

Folkestone

Hythe & Romney Marsh

Shepway District Council



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A PARKING STRATEGY FOR SHEPWAY

November 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of the Parking Strategy is to achieve a number of key objectives in the control of on-street and off-street parking throughout the District of Shepway. These outcomes will contribute to the Council's six strategic objectives by improving the appearance of the District through investment in its car parks; improving services to customers by enhancing the quality of parking facilities; regenerating our communities by enabling better traffic flow and by improving control of on-street parking; improving access to sport, leisure and culture through appropriate provision of parking facilities; and strengthening the Council's financial position by increasing the level of parking revenue.
2. In addition to improving the street scene, one of the principal objectives is to reduce the severe parking congestion which exists in large parts of urban Folkestone, as well as in other areas such as Hythe, Sandgate and Cheriton. This will be achieved by a combination of on-street and off-street parking policies which will provide a joined-up approach to the parking needs of the District.
3. A further aim of the strategy will be to reduce traffic flows in Folkestone town centre, especially after the Bouverie Place Shopping Centre opens in Summer 2007. A coherent parking strategy will enable the Council to influence the parking and traffic environment by utilising appropriate on-street controls (such as pay and display) and off-street pricing.
4. The strategy will also aim to make a positive contribution to the Council's revenue stream, by ensuring that charging policies for both on-street and off-street parking are appropriate to the area and related to each other.
5. The strategy will also include proposals to ensure that appropriate parking controls are in place before the start of high speed rail services to London in December 2009. This will involve different policies in the vicinity of each of the stations in the District.

FOREWORD

Parking is an issue which affects everyone in our District – motorists, pedestrians, residents, traders and visitors alike. As car ownership grows, parking problems increase, and solutions have to be found.

This Parking Strategy aims to identify the principal areas where there are significant parking problems, determine parking review areas which will address those problems, and recommend possible solutions. It does not aim to solve all the parking problems in the District, but rather to enable the Council to adopt a clear and consistent approach to parking throughout Shepway.

The possible solutions to the parking problems identified in the Strategy are the result of consultation with members of Shepway District Council, the town and parish councils, and representatives of the local business community through the Channel Chamber of Commerce.

I commend this Parking Strategy to all members of Shepway District Council for adoption at our Council meeting on 29 November 2006.

Councillor Linda Cufley
District Secretary for Economic Development

1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 This is the Council's first Parking Strategy. It is intended to reflect the concerns of local people and to help the Council meet their needs.
- 1.2 The Shepway Community Plan has been developed by the Council and its partners to provide a clear long-term vision for the future direction of the District. Work carried out in preparing the Plan shows that Shepway's citizens have significant concerns about the appearance of their surroundings.
- 1.3 This is reflected in the Council's Strategic Priorities, which are to:
 - Improve the appearance of the District
 - Improve service to customers and be a well managed Council
 - Regenerate our communities
 - Improve benefits performance
 - Improve opportunities for sport, leisure and culture
 - Strengthen the Council's financial position.
- 1.4 The Parking Strategy also links to the following documents:
 - The Corporate Plan
 - The Medium Term Financial Plan
 - The Capital Investment Strategy
 - The Asset Management Plan
 - The Capital Programme
 - The Fees and Charges Strategy.
- 1.5 Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) sets out the context for parking policies and recommends that parking policies be used to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys. The Council's Local Plan sets out policies for the sustainable location and design of new development. The Local Plan also includes a policy (TR12) linking new developments to the Kent Vehicle Parking Standards. These standards are currently being reviewed to reflect the latest research.
- 1.6 The Council also manages over 30 car parks across the District. In addition, it has been responsible for on-street parking control since the decriminalisation of parking in 2000.
- 1.7 This power transferred control from the highway authority, Kent County Council (KCC) to the District through the Road Traffic (Permitted Parking Area and Special Parking Area) (County of Kent) (District of Shepway) Order 2000.
- 1.8 During the recent past the Council has received numerous requests for changes to parking restrictions, including many enquiries about the introduction of residential parking schemes. These requests have arisen due to the serious parking congestion which now exists in large parts of

the urban environment in Shepway. The Council also needs to prepare now for the implementation of appropriate parking controls which will meet the needs of residents and commuters when the high speed rail service to London commences in 2009.

1.9 The significant developments which are either underway or planned in the District will also have a major impact on parking provision. In Folkestone, the opening of the new Bouverie Place Shopping Centre, the proposals for redevelopment of the seafront, the possible provision of a university and the plans for a new sports centre will all require changes to current parking provision.

1.10 There are also different parking needs to be met in Hythe and the other coastal towns in the District. While off-street parking here is generally good, there is scope for further on-street parking controls in these localities. Some of the larger villages elsewhere in the District also need to have their parking provision reviewed.

1.11 This Parking Strategy has therefore been developed in order to meet the following objectives:

- To improve the delivery of parking services to customers.
- To promote sustainable travel patterns, reduce parking congestion and secure improvements in local environmental quality.
- To coordinate on-street parking controls and off-street parking capacity.
- To ensure that the car parks managed by the Council:
 - contribute positively to the appearance of the District;
 - are designed and maintained so that people feel safe to use them;
 - maximise income generation for the benefit of local taxpayers and improve the financial standing of the Council;
 - are accessible to all members of the community.
- To provide a framework for the development proposals for on-street parking controls.
- To ensure adequate parking is provided for new development, particularly major development schemes.
- To minimise disruption before the start of the high speed rail service to London in December 2009.

2. THE APPROACH

- 2.1 The Council commissioned consultants, Colin Buchanan and Partners, to produce a Parking Strategy for Shepway, which was published in February 2004. The issues identified by Buchanan are set out in Section 3 of this Strategy. A response to the policy proposals put forward at the time is also included.
- 2.2 The Strategy has been developed further following consultation and workshops with District, town and parish councillors and representatives from the local business community. A summary of the feedback from each of the workshops is set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Having regard to the views received, the Strategy approaches parking issues under two main headings:

Parking Review Area – an area by area review of on-street parking problems with solutions adapted to suit the locality concerned including co-ordination with off-street parking provision (Section 4).

Car Parks Programme – a programme to review and plan for the investment required, over time, in each of the Council's car parks (Section 5).

- 2.4 As part of the statutory process of implementing changes to parking controls, public consultation would be arranged on an area by area basis, in accordance with the planned roll-out of each residential parking review area. Following public consultation, including consultation with Kent County Council, town and parish councils, the police and the Channel Chamber of Commerce, traffic surveys would need to be commissioned in each area, and the results used to inform the final proposals.
- 2.5 The actual process of implementing proposals on the ground will involve the statutory procedures established under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, including the publication of public notices in the local press, formal consultation with all interested parties, and placing of contracts for lining, signing, machines and associated equipment.
- 2.6 The need for improvements to, and investment in, the Council's off-street car parks has also been identified to bring them up to an acceptable standard. This has been shown in other authorities to increase revenue, especially when signing and re-surfacing improves public awareness of car park location and safety.

- 2.7 Priority will be given to the implementation of appropriate on-street parking controls within at least a half-mile radius of Folkestone West and Folkestone Central stations, in preparation for the commencement of the high speed rail service between Folkestone and London in December 2009. These controls will need to be implemented by December 2009 at the latest, in order to ensure an appropriate on-street parking regime in the vicinity of both stations by the time the new rail service is introduced.
- 2.8 This Strategy also considers the possibility of the need for a Park and Ride scheme in Folkestone as well as the issues raised by coach and lorry parking.
- 2.9 An Action Plan summarising the main proposals is set out at Appendix 3.

3. SUMMARY OF PARKING ISSUES AND PROPOSED POLICIES

3.1 The following are the principal issues which Colin Buchanan and Partners identified as needing solutions as part of a parking strategy for the District:

Source: A Parking Strategy for Shepway – Final Report, Colin Buchanan and Partners, February 2004

PARKING ISSUE IDENTIFIED	PROPOSED POLICY
Overall parking supply is generally adequate, but increased demands are likely with new developments planned, further on-street controls, and high speed rail service from 2009	1 – Effectively manage and co-ordinate the existing on-street and off-street public parking capacity 2 – Provide sufficient short stay parking for town centre 3 – Monitor impacts of new measures and developments on supply of parking 4 – Ensure new shopping centre development provides sufficient replacement parking capacity for expected demand
General low utilisation of seafront and some town centre car parks	5 – Retain and improve prime car parks, and allow redevelopment of under-used car parks 6 – Retain existing seafront car parks, even though under-used in off-season 7 – Consider opportunity costs of car parks and return on investment to transfer for other uses
New residents' parking areas may increase demand elsewhere for off-street parking	8 – Prioritise town centre parking for short-stay visitors and shoppers 9 – Provide long-stay car parking in town centres consistent with other policy objectives
Lack of consistency in policy between public and private car parks	10 – Encourage private car park operators to charge consistently with public car parks
Car park quality is variable	11 – Ensure a high quality of public car park provision, with improved signing, surfacing, lining and security
On-street parking is free while most off-street parking is charged	12 – Ensure compatibility of on-street and off-street pricing and controls 13 – Introduce on-street charging area by area, in accordance with programme and timescale set out in parking strategy
Insufficient supply of disabled parking, motorcycle and cycle parking, parking for parents with children, loading/unloading facilities and coach parking	14 – Review current demand for each type of parking and provide sufficient capacity to good standard

Parking charges in Shepway are similar to or higher than other competing Districts	15 – Ensure future parking charges are competitive with neighbouring Districts, and are raised every two years in accordance with budgetary requirements
Parking contraventions not always enforceable due to disparity between TROs and lining/signing on roads	16 – Review of TROs and lining/signing to ensure compatibility, enabling higher level of enforcement
Parking demand high in Hythe town centre	17 – Regulate demand by pricing policy
Parking demand likely to exceed supply when Folkestone seafront is developed, and excessive demand on other coastal car parks in high season	18 – Ensure sufficient parking capacity included in Folkestone seafront development 19 – Improve enforcement and signing in other coastal car parks
Increasing car ownership and use, leading to increased demands for parking	20 – Apply maximum Kent Parking Standards criteria to new developments depending on location/accessibility 21 – Restrict car travel to developments through location policy 22 – Encourage reductions in existing privately owned, non-residential parking spaces
High speed rail services will create significant additional demand for parking in vicinity of Folkestone West and Folkestone Central stations	23 – Improve public transport access to and from Folkestone Central 24 – Introduce specific on-street parking restrictions (e.g. no waiting for one specified hour during day on Monday to Friday) in vicinity of both stations
Serious lack of on-street parking capacity in urban areas, especially eastern Folkestone and Cheriton	25 – Review existing restrictions in areas with parking pressure 26 – Introduce residents' parking reviews in accordance with an agreed programme, area by area, with limited stays permitted for short-term visitors 27 – Consider adoption of Travel Plans by major employers (e.g. SAGA, SDC, KCC) 28 – Minimise additional on-street parking problems resulting from new developments, and require this to be assessed in planning process

- 3.2 A response to each of the policy proposals put forward by Colin Buchanan and Partners is set out below:

1 – Effectively manage and co-ordinate the existing on-street and off-street public parking capacity

There is a clear need for the co-ordination of policy relating to on-street and off-street public parking.

First, the on-street parking environment needs to be developed so that the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are matched by the lining and signing on the street. A programme of co-ordination to achieve this goal is underway by the Highways Engineer and Technical Officer, which will take several years to complete. In parallel with this, the actual needs of each area for on-street parking restrictions will have to be assessed.

In many urban parts of the District, there appears to be an excess of yellow lining, and easement in some areas will assist traffic management and facilitate greater on-street parking for residents. In other parts of the District, there is a need for additional restrictions, in order to provide junction protection and a safer highway environment.

Changes to parking restrictions, whether additions or subtractions, will need to be co-ordinated with the introduction of residential parking reviews, as set out in this strategy.

Second, the off-street parking environment needs to be improved through a programme of capital expenditure in order to bring the Council's car parks up to an acceptable standard. There also needs to be co-ordination between the provision of off-street parking charges and the need to introduce on-street parking restrictions in adjacent roads where these are lacking.

2 – Provide sufficient short stay parking for town centres

This has already been implemented in part, with the conversion of Shellons Street car park from long-term to short-term. There is now short-term capacity in Folkestone at Shellons Street, Upper Payers, Pleydell Gardens and Foresters Way, and the balance between short-term and long-term capacity here is probably about right. With the opening of the Bouverie Place Shopping Centre in Summer 2007, the overall parking situation will need to be monitored again.

In Hythe, there is short-term capacity at Mount Street, and short-term free parking in Waitrose's own car park. The balance between short-term and long-term capacity here is also about right.

3 – Monitor impacts of new measures and developments on supply of parking

Apart from Bouverie Place Shopping Centre, the most significant new development is likely to be the Folkestone seafront. Whichever development is agreed here, sufficient public parking must be provided in accordance with the Kent Parking Standards. It is still likely that there will be an excess of demand over supply in the peak Summer period here, with visitors to the beach and coastal park.

There is a large housing development planned at Nickols Quarry, Hythe and smaller housing schemes planned in other locations. Sufficient on-street parking will be required in each location in accordance with the Kent Parking Standards.

4 – Ensure new shopping centre development provides sufficient replacement parking capacity for expected demand

The Bouverie Place Shopping Centre will incorporate an integral car park providing 550 spaces, including about 28 for disabled drivers (5%). This will effectively replace the original open car parks on this site, which between them provided 434 spaces. However, the existence of the new shopping centre is expected to generate a considerable increase in demand for parking capacity, which may be as high as an additional 25% of that previously required. The overall provision of parking capacity in Folkestone will therefore need to be continually monitored, and it is envisaged that both the Middelburg Square and Leas Cliff Hall car parks will continue to be needed to provide the total capacity required in the town centre.

5 – Retain and improve prime car parks, and allow redevelopment of under-used car parks

There are several small car parks throughout the District, often in poor condition. The overall strategy for off-street parking will be to develop prime sites in and near the town and village centres, and dispose of some of those on the periphery which generate no income and which require significant expenditure on maintenance. The Council's Asset Development Project is underway which supports this proposal.

6 – Retain existing seafront car parks, even though under-used in off-season

The coastal car parks are in very high demand in the peak Summer season, and with good weather in Spring or Autumn they are still very well used at these times of year. They all need to be retained, and their condition improved.

7 – Consider opportunity costs of car parks and return on investment to transfer for other uses

Some of the smaller car parks may be considered for developmental use, provided that there is sufficient parking capacity in the locality concerned.

8 and 9 – included in responses to policies above

10 – Encourage private car park operators to charge consistently with public car parks

Whilst the Council has limited control, car park operators will be encouraged to adopt charging policies which reflect the objectives of the Council.

11 – Ensure a high quality of public car park provision, with improved signing, surfacing, lining and security

Capital expenditure will need to be committed from within the parking strategy capital budget in order to ensure a high quality of public car park provision.

12 – Ensure compatibility of on-street and off-street pricing and controls

When area residential parking schemes are introduced, it will be essential to ensure that any pay and display elements are compatible with off-street parking charges in the locality. This does not necessarily mean that they have to be the same, as price can be used as a mechanism to control demand for either, but it will be important to set any on-street pay and display charges at a level that does not deter motorists from using spare off-street capacity.

13 – Introduce on-street charging area by area, in accordance with the programme and timescale set out in the parking strategy

Proposals for residential parking schemes are set out in this document.

14 – Review current demand for each type of parking and provide sufficient capacity to good standard

Additional provision of loading/unloading bays is being provided in Folkestone town centre as part of the permanent TRO in association with the Bride Hall Estates development. Additional disabled parking has been provided in Sandgate Road and Bouverie Place, Folkestone, and will be provided in other town centre locations where there is a recognised demand for it. Additional coach parking capacity will be provided in the Marine Parade car park on the seafront when the present car park is redeveloped. The new integral car park in the Bouverie Place shopping centre will include parking provision for

parents with children. Many of the existing car parks in the District have small areas for motor cycles and cycles to park.

15 – Ensure future parking charges are competitive with neighbouring Districts, and are raised every two years in accordance with budgetary requirements

When parking charges are reviewed, those of neighbouring authorities are taken into consideration. Shepway's charges are broadly comparable with those in Ashford, Canterbury and Hastings, and rather more than those in Dover. A programmed increase every two years would build a real-term increase in revenue into the parking budget, and enable reasonable increases of 5p or 10p for each charging period.

16 – Review of TROs and lining/signing to ensure compatibility, enabling higher level of enforcement

As recorded above, the Highway Engineer and Technical Officer are undertaking a programme of ensuring that TROs and lining/signing are compatible, which will in turn lead to a higher level of enforcement.

17 – Regulate demand by pricing policy

This will be an important element of the parking strategy, for both on-street and off-street parking. There is no evidence that the recent increase in parking charges have suppressed demand; on the contrary, car park use is buoyant and off-street income for 2006/07 is above expectations. It may be necessary to control demand for on-street parking through higher pricing for non-residents as residential schemes are introduced, so as to encourage visitors and shoppers to use off-street parking capacity first.

18 – Ensure sufficient parking capacity included in Folkestone seafront development

The proposals which have been submitted to the Council for planning approval on the seafront include provision for 100 off-street public parking spaces, as well as 70 in a reduced Rotunda car park and 30 in a redeveloped Marine Parade car park. This would meet the requirement of the Local Plan for 200 public parking spaces in the seafront area. There are separate proposals for the seafront area embodied in a Masterplan proposed by Sir Norman Foster Architects which makes extensive provision for off-street parking in multi-storey car parks, but these proposals are not yet the subject of planning approval.

19 – Improve enforcement and signing in other coastal car parks

The coastal car parks at Dymchurch Martello and Dymchurch High Knocke have been improved by the addition of a second pay and display machine in each of them. This will increase income in the high season (as previously payment has been impossible because the machines were full). The level of enforcement in the coastal car parks has already improved with the introduction of some evening patrols, and will continue at a reasonably high level, especially during the Summer months. There is also some scope for improvements to signing at all the coastal car parks.

20 – Apply maximum Kent Parking Standards criteria to new developments depending on location/accessibility

The parking standards are under review in Kent and maximum standards are likely to be replaced.

21 – Restrict car travel to developments through location policy

Local Plan policy directs development to sustainable locations. In addition, Travel Plans are a standard requirement of the development control process.

22 – Encourage reductions in existing privately owned, non-residential parking spaces

Whilst 'maximum' parking standards have been applied to new developments in recent years, the approach has been unpopular. New parking standards are being prepared for adoption in Kent based on a more pragmatic approach to consumer demands.

23 – Improve public transport access to and from Folkestone Central

Kent County Council, in conjunction with this Council and using Local Transport Plan capital funding, undertook improvements in the vicinity of Folkestone Central station (Summer 2006). The intention was to improve the pedestrian link between the station and the bus stops for bus services to and from the town centre. Both stops now have clearways, and further improvements will be made to the southbound stop to assist buses pulling out from here. There is also the likelihood of a dedicated bus service, operated through a Section 106 agreement, and funded by the seafront developer, between the seafront, the town centre and the railway station. This would offer a direct bus/rail connection in Station Approach, and encourage bus use between the new residential development at the seafront and the railway station.

24 – Introduce specific on-street parking restrictions (e.g. no waiting for one specified hour during day on Monday to Friday) in vicinity of both stations

The proposals in the parking strategy include provision for a commuter exclusion zone around each of the Folkestone stations, for a radius of half a mile from each station, so as to exclude commuter all-day parking by preventing parking for one specified hour on Monday to Friday.

25 – Review existing restrictions in areas with parking pressure

This will be done as part of the on-going review of parking restrictions, in order to meet the many requests for easement of restrictions received from residents in the Folkestone area.

26 – Introduce residents' parking reviews in accordance with an agreed programme, area by area, with limited stays permitted for short-term visitors

Proposals to introduce residential parking reviews are included in the parking strategy.

27 – Consider adoption of Travel Plans by major employees (e.g. SAGA, SDC, KCC)

The use of Travel Plans is a useful tool which may be considered as part of the wider transport needs of the District in the future.

28 – Minimise additional off-street parking problems resulting from new developments, and require this to be assessed in planning process

See comments above in response to 20.

- 3.3 The proposals in this parking strategy do not suggest solutions to all the issues raised by the Buchanan document, but they do recommend policies which would alleviate some of the more serious issues raised. The proposed “parking review areas” are designed so as to offer a flexible approach in each area, so that the policies eventually adopted reflect the different parking needs of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors which will vary from area to area.

4. PARKING REVIEW AREAS AND OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

- 4.1 The concept of parking review areas will be used to address the on-street parking problems which exist in many areas of the District, with a rolling programme covering the areas affected. Each review will be adapted to suit each locality, and will consist of proposals for a mix, as appropriate, of either residents' parking permits, or pay and display, or yellow line restrictions, or free parking for one hour, or free parking for all-comers. These reviews will also take account of any planned population growth in each area, and recommend appropriate parking provision. Whilst principally dealing with on-street parking issues, area reviews will take account of the need to co-ordinate on-street restrictions with off-street parking capacity and charging.
- 4.2 The following parking review areas are shown in detail on the maps at the end of this Strategy:

AREA 1 – FOLKESTONE CENTRAL

Comprising the central area of Folkestone, the seafront and harbour, the west end, the Guildhall North neighbourhood renewal area, and the area to the north of the railway line. This area will include most of the area which is within half a mile radius of Folkestone Central station, and there will need to be appropriate on-street parking controls which will prevent commuters from parking all day in this area.

This area has been the subject of several requests for residential parking schemes, especially the Guildhall North area which has already demonstrated some public support for such a scheme. There is an acute shortage of on-street parking throughout this area, which would be a prime area for a pay and display scheme. There is a particular need to determine an appropriate form of parking control on The Leas, and in Clifton Gardens/Langhorne Gardens where there is a local need for a residential parking scheme to replace the free all day parking currently in place.

The town centre area around Rendezvous Street/Guildhall Street/Church Street has particular problems relating to access during periods when these roads are pedestrianised. The associated parking problems which arise from this illegal access will only be resolved when a solution is found to the wider issue of the extent of pedestrianised highway in the town centre.

There are also some areas which appear to have an excess of yellow lines, such as the Christchurch Road/Manor Road and West Cliff Gardens areas, where alternative methods of parking control could be introduced to better serve the parking needs of businesses, residents and visitors to the town centre. There is also a need for more loading bays in the Sandgate Road area in order to facilitate loading/unloading outside business premises and shops without the vehicles blocking the highway.

A significant part of the on-street parking controls in the town centre provide the facility to park for one hour with no return permitted within two further hours. This time limit needs to be reviewed, with a lower maximum time permitted in the centre of the town. This would create a greater turnover of vehicles and maximise the number of short-term business and shopping journeys.

A particular local need for limited time parking exists in Court Approach to enable visitors to Folkestone Magistrates' Court to use the limited parking here, rather than it being available for free all-day parking.

AREA 2 – FOLKESTONE WEST

Comprising the western area of Folkestone, the Morehall area, the Cheriton area, and the Coolinge area. This area will include most of the area which is within half a mile radius of Folkestone West station, and there will need to be appropriate on-street parking controls which will prevent commuters from parking all day in this area.

There have been several requests for residential parking schemes in this area, particularly from the Cheriton and Morehall areas, and there are some areas which appear to have an excess of yellow lines. This area may be suitable for a mix of a residential parking scheme and other parking controls.

The Cheriton and Morehall areas suffer from particular parking problems around the local primary schools in the area, and there may be scope for improvement to the parking controls currently in force in Cheriton High Street. Horn Street is also a constant source of traffic and parking problems, especially round St Martin's primary school, which are made worse by lorries using this route to obtain access to the A259.

AREA 3 – FOLKESTONE EAST

Comprising the eastern area of Folkestone, the Stade area, and the Foord area. This area is almost entirely beyond the half-mile radius from Folkestone Central station, and is therefore unlikely to be subject to all day on-street commuter parking.

This area has an acute shortage of on-street parking in the section nearest to the centre of Folkestone, from which there have been several requests for residential parking schemes. Some of this area may also be suited to a pay and display scheme. There is also a need to alleviate the particular problems in The Stade area around the harbour, where long-term parking of vehicles including mobile holiday homes causes serious parking problems for local residents, possibly by a mix of pay and display and a residential parking scheme.

Some areas appear to have an excess of yellow lines, especially in the Foord Road/Black Bull Road/Radnor Park Road/Canterbury Road area, and there may be scope for change to the parking controls currently in force in these locations.

AREA 4 – SANDGATE

Comprising the coastal strip of Sandgate village. This review will assess the overall parking needs of Sandgate, including the use by residents of the car parks located in the village.

The village of Sandgate has been the source of many requests for easement to parking restrictions. By its nature on-street parking here is very limited, although there should be some easement through the imminent conversion of two local roads to one-way, which should permit some limited additional on-street parking. There may also be scope for some reduction in the extent of yellow line restrictions in the village, which may also be suitable for a residential parking scheme. However, an appropriate balance will need to be found between the competing needs of residents and visitors.

Any review of Sandgate needs to consider the use of the car parks in the village, and especially the problems arising from extensive on-street parking by employees of Saga Ltd which does provide its own off-street car park for its employees.

AREA 5 – HYTHE COASTAL

Comprising the coastal strip of Hythe, along Princes Parade, South Road and West Parade. This review will assess the parking demand along this coastal strip, and will consider what, if any, provision is required due to the planned sports centre in South Road.

Any on-street parking controls in this coastal strip could only be introduced in conjunction with an appropriate charging policy in the off-street parking areas at either end of Princes Parade, which are not yet adopted as formal car parks by Shepway District Council.

There are also parking problems around Seabrook School and St Martin's School, Horn Street, both of which have been incorporated in the parking review areas.

AREA 6 – HYTHE TOWN

Comprising the central area of Hythe. This review will assess the parking demand in Hythe town centre, including the additional demands made by holiday visitors in the Summer period.

There has been some demand for a residential parking scheme in Hythe, as on-street parking is very tight in Hythe town centre, but there is only limited scope to create additional on-street parking in the town.

There is scope for improvements to parking controls in the High Street, Twiss Road and East Street. Vehicles parked in Dymchurch Road need to be protected from passing traffic, possibly by the creation of build outs in conjunction with Kent Highway Services. Improvements to the siting of both eastbound bus stops in the two long service roads adjacent to Dymchurch Road would also improve parking, traffic flow and accessibility to public transport.

AREA 7 – DYMCHURCH

Comprising the central area of the village. This review will assess the parking demand in Dymchurch, including the additional demands made by holiday visitors in the Summer period.

The principal problem here is during the peak holiday period. Any on-street parking here should be very limited, as visitors should be encouraged to use off-street car parks whenever possible.

There are particular parking problems in Dymchurch High Street during the summer, as well as pavement parking in side roads and further along the coast in Jefferstone Lane at St Mary's Bay.

AREA 8 – NEW ROMNEY

Comprising the central area of New Romney between the High Street and Church Road inclusive. This review will assess the parking demand in New Romney, including the additional demands made by holiday visitors in the summer period.

There is serious on-street parking congestion in the Church Road area, and consideration needs to be given to extending the maximum period of stay at Church Road car park from 3 hours to 24 hours. On-street parking controls in this area should encourage visitors to use car parks whenever possible.

There may be scope for improvements to parking controls in New Romney High Street, and the parking review area has been extended to include the surrounding roads where parking congestion is often problematic during the summer.

AREA 9 – COASTAL

Comprising the coastal strip between Littlestone and Lydd-on-Sea. This review will assess the parking demand along this stretch of coastline, and in particular will seek to encourage greater use of off-street car parks within this area, taking account of additional demands made by holiday visitors in the Summer period.

This area may require some consolidation of on-street parking restrictions, in order to ensure a consistent policy all year.

There is a particular need for additional parking restrictions during the summer in the area around Romney Sands Holiday Centre.

AREA 10 – LYDD

Comprising the central area of Lydd between High Street and Park Road inclusive. This review will assess the parking demand in Lydd town centre.

The current proposals for disposal of the Park Road car park are fully justified, as this area is used almost exclusively by Turks Removals vehicles, in contravention of the requirements of the Council's off-street parking Traffic Regulation Order. Alternative arrangements will need to be made for the KCC re-cycling service, but there is more than sufficient on-street parking capacity in Lydd to meet the demand for parking.

The existing parking restrictions in Lydd generally work well, although some limited restrictions may be required in the Queen Street and Skinner Road area.

AREA 11 – ELHAM

Comprising Elham village centre, this review will assess parking demand in Elham village. There may be a need here for some consolidation of on-street parking restrictions, as the village has been adopted by Tourism South East to pilot rural tourism and an increase in visitors is expected. Chevron parking along part of main street, in conjunction with appropriate highway improvements, would increase on-street parking capacity. The parking available in the Village Square is KCC highway land, and is not designated as a public car park in law.

AREA 12 – LYMINGE

Comprising Lyminge village centre. This review will assess parking demand in Lyminge village, including the effect on the village of the introduction of off-street parking charges at Station Road car park between May and October 2006, which have now been abolished. The original yellow line parking controls on the main road through the village were recently reinstated for road safety reasons, and it is unlikely that any other parking restrictions would be required in the village.

AREA 13 - HAWKINGE

Comprising the main road through Hawkinge village. This review will assess parking demand in Hawkinge, including the effect of the completion of the Hawkinge relief road and the use of the lay-by to the north of the village centre. While this should result in a reduction in through traffic, it is likely that there will still be a high demand for parking in the village centre for access to local shops and services. There are on-going problems with misuse of the bus stop clearways which were recently installed in the village, and there is a need for improvement to, and enforcement of, parking facilities in this location. The growth of housing in the village will continue to increase demand for parking, and this will need to be considered when any changes to parking controls here are implemented.

The Rural Hinterland

- 4.3 There are several other rural villages in the Elham Valley part of the District which have local parking issues. Sellindge, which is a linear village situated on the A20, may require some changes to the parking controls in the vicinity of the village centre. Stelling Minnis has no need of any on-street parking controls, but its residents are often unaware of planned changes to, for example, parking charges as they receive the Canterbury rather than the Folkestone editions of the local press.

Car Parking at Folkestone West Station

- 4.4 In addition to the Council's own parking provision, Network Rail owns the land adjacent to Folkestone West station which is ideally situated for the provision of a large 500-capacity off-street station car park. Negotiations with Network Rail and the railway operator, Govia, will continue, with the intention of providing a purpose-built car park on this land which will meet the expected high demand from commuters for station parking at Folkestone West. The Council's Rail for Folkestone Group has adopted this approach as part of its policy in preparation for the new high speed rail service between Folkestone and London, which will commence in December 2009.
- 4.5 If an agreement with Govia and/or Network Rail to construct a new car park on this site is not forthcoming, this Council should express an interest in leasing or acquiring the land from Network Rail, investing in the construction of a new car park and operating it. This should certainly be considered as a serious option, as such a project would generate significant revenue as well as contributing to the aims of the strategy by keeping commuter parking away from residential streets.

5. CAR PARKS PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The Council's car parks form an important part of its overall assets and when maintained in good condition, will make a significant contribution to the Council's strategic objective of improving the appearance of the District. They are a regularly used public interface and can, for minimal outlay, generate important revenue reserve streams for the Council.
- 5.2 In recent times it has become obvious to both the private and public sectors alike that large revenues can be generated by well run and managed parking facilities. It is important to note, however, that poorly run car parks can become a burden to the owners, causing large costs in terms of maintenance, insurance claims, and by becoming a haven for crime and a general public embarrassment.
- 5.3 To overcome these shortcomings it is important to maintain the asset in a good, safe and welcoming condition to maximise usage and to enhance the reputation of the Council. This in turn will produce increased income via revenue and enforcement.
- 5.4 In terms of facilities management it is vital not only to have the facility in a good state of repair, but also that it is appealing, easily identifiable and accessible to the public. This means increased directional signing to the facility and clearer more inviting conditions on the site.
- 5.5 The safety of the public while using the Council's asset must always remain of the highest priority, both in terms of physical risk of injury (slips/trips) and in terms of protection to themselves and their property.
- 5.6 To these ends the Association Of Chief Police Officers has introduced a 'safer car parking award' which is given to car parks that meet the required criteria. This award in itself is of high prestige and demonstrates the Council's intentions to have high quality assets. It also helps increase income because the public tend to favour car parks with these kinds of awards.
- 5.7 It is recognised that there is a backlog of maintenance and improvement works required and a condition survey is being carried out to inform a programme of capital expenditure over a number of years. These improvements will be developed alongside the on-street parking controls implementation plan. This will include:
- Visual improvements
 - Dealing with any health and safety issues
 - Reviewing signage and ticket machines
 - Co-ordination of car park information
 - Ensuring equality of access.
- 5.8 Capital funding is dealt with in Section 8.

5.9 New Car Park Locations

The Council will consider the acquisition of suitable land for the location of new car parks wherever this opportunity arises. At present there are too many small car parks which are relatively expensive to maintain considering the return they produce for the Council. If the Council were able to acquire appropriate sites for new car parks in areas of high parking demand, it would be more efficient to close some of the smaller car parks in order to reduce overall maintenance costs. No opportunities are expected to arise in the short terms and no specific budgetary provision has therefore been made.

5.10 Present Car Parks and Capacity

The present list of car parks available for public use in the Shepway District is set out in Appendix 2. All are either owned or leased by Shepway District Council, with the exception of the Middleburg Square car park (leased by NCP from Bride Hall Estates), and the Elham Village Square car park (owned by Kent Highway Services and part of the highway).

6. **CHARGING POLICY**

- 6.1 There is a need for a clear and consistent charging policy for the Council's off-street car parks. The Fees and Charges Policy approved by the Cabinet on 25 October 2006 sets the framework for the future. The strategy is to maximise income with charges increasing on average by 5%.
- 6.2 Season ticket charges were stabilised on 1 April 2006, with reductions in the charges for three-month and six-month tickets. Take-up of season tickets needs to be monitored, and a judgement made on the possible loss of patronage following any future increases. Early indications are that there has been a small increase in the purchase of three-monthly and six-monthly season tickets, with a corresponding reduction in the number of annual season tickets being sold. This change reflects the new charging structure, which now charges the same rate *pro rata* regardless of the season tickets' period of validity.

7. **ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

- 7.1 If the Parking Strategy for Shepway is to succeed in its aim of regulating on-street and off-street parking controls in the District, some of the existing enforcement practices will have to change. There must be new flexible working practices, based around a moving rota, so as to ensure that there is sufficient enforcement capability covering all hours of enforcement on all days of the week.

- 7.2 As proposals for each residential parking review are agreed, there will be a requirement for regular daily enforcement if each proposal is to be viable. This alone will require a significant increase in the establishment of parking officers, increasing each year as additional areas are added. As part of every review, costs will be evaluated with the aim of breaking even within a short timescale. There will also be a particular need to enforce those residential areas within walking distance of the railway stations once the high-speed rail service to London commences in December 2009.

8. FINANCING PROPOSALS IN THE PARKING STRATEGY

Capital Funding

- 8.1 Capital funding has been approved by the Council for implementation of the Parking Strategy as follows:

	£
2006/07	200,000
2007/08	200,000

The estimated use of this capital funding is as follows:

	£	
2006/07	15,000	New pay and display machines
	5,000	Purchase of Parkmap © system
	<u>180,000</u>	To be accrued forward to 2007/08
	<u>200,000</u>	
2007/08	80,000	Improvements to car parks
	<u>300,000</u>	Implementation of some proposals*
	380,000	
	<u>-180,000</u>	Less accrual forward from 2006/07
	<u>200,000</u>	

* *If this were to include proposals for the Guildhall North NRA, the capital costs of that part of the Folkestone Central area would be met from NRA capital funding*

- 8.2 A broad estimate of the capital funding which will need to be allocated for several years beyond 2007/08 is set out below, but this has not yet been included in the Council's capital budget and provision for this proposed capital expenditure will therefore be required if further proposals in the Parking Strategy are to be implemented:

2008/09	£100,000	Implementation of further proposals
2009/10	£100,000	Implementation of further proposals
2010/11	£100,000	Implementation of further proposals
2011/12	£100,000	Implementation of further proposals

Revenue Funding

- 8.3 Additional staff will be required temporarily to roll-out the parking strategy. It is estimated that the cost will be in the region of £50,000, principally in the consultation and advertisement process. It is anticipated that the costs in year one of implementation in any parking review area will show a deficit. Surpluses are expected in subsequent years which can help fund the deficits in the first years of subsequent roll-outs.
- 8.4 The overall revenue implications arising from proposals included in the parking strategy are therefore likely to be positive, with a significant net revenue surplus produced during the period of full implementation. Detailed analysis will take place at the time of deciding on whether to proceed with roll-out in any particular parking review area.

9. PARK AND RIDE

- 9.1 It is unlikely that the introduction of a Park and Ride facility in Folkestone would be required even with the increased level of retail and economic activity likely to result from the opening of the Bouverie Place Shopping Centre in Summer 2007.
- 9.2 When there is more clarity about the demand or congestion resulting from redevelopment of the Folkestone seafront area, the need for a Park and Ride scheme would then need to be assessed. If such a service were found to be necessary, a suitable site on the periphery of the Folkestone area would be required for the parking area, with a dedicated bus service to and from the town centre and seafront area.
- 9.3 If a Park and Ride scheme is ever regarded as a requirement due to congestion problems, an assessment would be required at the time of its likely use and of its economic viability. It would be essential to provide adequate alighting and boarding facilities in Folkestone town centre, as well as sufficient parking capacity at the chosen site on the periphery of Folkestone. However, a very high level of consistent use would be required before a Park and Ride scheme could be operated economically.
- 9.4 It is not anticipated that this will arise within three years and therefore no budget provision is made for it.

10. COACH PARKING AND LORRY PARKING

Coach Parking

- 10.1 Current provision for coach parking is patchy across the District. In Folkestone there is some limited coach parking available in Sandgate Road. There are also some coach bays on the western section of the Leas, but as this is currently a private road these cannot be enforced at present.
- 10.2 There is a need for some increase in on-street coach parking in the upper part of Folkestone, but this would only be possible at the cost of losing on-street car parking. The western section of the Leas may provide an ideal location. There is provision for extensive coach parking in the lower part of the town, at Marine Parade car park, which exceeds the existing and likely demand in the future. This coach park will be enhanced as part of planning proposals for redevelopment of this site and be paid for by the developer.
- 10.3 The coastal car parks at Dymchurch Central and Littlestone Coast Drive include provision for coach parking. The provision at Dymchurch is well used in the summer, and should be retained and improved. Proposals in the Dymchurch Parish Plan would need to be taken into account as part of any scheme. There is very little demand for the provision at Littlestone, which could possibly be removed if this car park were to be improved.
- 10.4 Although there is some demand in the summer for coach parking at Hythe, there is no formal provision for this at present. Any future plans for formal adoption by the Council of the two small coastal parking areas should consider provision for coach parking at one of these locations.

Lorry Parking

- 10.5 There are extensive problems experienced by residents throughout the District, but especially in the Folkestone and Cheriton area, caused by overnight parking of lorries, many of which originate from continental Europe. This overnight parking pays no heed of any parking restrictions or requirements of traffic laws, and is almost impossible to enforce. Even if penalty charge notices were issued, they would be virtually impossible to enforce on non-UK lorry drivers as they are civil rather than criminal penalties.
- 10.6 The issue needs to be addressed by national, regional, county and District government working together, and is a much bigger issue than one which can be solved by a District council acting alone. It may well be that an off-road lorry parking facility is the only viable solution. If nothing is done, the problem will continue to grow, as the overnight lorry park at Ashford is due to close soon and the volume of cross-channel lorry traffic will continue to grow inexorably.

- 10.7 A particular problem has existed for some time at the slip-road in Cheriton High Street near Tesco's, where overnight lorry parking has caused continual problems for local residents. Kent County Council plans a modest scheme here which will narrow this slip road and prevent any vehicles from parking, but the problem will inevitably only be moved elsewhere.
- 10.8 A consistent policy is clearly required, whereby a suitable off-road site is found and the necessary financial resources are provided by other agencies to secure a safe and effective solution to overnight lorry parking for the foreseeable future. The Council's Local Development Framework will seek to address this issue.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 The Parking Strategy for Shepway sets out proposals which will address the many issues raised by both on-street and off-street parking throughout the District. The issues raised by councillors, residents, businesses, traders and visitors will need to inform the decision-making process, which will determine the right parking policies for each area.
- 11.2 The recommendation that there be a number of parking review areas reflects the wide range of parking needs in the District. Each area will need to be assessed in terms of needs and objectives, so that the right balance is achieved between competing demands for scarce parking capacity.
- 11.3 The Council's own off-street car parks will be a critical element in the overall parking strategy. They must be brought up to an acceptable standard, well maintained, well enforced, have an appropriate charging policy, and must make an effective contribution both to the management of parking demand and to the Council's revenue income.
- 11.4 The parking strategy will only be as effective as its enforcement. New enforcement practices will be required, offering complete flexibility in order to ensure that infringements of parking restrictions are enforced so that their intended effect is achieved. Without such an effective enforcement policy the proposals in this document will not be achieved.

12. MAPS

12.1 The maps at the end of this document show details of the proposed parking review areas and the location of public car parks in the District:

Map A	Area 1 – Folkestone Central Area 2 – Folkestone West Area 3 – Folkestone East Area 4 – Sandgate
Map B	Area 5 – Hythe Coastal Area 6 – Hythe Town
Map C	Area 7 – Dymchurch Area 8 – New Romney
Map D	Area 9 – Coastal
Map E	Area 10 – Lydd Area 11 – Elham Area 12 – Lyminge Area 13 – Hawkinge
Map F	Folkestone, Sandgate and Hythe Car Parks
Map G	Shepway District Car Parks

12.2 The maps are produced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

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CONSULTATION PROCESS

The three workshops held for the three areas of the District produced the following recommendations for improvements to parking controls from councillors and representatives of the local business community:

The following recommendations were made at the FOLKESTONE AREA workshop:

- Parking controls within a half-mile radius of Folkestone Central station
- Guildhall North residential scheme
- Pay and Display on The Leas, including removal of excess yellow lines
- Residential parking scheme in Clifton Gardens/Langhorne Gardens
- Improvements to access arrangements around Rendezvous Street/Guildhall Street/Church Street area
- Reduction in excess yellow lines in Christchurch Road/Manor Road and West Cliff Gardens areas
- Provision of more loading bays in Sandgate Road area
- Lower maximum permitted waiting time in parking bays in town centre
- Limited time parking in Court Approach
- Parking controls within a half-mile radius of Folkestone West station
- Easement of excess yellow line restrictions in Cheriton and Morehall areas
- Improvement to parking controls in Cheriton High Street
- Improvements to parking and traffic problems in Horn Street
- Alleviation of parking problems in The Stade and harbour area
- Easement of excess yellow line restrictions in Foord Road/Black Bull Road/Radnor Park/Canterbury Road area
- Reduction in yellow line restrictions in Sandgate High Street
- Restrictions to stop Saga employees parking on-street in Sandgate village.

The following recommendations were made at the HYTHE AND ROMNEY MARSH AREA workshop:

- In coastal areas parking demand varies throughout the year
- Visitors to area should pay for on-street parking in Summer
- General need to improve the Council's car parks
- Hythe High Street would benefit from some reduction in yellow lines
- Scope for pay and display on West Parade and Princes Parade, Hythe
- Twiss Road and East Street, Hythe need to be included in parking review area
- Need for protection for vehicles parked on Dymchurch Road, Hythe by creation of build outs in conjunction with Kent Highway Services
- Parking review area needs to include Military Road and Dymchurch Road, Hythe
- Princes Parade, Hythe informal parking areas could be pay and display during Summer, once they are formally adopted by SDC as car parks

- Serious parking problems around St Martin's School, Horn Street and Seabrook School, Seabrook Road
- Dymchurch High Street has serious parking problems especially during Summer, and there is need for improvement to parking controls
- Pavement parking causes problems in St Mary's Bay at Jefferstone Lane
- Main concerns in New Romney are High Street, West Street, Fairfield Road, Station Approach, George Lane, North Street, Sussex Road, St John's Road and the area around St Nicholas's Church, all of which should be included in parking review area for New Romney
- Request for reintroduction of one hour's free parking in both New Romney car parks, and for free parking on Sundays
- Agree with proposed sale of Park Street, Lydd car park
- Existing parking restrictions in Lydd work very well, although some limited restrictions are needed around Queen Street and Skinner Road, Lydd
- Romney Sands area of Greatstone needs some summer restrictions

The following recommendations were made at the ELHAM VALLEY AREA workshop:

- Consolidation of parking restrictions in Elham village centre, with possible chevron parking in conjunction with highway improvements in main street
- Review of effect of abolition of parking charges on village traders in Lyminge
- Determine effect of opening of relief road on parking in Hawkinge village centre
- Improvement to provision and enforcement of parking in Hawkinge village centre
- Monitor future need for parking controls arising from development of Hawkinge
- Improvement to parking controls in centre of Sellindge village
- Enable Stelling Minnis residents to be better informed of changes to parking charges.

APPENDIX 2

PRESENT CAR PARKS AND CAPACITY

NAME OF CAR PARK	OWNERSHIP	LENGTH OF STAY	NUMBER OF SPACES	DISABLED SPACES	MOTOR BIKES
Middelburg Square M/S	Long lease by NCP	Long-term	366 SAGA 203 PUBLIC	6	
Leas Cliff Hall	Long lease	Long-term	176	4	
Pleydell Gardens	SDC	Short-term	41	2	
Rotunda	Part-Leased	Long-term	202	7	
Marina	Leased	Long-term	124	3	
Marine Parade	Leased	Long-term	102	6	2
Harbourside	SDC	Long-term	10	1	
Tram Road	SDC	Long-term	66	6	
Lower Payers	Leased	Long-term	29	2	
Upper Payers	Leased	Short-term	47	4	
Shellons Street	SDC	Short-term	64	2	2
Foresters Way	Leased	Short-term	27	2	
Military Road Hythe	SDC	Long-term	47	4	
Mount Street Hythe	Part-Owned	Short-term	65	4	1
Paddocks Hythe	SDC	Long-term	21	1	1
Dymchurch Central	SDC	Long-term	139	7	1
Martello	Part-Leased	Long-term	180	6	
High Knocke	Leased	Long-term	400 (estimate)	8	
Church Rd New Romney	SDC	Short-term	36	5	
West Street New Romney	SDC	Short-term	30	2	
Coast Drive, Littlestone	SDC	Long-term	100 shingle (estimate)		
Greatstone	SDC	Long-term	165	4	

NAME OF CAR PARK	OWNERSHIP	LENGTH OF STAY	NUMBER OF SPACES	DISABLED SPACES	MOTOR BIKES
Castle Road, Sandgate	SDC	Long-term**	40		
Lwr S'gate Road West	SDC	Long-term	70 (estimate)		
Station Road Lyminge	SDC	Long-term FREE	40		
Wilberf'c Rd Sandgate	SDC	Long-term FREE	26		
Golden Vall. Folkestone	SDC	Long-term FREE	36		
Gough Road Sandgate	SDC	Long-term FREE	5		
Broomfld Rd Folkestone	SDC	Long-term FREE	50		
East Cliff Pv. Folkestone	SDC	Long-term FREE	20		
Park Street, Lydd	SDC	Long-term* FREE	12		
Lade, Lydd-On-Sea	SDC	Long-term FREE	37		
Village Sq. Elham	KCC Highways	Long-term FREE	12		

* disposal of this car park under consideration

** charges suspended during 2006/07 in lieu of payment by Sandgate Parish Council

ACTION PLAN

Outcome	Lead Officer	Target Date
Consolidation of existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)	Transportation Manager/Consultant	September 2007
Complete programme of matching TROs to lines and signs	Highway Engineer	December 2012
First Parking Review Area proposals implemented	Transportation Manager	December 2008
Final Parking Review Area proposals implemented	Transportation Manager	December 2012
Develop programme of car park enhancement	Transportation Manager	December 2011
First 'safer car parks' award achieved	Transportation Manager/Property Manager	December 2008
Need for short term parking facilities reviews	Transportation Officer	December 2007
Sufficient parking provided on seafront following redevelopment	Transportation Officer/Planning Manager	December 2011
All new developments have sufficient parking	Planning Manager	Ongoing
Under-used car parks sold for redevelopment	Property Manager	In accordance with Asset Development Project timescales
Parking charges reviewed regularly	Transportation Officer	In accordance with Fees and Charges Strategy
Improved public transport access around Folkestone Central station	Transportation Officer/Kent Highway Services	Achieved October 2006