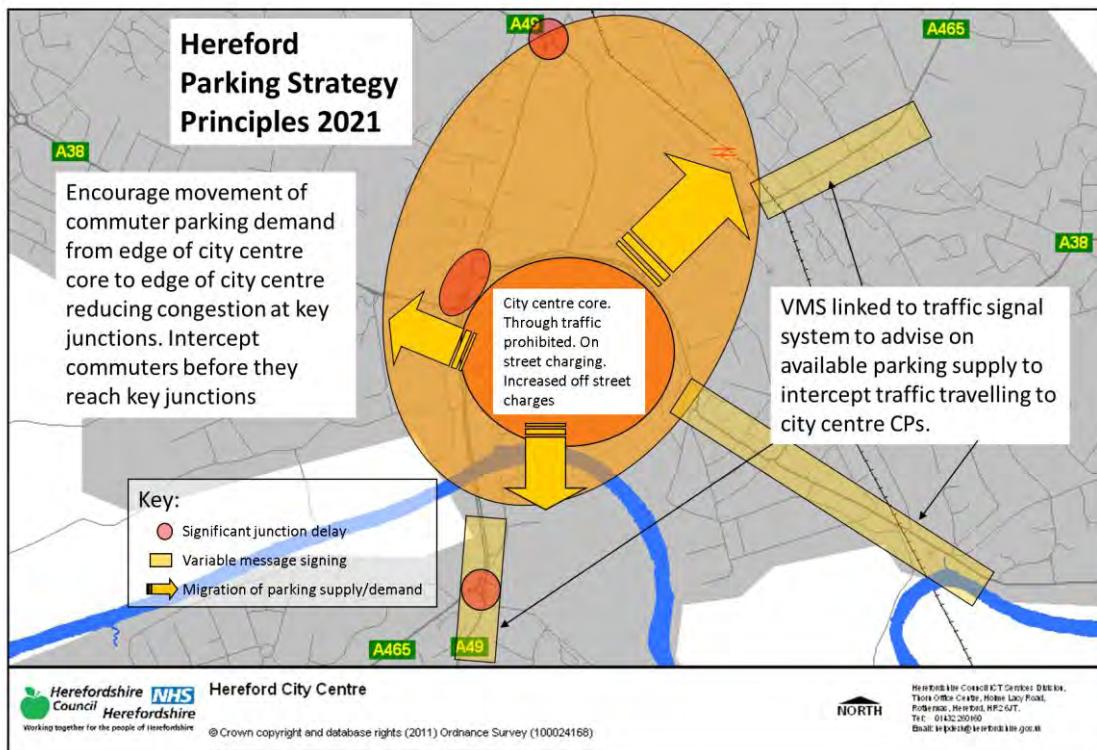
Residents Parking Scheme

In the short term, we will review our Residents Parking Scheme Policy. The residents parking scheme is a method of restricting parking in an area or street by means of legal Traffic Regulation Orders whilst allowing residents and visitors to park by the provision of residents' permits and scratch cards. The purpose of such schemes is to prevent long term parking by commuters and non-residents therefore providing a better opportunity for residents to park close to where they live.

Management of Retail Parking

In the short term, we will also explore, through negotiation and planning controls, how we can bring more of the publicly available parking within the same regime as that for Council controlled parking. We will consider if further planning policy is required to ensure that such parking is brought within Council control through the development process.

Figure 2- Hereford Parking Strategy Principles 2021 – Concept Plan



3.3 Medium Term Parking Strategy (2015 to 2021)

Figure 2 and **Table 1** summarises key changes in supply and demand over this period. This will require a continuation of the programme to manage the adequate supply of parking and will include, where feasible and supported by development, the phased rationalisation of smaller car parks and

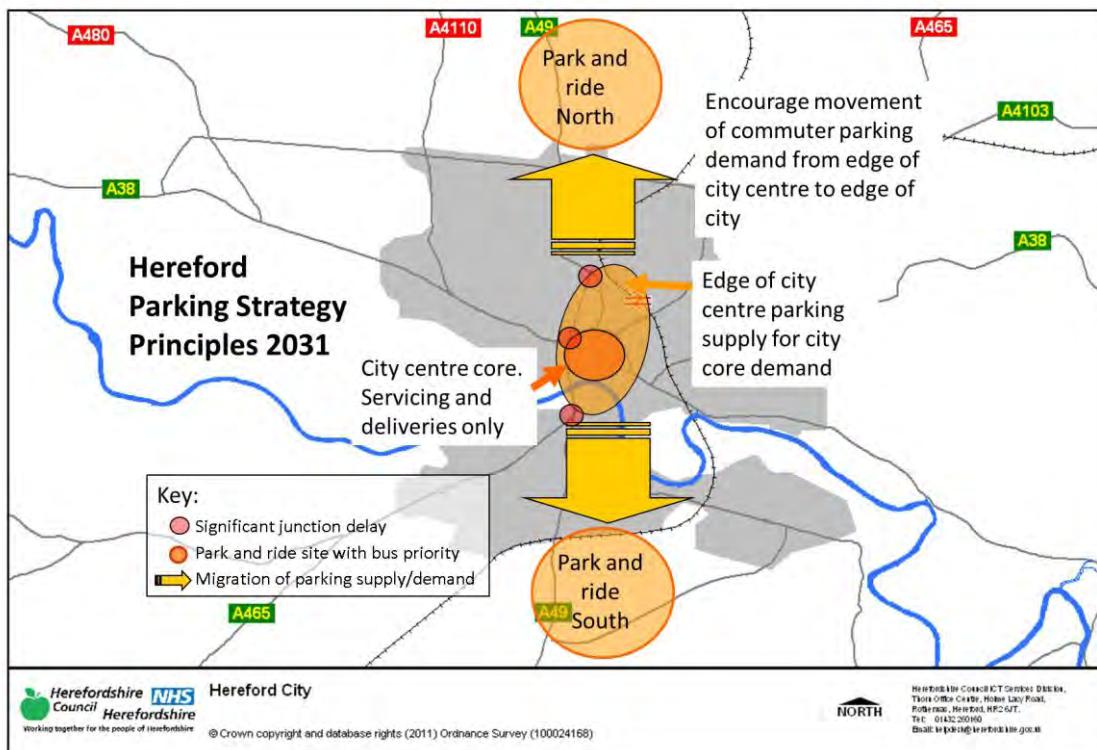
consolidation of parking at the edge of the central area adjacent to key access corridors. It is anticipated that the ESG link road will be in place during this period and this will facilitate further opportunities to re-locate parking to the edge of the central area.

In addition to ensuring adequate supply we will also progress the implementation of real time information for drivers, to better manage access to parking, reducing congestion and make best use of the spaces available. Real time systems of this nature work better where there are a small number (around 3-6 for Hereford) of larger car parks (at least 250 spaces) due to the need for IT systems and infrastructure to collate information on parking usage and also to be able to disseminate it quickly and simply so that drivers can make informed decisions on parking locations. Such a system would be very difficult to introduce in Hereford at the current time due to the fragmentation of parking across a large number of small car parks.

3.4 Long term parking strategy (2021 to 2031)

The main feature of the longer term strategy (**Figure 3**) is the development of park and ride sites and the relocation of longer stay parking outside of the urban area. It is anticipated that these sites will need to cater for 400+ spaces to be viable in terms of supporting park and ride bus services and that substantial elements of an outer relief road would need to be in place to enable effective access to the sites from various radial routes approaching the city. In addition, the capacity provided by a relief road will also enable the introduction of bus priority measures within the central area to ensure that a park and ride services present an attractive alternative to commuters and visitors to driving into the centre of the city.

Figure 3- Hereford Parking Strategy Principles 2031 – Concept Plan



3.5 Hereford Parking Policy

Policy LTP PS1 – Hereford Parking Policy

We will work in partnership with Hereford City Council, Highways Agency and other stakeholders to continually review the supply and quality of car parking facilities within Hereford. Activities will include:

- Setting of car park charges will be in line with the council's charging principles with long stay parking charges to be increased annually to match those of comparable centres;
- Phased reduction over the period to 2031 of long-stay commuter parking supply within the city centre;
- Park and cycle and park and share facilities to be free to registered users with secure cycle storage provision at park and cycle sites;
- Good quality signing to make more efficient use of parking supply;
- Work in partnership with developers and the Highways Agency to introduce real time signing to reduce un-necessary car movements within the city centre and reduce driver search times;
- Work in partnership with the Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and local businesses to identify alternative lorry parking following the closure of Merton Meadow;
- Pedestrian access routes connecting public off-street parking with urban centres will be examined for potential environmental improvements to ensure they are safe and pleasant to use;
- Establish the feasibility of installing electric vehicle charging points in selected car parks;
- Review the operation, management and charging of Residents Parking Schemes to ensure residents can park within a reasonable distance of their home and that commuters and short stay users are discouraged from using residential streets;
- Parking allocations for new and re-developments must comply with Herefordshire Council's Highways Design Guide for New Developments

4.0 Countywide Parking Strategy

4.1 Introduction

This strategy covers the remainder of the county outside Hereford including the five market towns within Herefordshire, Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. Each attracts a mix of commuters, shoppers and tourists and it is essential that there is adequate parking supply to meet demand in these centres. Parking facilities within these centres needs to be managed to support the local economy whilst supporting the LTP objectives to reduce congestion and encourage the use of alternative forms of transport. This is more challenging in the market towns where alternatives to car use are limited. We therefore need to be realistic about what this parking strategy can achieve in relation to reducing car use within the market towns. This strategy includes the following:

- Overriding strategy for parking within Rural Herefordshire
- Specific approaches to each of the Market Towns
- Park and Share Car Sharing Scheme
- Countywide parking policy

4.2 Overriding principles for parking within the Market Towns

Local economy

Ensuring adequate parking supply is available within each of the Market Towns to meet demand is fundamental to support the local economy and future growth. The following principles are to be applied countywide:

- There must be adequate parking supply to meet demand in each of the market towns.
- There should be at least 10% spare capacity within each town to efficiently manage parking demand, limit search times and reduce unnecessary car use.
- Long-stay parking arrangements should be located further from the town centres to enable short-stay parking supply is easy accessible and available.

Travel patterns, parking tariffs, supply and demand

The car will continue to be the primary mode of travel for people visiting market towns and parking spaces must be provided to accommodate this level of demand. For local journeys, of less than 3 miles, the Local Transport Plan has a range of initiatives to support modal shift, particularly for commuters and school journeys. The following principles are to be applied countywide:

- Residents should generally be able to park in residential streets and residential parking schemes will be used to deter commuter and shopper parking in residential areas;
- Parking charges will be similar to neighbouring towns and cities;

- Public off-road parking supply will be appropriate to meet demand; accommodate planned growth and be located in convenient locations accessed by main distributor roads to ensure parked vehicles do not obstruct the public highway;
- Off-road car parks should be maintained to a high standard to limit any potential risks of use;
- Good quality signing will be provided to make more efficient use of parking supply;
- On-street parking is controlled by the use of limited waiting restrictions to ensure the efficient turnover of short-stay parking for shoppers and visitors in towns, and provide for access for servicing of businesses;
- Civil Parking Enforcement will be used to manage illegal car parking; and
- A review of existing cycle parking facilities will identify where additional cycle parking is required.

Future developments

Where new or re-developments impact existing parking supply or are assessed to generate additional traffic the council's Highway Design Guide should be referred to for information on parking standards.

Revenue generated through parking charges

Revenue generated from parking charges and fines provide an important income stream to the council. There is clearly a balance to be struck in setting parking tariffs between maximising income to contribute towards a challenging budgetary position and on the other hand, keeping transport costs to a minimum in difficult economic conditions that are challenging for the 'high street' and for consumers. We will work closely with town and parish councils, who we believe are better placed to understand local economic conditions, and will provide them with flexibility to consider tariffs in their areas subject to maintaining minimum income levels.

The following principles are to be applied countywide:

- The setting of car park charges will be in line with the council's charging principles;
- Charges will be reviewed at each car park annually and in consultation with the local town council; and
- Part of the revenue generated from car parking should be reinvested into improving the quality of parking facilities on offer.

4.3 Specific approaches to each of the Market Towns

Bromyard is a small Market Town that serves mainly its local population and people from the surrounding rural areas. Parking surveys indicate there is sufficient parking supply to meet existing demand.

- No plans for the introduction of on-street parking charges
- Fees for off-street parking will be reviewed annually

Kington is the smallest of Herefordshire's Market Towns and a mixture of free and charged off-street parking is provided. Parking surveys indicate there is sufficient parking supply to meet existing

demand, although it should be noted spare capacity is usually only available within the car park where charges apply.

- No plans for the introduction of on-street parking charges
- No plans for the introduction of parking charges to off-road sites which are currently free
- Fees for off-Street parking will be reviewed annually

Ledbury is a thriving Market Town with a significant tourist draw. It is important to manage the parking to ensure that short-stay visitors are well catered for. Parking surveys indicate there is sufficient parking supply to meet existing short-stay demand.

- No plans for the introduction of on-street parking charges
- No plans for new off-street parking supply within the town centre
- Fees for off-street parking will be reviewed annually
- Introduction of parking charges to the car park in Bridge Street.

Leominster serves as a commercial and administrative centre for north Herefordshire in addition to providing several tourist destinations. The town is well provided with conveniently located car parks but it is important to ensure a reasonable turnover of spaces particularly for shoppers and visitors to support the local economy. Parking surveys indicate there is sufficient parking supply to meet existing demand, but with limited spare capacity.

- No plans for the introduction of on-street parking charges
- Fees for off-Street parking will be reviewed annually
- Review the introduction of parking charges to the car park in Etnam Street

Ross-on-Wye combines the functions of a Market Town with those of a tourist attraction and a ‘gateway’ to other places. Charges in Council controlled car parks are set to reflect the fact that there is significant demand for parking by both visitors and local people wishing to access jobs and local services. Charges for car parks closer to the centre are set to encourage short stay and a turnover of spaces to support the local economy, with longer term parking allocated to car parks further from the centre. Parking surveys indicate there is sufficient parking supply to meet existing demand, but with limited spare capacity.

- No plans for the introduction of on-street parking charges
- Fees for off-street parking will be reviewed annually

4.4 Park and Share car sharing scheme

The council’s Park and Share scheme is integral to our plans to reduce commuter car use within Hereford. We will work with local businesses to expand the network of hubs where car sharers can meet, en-route to their destination.

The concept of this initiative is to support car sharing. In a large rural county, many rural residents currently need to make detours to car share. This initiative works with local businesses to identify a

network of hubs where car sharers can meet, en-route to their destination, enabling more people to match journeys.

Park and cycle operates on a similar basis with car parking spaces provided by local businesses to where individuals can drive, park their car and then cycle the remainder of their journey. The number of sites and spaces is expected to increase during the short-term to attract greater numbers of individuals using the scheme.

4.5 Countywide Parking Policy

Policy LTP PS2 – Countywide Parking Policy

We will work in partnership with town and parish councils to manage car parking in Herefordshire.

- Public off-road parking supply should be appropriate to meet demand, accommodate planned growth and be located in convenient locations accessed by main distributor roads to ensure parked vehicles do not obstruct the public highway;
- Good quality signing to be provided to make more efficient use of parking supply;
- Charges will apply for all off-street parking, unless there is a clearly defined economic reason for providing free parking;
- Charges for car parks closer to the centre are set to encourage short stay and a turnover of spaces to support the local economy with longer term parking allocated to car parks further from the centre;
- On-street parking to be free in the Market Towns; and
- On-street parking is controlled by the use of limited waiting restrictions to ensure the efficient turnover of short-stay parking for shoppers and visitors.