

LYMINGTON PARKING STUDY**1. BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At the request of the Planning and Transportation review panel a study has been undertaken to try and ascertain future parking pressures in Lymington and provide suggestions on how these can be met. The study has now been completed and the final report published. A core element in this process has been stakeholder involvement. Stakeholders' comments have influenced the recommendations and conclusions of the study.
- 1.2 The Planning and Transportation Review Panel have considered the findings of the study and suggested some amendments to the priority order of the action plan, and changes in emphases, these have been incorporated into the recommendations of this report.
- 1.3 A copy of the full study can be found on the following link www.newforest.gov.uk/lymparkingstudy which includes an executive summary and notes of the last stakeholders' meeting.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THIS REPORT

- 2.1 The objective of this report is to suggest an action plan that, after taking stakeholders and the Review Panel's views/ideas into account, implements the recommendations of the Parking study. The suggested action plan sets out an incremental approach to meeting future parking pressures in Lymington. This report does not seek to rerun all of the considerations/options already considered in the parking study and discussed at stakeholder meetings.
- 2.2 The key aim of the study and this report is to suggest measures which enable an increase in parking capacity at peak periods in order to maintain the economic conditions which allow the town to thrive. Every effort should be made to achieve this in a way which does not significantly increase the amount of hard paved areas, loss of significant landscaped areas or be to the detriment of the Town's historic and attractive environment.

3. STUDY FINDINGS**3.1 Current Capacity**

The surveys and available data demonstrate that whilst there is spare capacity in the town car parks during weekdays in the low season, capacity has already been reached on some weekdays during the high season and exceeded on some of the busiest Saturdays during this period. Observations undertaken during the high season on Saturdays suggests that at peak times demand exceeds capacity by approximately 10%. This figure has been estimated by observing the number of motorists queuing while searching for spaces in car parks and the adjacent highway.

3.2 Future Demand and Gap Analysis

A key element in the study is forecasting future demand. In order to do this the consultants used the TEMPRO modelling tool, a Department of Transport (DFT) computer programme which forecasts end trip growth taking into account national and local factors. The TEMPRO model should be seen as a guide to future trends rather than setting out absolute numbers. It is important to keep in mind that there are many variable influences on parking demand.

As a result of using TEMPRO the table below has been constructed to illustrate the predicted Gap between existing provision and future demand.

FORECASTS	July-2009	July-2010	July-2011	July-2012	July-2013	July-2014	July-2015	July-2016	July-2017	July-2018
Peak Saturday Capacity Gap	129	140	150	160	170	184	195	205	216	228
Peak Weekday Capacity Gap	0	14	31	42	53	66	76	88	102	114

Survey information for week days in the low season suggests that there is in the region of 24% spare capacity during this period. No survey data is available for Saturdays in the low season.

3.3 Face to Face Surveys

These surveys were undertaken between 10:00am and 16:00pm on Thursday 20 August and Saturday 22 August 2009 to ascertain the customers' views relating to parking facilities in Lymington and to find out where people started their journeys from. The surveys provided some positive results with 94% of people believing that the cost of parking was good value/reasonable and 94% said they would visit the Town again. This is despite 17% of those interviewed saying they had considerable difficulty in parking.

The surveys show that nearly all the visitors came from a distance not exceeding 25 miles, which is perhaps surprising given that the surveys were undertaken during the peak holiday period. If any more detailed information is required more in-depth surveys would need to be undertaken.

4. CONSULTANTS KEY PROPOSALS

4.1 The key proposals set out in the Study for managing peak parking demand during the summer period are set out in the table below.

Low Cost Up to £25K	Changing balance of Short-term/Long-term Parking Provision Minor Signing/Marking Improvements to Car Parks and Entrances Creation On – Street Parking Bays		
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Medium Cost Up to £250K	Use of Other Council or Private Land Advanced Directional Signing	Park and Ride (Shared Land and Peak Saturdays Only) Park and walk Sites	Variable message signing
High Cost Up to £6 Million			Multi-Storey Car Park Park and Ride (Dedicated Site)
	Short Term 0-2 Years	Medium term 2-5 Years	Long term 5-10 years

5. SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDERS COMMENTS ON KEY PROPOSALS

Stakeholders and local Members were sent a draft copy of the parking study and a meeting was then held with them to discuss and consider the reports findings/conclusions. The principle conclusions from these consultations are set out below.

5.1 Short and Medium Term Proposals

5.2 Changing the balance between long/short term parking

The stakeholder group fully appreciated the importance of providing sufficient parking for those who work in the town but believed that changing some long stay spaces to short stay would create more parking opportunities. Additional parking could be created at peak periods by use of underutilised facilities not owned by this Council, enabling more town centre spaces to be designated short stay. The Chamber of Commerce indicated that they would be willing to work with the Council on this proposal.

5.3 Signing

The general view was that there was room for improvement particularly with directional signs to car parks. However signing must be undertaken in a way that is in keeping with the special nature of the Town's environment. Variable message signing was thought to be costly and intrusive.

Stakeholders acknowledged that better signing on its own would not create additional space but could reduce congestion by reducing the number of "circulating" vehicles.

5.4 Use of parking facilities not owned by New Forest District Council

There are private parking facilities which are underutilised at weekends and at other periods. However, these could only be used with the consent of the owner who will require certain guarantees relating to such matters as public liability insurance, indemnity against claims or damage. For all practical purposes the District Council is the only organisation that would be able to make such an agreement with landowners.

The best option for utilising unused facilities appears to involve issuing “worker” permits to park in a location such as a School car park in order to “free up” town centre parking.

5.5 Saturday only Park and Ride

Stakeholders believed that the feasibility of a Saturday only park and ride, possibly from the Hospital/Ampress site should be considered further.

5.6 Coach Parking

Although not part of the study stakeholders felt that consideration should be given to providing a drop off/on point for coach passengers with longer term coach parking facilities being provided outside the main town area, for example the Ampress site could be considered.

5.7 Long Term proposals

5.8 Park and Ride

Stakeholders felt that a permanent full time park and ride scheme would not be viable for Lymington. Even in larger conurbations such as Winchester and Salisbury, schemes required considerable revenue subsidies to cover costs.

5.9 Multi Storey/Decked Provision

A multi storey/decked car park will have a considerable environmental impact, not only visually but also there would be increased traffic volumes to nearby residents. Given the need to generate sufficient income to payback construction costs and provide a return on capital invested, parking charges would have to be set at a level to generate sufficient income to pay these financing costs. It is most unlikely the present low cost clock/tariff structure could be maintained in such circumstances as there would be insufficient income to pay for the financing costs of a multi storey/decked car park.

6. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES RAISED BY PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION PANELS COMMENTS

6.1 Prediction of Future Demand

After discussion the Panel was satisfied with the methodology that was used to establish the projected shortfall of parking in Lymington and felt that progress on this issue was essential to maintain the viability of the Town.

6.2 Priority Areas for the Action Plan

The Panel felt that priority should be given in the plan to those actions that would create more parking opportunities, namely the use of privately owned parking areas (a parking permit system for employees of Lymington businesses would divert this demand out of the visitor car parks) and increasing the ratio of short to long stay spaces. Better signing would improve traffic circulation but would not in itself create more space. They asked for these measures to be progressed with some urgency during the coming months.

6.3 Consideration of Park and Ride and Multi - Storey Parking

The Panel felt that Park and Ride would not be practical for Lymington bearing in mind the large revenue operating deficits experienced by others and the relatively small size of Lymington. The Panel acknowledged that a multi-storey car park would increase parking capacity. However the Panel felt that the environmental impact and the economic impact of higher parking charges on the Town would be very significant and not all beneficial. Given this, the use of multi- storey car parks should not be put in the immediate action plan and its consideration deferred until all other possible measures had been put in place.

7. OVERALL SUMMARY

- 7.1 The study has provided an estimate of the additional parking demand until 2018 and suggested ways of coping with that demand. The stakeholder consultations have meant that the ideas and views of groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Lymington Society and local Members have been taken into account and form an integral part of the study itself.
- 7.2 Subsequent to the parking study being undertaken it has emerged that the one site project may provide the opportunity for approximately 40 additional parking spaces to be created at the Town Hall when the existing temporary buildings are removed. In addition to these 13 spaces may be constructed at the front of the Town Hall subject to consultation, planning permission and the clarification of some legal issues. All these spaces, when constructed, will be available for public use at week ends and Bank Holidays. This will make a contribution towards reducing the shortfall of peak period parking provision in Lymington.
- 7.3 Predicting future parking pressures is not an exact science but the study has given a clear indication of the scale of parking pressures. Given the comments of stakeholders and report findings it is suggested that the Council concentrate on considering the short and medium term options. When these have been completed the impact should be measured to ascertain if the long term and high impact proposal for multi storey/decked car parking should be pursued.

8. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

Increasing the ratio of short stay to long stay and utilise underused private/public facilities.

Timetable Financial Year	Teams Responsible	Action
2010/2011	Parking service	Use of privately owned parking areas - discussions with Chamber of Commerce to establish numbers involved and ways of managing staff parking. Identification of sites.

Timetable Financial Year	Teams Responsible	Action
2010/2011	Parking Service/ Legal and Democratic /Property Services	Use of privately owned parking places - If sites identified, set up agreement with land owners and introduce permit scheme (to be run through the Chamber of Commerce). Changing ratio of long and short stay places –The scope of the change will depend on the results of length of stay surveys and the amount of private parking that can be utilised. Amend parking order and re-sign.
2011/2012-2012/2013	Parking Service/Legal and Democratic Services/Property Services	Investigate Saturday park and ride from Ampress site.
2011/2012	Parking Services/Legal and Democratic Services/Property Services/HCC Highways	Investigate and if possible implement coach parking drop off/pick up point with longer term parking facility out of town.

(ii) Signing

Timetable Financial Year	Teams Responsible	Action
2010/2011 & 2011/2012	Transportation/Parking/H CC Highways	Draw up objectives of new signing scheme and scoping document for design and implementation stages. Bid for a “pump priming” budget of £6,000 for design and £15,000 for implementation.

The action plan above gives a stepped approach to mitigating the ever increasing pressures to provide for those wishing to visit Lymington during the peak summer period, particularly on Saturday Market Days.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The environmental implications of this report are significant for two primary reasons, firstly for the Town to thrive there needs to be sufficient parking provided for those wishing to visit the town and secondly the facilities provided should not be so intrusive as to detract from the towns special environment.

- 9.2 Making more parking spaces available for public use during the peak periods should reduce the need for motorists to search for spaces consequently reducing the amount of car derived pollution.
- 9.3 At the present time improvements are being made to cycle routes in Lymington. These should encourage the use of cycles for local journeys which will make a contribution to reducing congestion and pollution caused by vehicles.
- 9.4 A balance will always need to be struck between providing parking at a cost to sustain the local economy and discouraging the use of vehicles in order to reduce congestion and pollution.

10. EQUALITY/DIVERSITY AND CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This report has no significant implications for the above.

11. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 Through a questionnaire and two meetings stakeholders have been fully engaged throughout the study and their ideas/views are incorporated in the study and conclusions of this report. The stakeholder group included The Chamber of Commerce, Lymington Society, Town Council, Local District and County Members and Hampshire County Council Highways.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Until detailed investigations are undertaken, it is not possible to set out the full financial implications of the action plan. The use of private parking areas may involve costs relating to signing, lining and there may be a requirement to pay some form of rental. Changing the ratio of long to short stay spaces will incur some costs relating to signing and amending the parking order. It is hoped that the use of private spaces and changing the ratio of long to short spaces will be revenue neutral in the long term.
- 12.2 This report asks the Cabinet to agree the action plan set out in Section 8. However, it is emphasised that only low or no-cost actions that optimise efficiencies will progress, following approval of this report.
- 12.3 In view of the Council's overall financial position, any other actions, which incur costs and may have budgetary implications, will be subject to a separate detailed report once these costs are available before any work commences.

13. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 13.1 The Portfolio Holder very much welcomed the parking study with its strong element of local consultation, and also welcomes this report which summarises the outcomes and action plans aimed at contributing to solving the long outstanding problems of parking in Lymington.

14. CONCLUSIONS

- 14.1 The study has provided data and ideas to enable the Council to set out plans for managing the provision of parking in Lymington. Following stakeholder consultations the action points set out in section 8 of this report, if implemented, should create additional parking opportunities at peak times without having a detrimental effect on the Town's environment. The effectiveness of these actions need to be assessed some 12 months after they have been implemented.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 That Cabinet agree the action plan be progressed provided this is done within the financial guidelines set out in section 12 of this report.

For Further Information Please Contact:

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Background Papers:

Lymington Parking Study
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