

Staffordshire County Council

On-Street Parking Policy & Strategy

1. The Policy

1.1 The Staffordshire Local Transport Plan

The third Staffordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) was launched in 2011 and covers the years 2011 to 2026. As part of that LTP, Policy 1.4 requires Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) and the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to manage parking and enforce restrictions to “maximise the reliable operation of the existing road network”.

1.2 Background

Vehicular travel is and for the foreseeable future will remain an important form of transport in a rural shire county such as Staffordshire. The challenge is to maximise the value that parking contributes towards the Council’s Strategic Plan, helping the people of Staffordshire to:

- a. Access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth
- b. Be healthier and more independent
- c. Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community.

Parking is part of all of our lives. It affects where we go and how we choose to get there. Parking spaces are needed to help our local economies grow but providing too much parking can encourage car use when more sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of transport are available.

2. Parking Strategy

2.1 Legal Framework

There are two main pieces of legislation that provide the legal framework for the County Council to manage traffic and parking on its highway network.

- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (“The 1984 Act”)

Section 122 of the 1984 Act requires the County Council, by using the powers contained in the Act, to “secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities”.

The main power conferred by the 1984 Act upon the County Council is the making of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) by which the Council controls the movement and parking of vehicles (Section 1), including parking for payment on the highway (Section 45).

- Traffic Management Act 2004 (“The 2004 Act)

Part 6 of the 2004 Act allows for the Civil Enforcement of Traffic Contraventions by Local Authorities instead of by the Police under the Criminal Justice System. A series of Statutory Instruments¹ made by the Secretary of State allows Staffordshire County Council to enforce Parking Restrictions and Bus Lane Contraventions under the 2004 Act.

2.2 Outcomes and Objectives

- Objectives

The original objectives of the Civil Parking Enforcement Service are:

- i. Maintain and, where possible, improve the flow of traffic there by making the County a more pleasant and environmentally safe place to live and visit.
- ii. Take into account the needs of local residents, shops and businesses, thereby sustaining the County and District Council’s economic growth.
- iii. Actively support the needs of disabled people bearing in mind that, in some cases, they are unable to use public transport and are entirely dependent upon the use of a car. This will ensure that people with disabilities are able to have equal access to all facilities within the County.
- iv. Actively discourage indiscriminate parking that causes obstruction to other motorists, public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities. This will ensure that the Districts remain accessible to all equally and safely.

- Additional Objectives

In the review of the Civil Parking Enforcement Service in 2013 additional objectives were considered and approved:²

- i. A service that is financially sustainable at a level that supports the required outcomes
- ii. A cohesive and consistent approach to on-street parking and enforcement across the County that supports the local economy and town centres
- iii. A service that is more responsive to the needs of residents, shops and businesses
- iv. A flexible and adaptable resource to deliver enforcement
- v. A service that is able to take advantage of opportunities for joint commissioning

¹ SI 2534/2007, SI 2536/2007, SI 2797/2007, SI 306/2009, available at www.legislation.gov.uk

² Keeping Staffordshire Moving: Civil Parking Enforcement Review. Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Localism. Cabinet Report 16th October 2013. Staffordshire County Council. Available at: www.staffordshire.gov.uk

- vi. A parking strategy that brings together on-street and off-street parking provision and management.

- Outcomes

The appropriate level of provision and management of on and off-street parking can contribute to the vitality and viability of busy town centres, villages and visitor locations alike and the County Council seeks to achieve the following outcomes³:

- i. Residents and communities are effectively engaged in the parking provision in their local areas;
- ii. Support the vitality and viability of town centres by ensuring the needs of shoppers and visitors are prioritised, recognising the varying needs of the day and night time economy;
- iii. Encourage the use of more sustainable travel modes;
- iv. That the special parking needs of people with disabilities are recognised;
- v. Peak hour congestion due to commuters is reduced through the appropriate management of long stay parking supply;
- vi. Wherever possible, the cost of providing and maintaining on and off-street parking spaces is funded by the user, rather than more generally through wider taxes, rates or levies in retail prices; and
- vii. The effective management of parking spaces achieves value for money, supporting the business plan aims of a 'Well Run Council'.

3. Civil Parking Enforcement

3.1 Civil Enforcement

Under the 2004 Act, Staffordshire County Council was able to apply for Civil Enforcement Powers to enforce Parking Restrictions and Bus Lanes as Civil Offences rather than the Police under the Criminal Justice System.

The following offences are enforced by the Council Civil Enforcement Officers:

- Limited Waiting Bays
- Double/Single Yellow Lines
- On-street Pay & Display Bays
- Permit Parking Bays/Areas
- Disabled Parking Bays
- Loading Bays
- Bus Stops
- Taxi Bays

³ Report of the Director of Place – Cabinet Meeting 17 June 2015, Staffordshire County Council. Available at: www.staffordshire.gov.uk

- School Keep Clear Markings
- Clearways
- Dropped kerb access
- Double parking (vehicles parked more than 50cm from the kerb)
- Pedestrian crossings (also police)

3.2 Police Enforcement

The Police deal with illegal obstructions and dangerous parking. This includes:

- Double White Lines (dangerous to park where no overtaking allowed)
- Obstruction – e.g. vehicles blocking footways
- Dangerous parking – e.g. bends, brows of hills, junctions etc.
- Box Junctions
- Access Only restrictions
- White hatched areas
- Pedestrian crossings (also CEOs)

3.3 Enforcement Hierarchy

CPE in Staffordshire is carried out in accordance with an enforcement hierarchy that prioritises safety and the movement of traffic (double yellow lines, keep clear markings etc.) over the enforcement of other parking restrictions such as parking bays or other places where parking is allowed but restricted in some way.

Highway Safety			
Preventing dangers due to parking:	Near Accident locations such as junctions.	PRIORITY HIGH	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions and loading restrictions at or close to junctions and bends particularly where visibility is poor to minimise dangers to moving traffic, pedestrians and other road users.
	Near Pedestrian Crossings	PRIORITY HIGH	Mainly preventing danger to pedestrians at crossing places. (This does not include the offence of stopping on white zigzag markings, which remains a police enforcement function.)
	Dangerous or double parking	PRIORITY HIGH	Mainly where drivers are parked on the carriageway but in a manner that is likely to cause a hazard to other drivers and road users.

	On Pedestrian Footways	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions and loading restrictions where drivers are using the footway causing obstruction and hazard to pedestrians, wheelchair and pushchair users. This also applies where there are no yellow line restrictions in the Traffic Regulation Orders.
Aid to Movement			
Preventing obstruction and congestion on:	Main access roads into Staffordshire (Principal Roads).	PRIORITY HIGH	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions and loading restrictions to enable traffic to flow freely and not be hindered by parked vehicles.
	Town Centre shopping streets	PRIORITY HIGH	Mainly enforcement of double yellow line restrictions and loading restrictions to enable essential traffic to access the town centre and not be hindered by illegally parked vehicles.
	Public Transport routes	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions and loading restrictions to enable bus traffic to flow freely and not be hindered by illegally parked vehicles.
	Main traffic routes within Staffordshire (Non-principal Roads)	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions and loading restrictions to enable traffic to flow freely and not be hindered by illegally parked vehicles.
	Other busy streets (Access Roads to Residential Areas/Local Shopping Parades)	PRIORITY LOW	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions to enable traffic to flow freely and not be hindered by illegally parked vehicles.

Obstruction & Nuisance			
Preventing hindrance to road users at:	Bus stops	PRIORITY HIGH	Enforcement of No Stopping Except Buses restriction in marked Bus Stop locations (where there is a wide yellow line marking) to prevent obstruction of bus stops.
	Vehicle accesses	PRIORITY HIGH	Mainly prevention of obstruction to private driveways that have yellow line restrictions. This is particularly important where residents are in the process of trying to enter or exit their premises. Dealing with obstruction of driveways without yellow line restrictions will be still be a police function.*
	Pedestrian access routes	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions where numbers of pedestrians are walking, such as shopping areas and pedestrian prioritised streets.
	Taxi Ranks	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions at Taxi Ranks to prevent obstruction.
	Grass verges	PRIORITY LOW	Mainly enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions where drivers are using the grass verge and causing damage. This does not apply where there are no yellow lines.
	Special entertainment events	PRIORITY LOW	This is primarily where large events such as football or firework displays cause short term visitors to park vehicles in side/residential streets in contravention of waiting restrictions, excluding temporary No Waiting cones placed at such events, which is still a police function.
Deliveries & Servicing			
Control and enable the conveyance of goods at:	Servicing yards	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions to enable effective use and access to service yards.
	Permitted loading areas	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Enforcement of single and double yellow line restrictions to enable effective use and access to loading bays.

Parking Bays			
Control effective use of permitted parking areas in:	Borough / District Council Car parks	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Issue PCN for infringement of car park Orders
	On-street Pay & Display	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Issue PCN for infringement of on street parking Orders
	Disabled Badge Holder Bays	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Enforce infringement of on street disabled only parking places where there is time a restriction and where vehicle is not displaying a blue Disabled Driver Badge
	Residents parking	PRIORITY MEDIUM	Enforce infringement of on street residents parking places where a vehicle is not displaying a current residents parking or visitor badge for the appropriate Zone.
	Limited waiting	PRIORITY LOW	Enforce infringement of on street parking Orders where there is no fee but parking is time restricted.

3.4 Appeals and Representations

Currently all appeals and representations against issued Penalty Charges Notices are handled by the PCN Processing Unit at Stoke City Council, under a service arrangement between the two councils.

The Guidance Document which contains details on how the Processing of Penalty Charge Notices is handled was approved by the Joint Staffordshire Parking Board in 2007 and updated in 2014.⁴

4. Parking Provision

4.1 Core Principles

The way parking is managed can play a major role in supporting the development of a sustainable and integrated transport system. It requires working together with key stakeholders such as district councils and private car park operators who control the

⁴ Civil Parking Enforcement. Guidance for the processing of Penalty Charge Notices in the County of Staffordshire. 2014. Staffordshire County Council. Available at www.staffordshire.gov.uk

majority of off-street parking facilities. This will ensure that people can make the trips they need without cluttering up streets and making places ugly and hard to get around.

Car park users are not solely influenced by price. Motorists will often have a wide variety of priorities when it comes to park rather than just on parking price such as convenience, availability, location and quality. However, price is an important tool both in ensuring availability and in reducing the amount of time traffic spends driving round searching for a space, which creates additional congestion and pollution and is of no benefit to anyone. Free parking, where demand exceeds supply, can clog-up town centres and make less attractive to visitors. It is therefore important to strike the right balance in each locality that benefits the whole community.

Whilst each town and village has its own unique requirements, a consistent approach to on-street parking in the local area can seek to balance the competing objectives through:

- A consistent approach to on and off-street parking
- A well-structured regime for the management (and charging) of on-street parking
- Parking facilities, arrangements and charging structures that reflect the needs of the individual towns (including zero charging)
- A charging structure that reflects the varying demands of all the users of the service

All parking schemes are subject to the legal Traffic Regulation Order process which provides community engagement and evidence of support via the locally elected County Division Member and through public consultation.

4.2 Types of Parking Provision

- Unrestricted Parking Bays.

An uncommon type of provision where lined bays are marked on the road to encourage users to park there and not on the footway, but there is no Traffic Regulation Order or time restriction.

- Blue Badge Holder Only Bays

These parking bays are reserved solely for the use of Blue Badge Holders (Disabled Drivers). They can either be without time limit, or in locations where turnover of users is still required, the time allowed can be limited.

- Time Limited Parking Bays

These are marked in the same way as above but have a Traffic Regulation Order and signs indicated a maximum length of time that users can park.

The advantages are that they are cheap to install and maintain, however difficulties over enforcement mean that the time limits are regularly abused.

Blue Badge Holders can park in these bays without limit on the time allowed.

- Pay & Display Bays

These bays are similar to time limited bays, but instead of simply parking up, the user is required to purchase a ticket upon arrival showing the time the allowed parking expires.

The advantages of this is it is much less resource intensive to enforce as each vehicle only needs to be checked once. As such compliance with the time restriction is much greater and a higher turnover of vehicles can be achieved.

Blue Badge Holders can park in these bays without time limit and without the requirement to purchase a ticket.

- Disc Parking Schemes

Disc Parking Schemes are a variation on time limited parking bays. Users have to display a parking disc, similar to the one provided with a Blue Badge. The Disc shows the time of arrival so that enforcement can be carried out with just one visit to check for anyone overstaying the time limit.

Blue Badge Holders can park in these bays without limit on the time allowed.

- Voucher Parking Schemes

Voucher parking schemes operate in a similar way to pay & display parking, but instead of purchasing a ticket from a nearby machine, the user instead purchases a voucher from a nearby shop, outlet or public building.

These schemes tend to be used in more rural or remote areas where machines are either unable to be installed or at risk of vandalism.

Blue Badge Holders can park in these bays without time limit and without the requirement to purchase a voucher.

4.3 Deciding appropriate provision

When considering options to manage on-street parking, there is often concern about the impact that this can have on the economy of town centres and that any increase in the types of control may discourage visitors to the town centre and reduce trade for businesses.

When considering travelling to a destination, drivers take account of the quality, convenience, safety and accessibility of their destination when they make their parking choices. All parking has a cost; either the user contributes directly at point of use or it is paid for via wider taxes, rates or levies, or in retail prices.

Each type of parking provision contributes to the required Outcomes listed at the end of section 2.2 in different ways, some more than others. The following chart is a guide as to how much each type of parking provision contributes to those outcomes.

H = High M = Medium L = Low	Unrestricted	Disabled Badge Holders Only	Time Limited	Pay & Display	Disc Parking	Voucher
Residents and communities are effectively engaged in the parking provision in their local areas;	L	M	M	M	M	M
Take into account the needs of local residents, shops and businesses, thereby sustaining the County and District Council's economic growth.	L	H	M	H	H	H
Encourage the use of more sustainable travel modes;	L	L	M	H	M	H
That the special parking needs of people with disabilities are recognised;	L	H	M	M	M	M
Peak hour congestion due to commuters is reduced through the appropriate management of long stay parking supply;	L	M	M	M	M	M
Wherever possible, the cost of providing and maintaining on and off-street parking spaces is funded by the user, rather than more generally through wider taxes, rates or levies in retail prices;	L	L	L	H	M	H
The effective management of parking spaces achieves value for money, supporting the business plan aims of a 'Well Run Council'.	L	M	L	H	M	M

When investigating the appropriate parking provision for Town Centres it is also necessary to consider distance to the final destination, as parking bays right outside shops or right in the centre of a town centre will be more convenient and have greater desirability than those further away on the outskirts.

To ensure that spaces remain available, turnover is maximised and visitors to town centre do not have to spend time driving around looking for a space the following is a guide to how town centre parking provision is likely to be managed.

- Adjacent to Shops – Very Short Stay, Paid Parking
- Within Town Centre vicinity – Short Stay, Paid Parking
- At edge of town centre – Medium Stay, Time limited Parking
- Outside town centre/adjacent to transport hub – Long Stay parking.

4.4 Annual Review

To ensure that the parking provision in town centres and other locations remains fit for purpose, there shall be an annual review of all charges to ensure they remain

appropriate. However, a review of the type of provisions provided will be taken on a long-term case by case basis, due to the legal TRO process required to change a restriction making an annual review impractical.

When reviewing charges, consideration will also be given to local public off-street car parks, ensuring that where appropriate charges remain at least as high so as to not discourage users from parking off-street.

4.5 Future Programme

Where parking provision is being reviewed it will be assessed against a set criterion following a scoring matrix, this will be prioritised with local Community and Councillor support before any decision is made. Other factors that will be taken into consideration include:

- Existing Provision
- Location
- Infrastructure
- Benefits
- Opportunities/Threats

Before any new or amended programme is approved communication will be made with the local community and councillors to request input into the possible decision and will only be made should local support be provided. If local support is provided the programme is then approved or amended by the Cabinet Member for Highways in consultation with the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

5. Permit Parking Schemes

5.1 Principles

Where residential areas are close to places like town centres and railway stations that generate a lot of visitors and vehicles, residents can often find their streets full of vehicles which prevent them from parking close to their homes.

Contrary to widespread opinion, there is no special claim to a parking space in front of properties and such provision is impractical. It is considered reasonable, however, to expect to be able to park close to one's home as this heightens a perception of accessibility and security.

Permits are made available for purchase by those located within a Permit Parking area, residents or otherwise, defined on a scheme by scheme basis. The requirement to display permits on vehicles parked in that area will enable the Council to take action to deter unauthorised parking. This in turn will help to secure the available on-street parking for those authorised to park there.

Combined with the provision of on and off-street parking in town centres and near railway stations, any displaced vehicles should still have appropriate places to park,

either for long-stay parking for workers and commuters and short and medium stay parking for shoppers and visitors.

Therefore, permit parking schemes can achieve the Outcomes by providing:

- A combined approach to the provision of parking, for residents, businesses, and their visitors, within town centres
- A permit scheme that is appropriate for each location, either exclusively providing parking for local residents and businesses, or combined with on-street free and paid for parking where appropriate
- A scheme which limits the available “free” on-street parking, ensuring that indiscriminate parking is displaced to either the paid on-street parking places or off-street car parks, where the parking of vehicles by shoppers and commuters can be properly managed
- A reduction in vehicle movements in town centres and residential areas contributing to cleaner air and a move towards greener or environmentally friendly sustainable alternatives.
- A scheme that is funded by the residents and businesses that benefit, through an initial joining fee and through the annual purchasing of permits.

5.2 Scheme Requirements

Not every residential area, which perceives to have parking problems, is suitable for a permit parking scheme to resolve those problems.

Permit Parking Schemes are usually suitable where the following apply:

- Residents do not have access to private off-street parking and are reliant on available unrestricted on-street parking provision
- The local streets are full of cars during daytime and weekend working hours, belonging to non-residents who are accessing facilities outside the area and are avoiding parking charges elsewhere.
- The local community supports the introduction of the scheme

The following situations are not normally suitable for a permit parking scheme

- The available on-street parking spaces are not enough for the number of residential properties nearby and the available spaces are being taken up by resident’s cars.

- Non-residents are parking in the local area but are accessing local facilities within the neighbourhood, such as small businesses and community facilities such as schools and places of worship.
- Individual streets where residents from an adjacent street are parking due to parking restrictions or some other impediment outside their homes.

5.3 Future Programme

Each request from either a member of the public or an elected representative is assessed against a scoring matrix, similar to the parking provision one, that prioritises each location to ensure that the most appropriate or needed are investigated first.

Each location is assessed against the following factors.

- Parked Vehicles
- Status of Road
- Character of Road
- Access
- Width of Carriageway
- Duration of Parking Problem
- Character of Local Area
- Private Parking Availability
- Public Parking Availability
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Community Support

The programme is then approved or amended by the Cabinet Member for Highways in consultation with the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills.

6. Future Developments

6.1 Electric Vehicles

The automotive industry has begun to move away from Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles and towards Electric Vehicles (EVs). Based upon current market figures it is expected that EVs will reach price equivalency with ICEs by the mid-2020s and that sales of EVs will overtake ICEs by the 2030s.⁵

Staffordshire County Council has already begun to provide support of EVs through the provision of on-street electric vehicle charging points, alongside the District Councils who provide such charging points on their off-street car parks.

However, the support for EVs is still in its infancy, with Local Authorities having no Statutory Obligation to provide EV support; more long-term planning is needed to resolve issues surrounding charging infrastructure, especially in residential areas that have limited private off-road parking, and whose vehicle owners are reliant on-street charging points.

⁵ Electric Vehicles: Driving the Transition. House of Commons. 16 October 2018. Page 3

The County Council has already put together a working group to investigate these issues and any future long-term plans can be included in future parking strategies.

6.2 Automated Vehicles

Automated Vehicles are another technological development in the automotive industry that will have a significant impact on the future of Traffic Management in the UK.

Currently Automated Vehicles are not legally permitted to be used on roads in the UK. HM Government has already started consulting Local Authorities to share knowledge and expertise and to help shape future policy and trials of this new technology.⁶

The County Council will incorporate future recommendations from the Government over the support and regulation of Autonomous Vehicles in future parking strategies.

⁶ Government Response to House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee Report “Connected and Autonomous Vehicles: The Future?”, Page 3. Available at www.parliament.uk