

**KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S GROUP**

**Overview & Scrutiny Management Board  
4<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

**Report Number C/13/06  
Draft Car Parking Strategy**

**Report by James Percy Caldwell, Chairman of the scrutiny team**

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**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

1.1 To report back the progress of the review team.

**2.0 Financial, Staffing, Risk & Legal Implications**

2.1 There are no potential staffing, financial, risk or legal implications arising out of this report.

**3.0 Background**

3.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Management Board appointed a task group to review the draft car parking strategy being developed by the council. (Minute 9 of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2005 refers).

3.2 The task group has reported progress back to the board regularly in 2005/06.

3.3 The working group consisting of James Percy Caldwell, Paula Winchcombe and Stephen Miles have continued to meet with officers of the council to take this work forward.

**4.0 Progress to date**

4.1 The task group circulated a consultation draft car parking strategy which went out to consultation during December, January and February. The consultation period allowed for 12 weeks in line with our commitment to the Wiltshire Compact. The group further considered the recommendations of the key groups to be targeted for the consultation in line with our Statement of Community Involvement.

4.2 Postal questionnaires were sent to a wide variety of individuals and organisations including:-

Interest groups

- Town/parish councils (71)
- KDC members (43)
- WCC transport section
- WCC members for Kennet (not KDC members) (3)

- KLSP membership (32 less the duplications with other areas)
- Police (through KLSP representation)
- Fire (through KLSP representation)
- Chambers of Commerce (3)
- Development Trusts (4)
- Community Planning Partnerships (through KLSP representation)
- Service Managers KDC (8)
- Forward Planning KDC (1)
- Ambulance service
- Area For a (through parish/town/district/county council's)
- Community Safety Partnership (through KLSP representation)
- VAK (through KLSP representation)
- Housing Associations
- Age concern (through hard to reach database)
- Kennet Carers Association
- Hard to reach database (36)

#### Public

- Kennet's voice (60)

**4.3** In addition to the postal questionnaire the consultation was placed online on the Kennet website and a press release issued informing any other interested parties how they could respond to the consultation. Three focus groups were also established to interview key witnesses. These included two groups representing key organisations in the Marlborough and Devizes area where representatives from the Town Council's, Chambers of Commerce, Community Planning Partnerships and Development Trusts from both towns were invited. The third meeting was with a representative from Wiltshire County Council's Highways department.

## **5.0 Consultation results**

**5.1** The task group received over 100 responses to the questionnaire and the results and also the organisations that responded (where known) are attached at appendix 1 of the strategy. Overall the response to the actual questions indicated broad support for most of the objectives set out in the strategy, however there were some areas that received less support and also raised other concerns.

**5.2** Concern was expressed at the proposed objective to investigate the use of ticket machines for all car parking with 46% of those consulted agreeing with the proposal and 54% not in favour. As a result it has been decided not to pursue this further and the objective has been removed from the strategy. When asked whether charges should be used to influence parking behaviour 64% agreed with this and 36% disagreed. A further 60% agreed that charges should be used to deliver the parking strategy and 40% disagreed. Views were expressed that some short stay free parking should remain, particularly in the market place in Devizes. Furthermore comments were received that whilst there was support for using charging to influence parking behaviour, charging should be kept at a reasonable level so as not to discourage

shoppers from using the towns and also that charging should not be used as a means of raising revenue for the council.

5.3 The interview with Wiltshire County Council highlighted the relationship of this strategy with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG13) and the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan. PPG13 in particular focuses on increase sustainability by reducing car use and increasing the use of other forms of transport. However it does recognise that such guidance is far more difficult to follow in a rural area. Despite this the strategy has been strengthened to identify the need to encourage alternative means of transport and further identifies the possibility of utilising space for bikes and buses/coaches. One method of reducing the use of the car could be to reduce the amount of parking availability. The task group however dismissed this option at this time given a) research and consultation revealed that there is a real concern in the community about the reduction of car parking space, particularly in the market towns of Marlborough and Devizes. b) The task group considered that the recent transport study commissioned by the Marlborough Community Planning Partnership provided evidence that Marlborough needs all its current parking capacity. c) The situation in Devizes is less clear because traffic studies are not up-to-date and therefore informed decisions on the correct level of parking provision could not be made. There are no proposals to consider a reduction in space until further research on usage levels and alternate delivery such as park & ride schemes have been investigated.

5.4 Many comments from both the questionnaires and the interviews put forward were contradictory. It was clear from the comments that there are a lot of concerns over many of the issues. However it is much less clear what the preferred outcomes are. For example some of the comments relating to residents parking were as follows:-

*“Strongly agree and request residents parking be given consideration in Marlborough”.*

*“No-one has the right to park outside their house, residents can use car parks”.*

*“We should be building lock-up garages for town dwellers or making provision for free overnight parking in principal car parks”.*

*“Residents parking schemes need to be subject to consultation”.*

*“Agree with introduction of some help for residents, but disagree with moving long-stay users away”.*

*“If no residents charges are involved”.*

*“Yes, but needs to provide enough free parking for non-residents”.*

5.5 Devizes and Marlborough are not on strategic transport routes and therefore parking for lorries have not been specifically considered as part of the strategy. A view from one consultee was that we should not provide specific lorry parking. However given that lorries continue to park in the area and the spaces they use are provided for coaches the strategy has not looked further at specifically barring lorries from overnight parking in the car parks.

5.6 A view was also expressed that we should look at restricting season tickets to discourage local people from using their car and encouraging them to find alternative forms of transport. It was felt that we do not have enough knowledge of season ticket holders to identify whether this would be realistic, we have therefore identified that we need to establish who the users are and what there needs are.

5.7 A summary of some other changes following consultation include:-

- Change of name from car parking to “Parking Strategy”
- Changes to the introduction to more clearly set out what the strategy is about.
- Inclusion PPG13 summary in the appendix.
- Inclusion of the provision of alternative means of parking such as bike racks to reduce car use.
- Inclusion of the aim to work in partnership to encourage alternative sustainable transport use.
- To use enforcement and length of stay as a means to influence parking and not just pricing.
- To aim to undertake an audit of all available parking space to maximise efficiency.
- Recognition of the need to review occupancy levels.
- Recognition of the sensitivity of residents parking schemes and the need to investigate thoroughly any such requests.
- The evaluation of season ticket usage.
- To reinforce the need for people to park to maintain the economic vitality of our town centres.
- To delete the consideration to use ticket machines for free parking control.
- Reinforce the recognition that different areas will need different parking solutions.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board approves the draft strategy and recommends that the Community Development Executive undertakes a further consultation on the draft in line with our Statement of Community Involvement prior to adoption as policy.

March 2006