

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

PARKING DELIVERY PLAN

March 2018

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1. Introduction

This document is an update to the Parking Implementation Plan produced in October 2017.

A new Local Transport Plan LTP4 covering March 2016 – 2036 and revised guidance from the Secretary of State for Transport necessitated the publication of a revised Buckinghamshire Vision for Parking and a new on-street Parking Delivery Plan to deliver it.

This Parking Delivery Plan (PDP) is an 18 point plan that is designed to help shape, manage and deliver Buckinghamshire County Council's Vision for Parking, setting out specific actions for delivery as well as aspirations for future parking management.

Subsidiary documents set out how we carry out civil enforcement:-

- **Buckinghamshire civil enforcement protocols**
- **Parking guide for LAFs**

All documents are available on our website at: - www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport/parking

These documents support Buckinghamshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4: 2016 – 2036.

2. Buckinghamshire's Vision for Parking

The Secretary of State requires local authorities to have a clear idea of what its parking policies are and what it intends to achieve by them. Local authorities are also required to appraise their policy and objectives regularly.

The 2016 Buckinghamshire County Council's Vision for Parking is to:

- Provide parking where appropriate;
- Control parking where necessary;
- Enforce parking fairly;
- Operate parking efficiently and cost effectively.

3. Legal background

On-street parking enforcement activities and policies are governed by a comprehensive suite of primary legislation. The main acts covering these activities are:

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984: (as amended) (RTRA) makes it the duty of the local traffic authority (Buckinghamshire County Council) to “secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities so far as this is practicable”. The Act empowers the county council to control waiting and loading and to provide parking places.

The Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996: sets out the legal process for making traffic regulation orders to implement measures under the RTRA.

The Road Traffic Act 1991 (RTA) decriminalised parking offences and introduced civil penalties in London taking the role of enforcement of waiting, loading and parking away from the police and traffic warden service and transferring the responsibility of enforcement to the traffic authority.

The Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (England) General Regulations 1997: extended the civil penalties regime outside of London.

Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (enacted 2008) (TMA): replaced the RTA for England and Wales and is the current legislation under which civil parking enforcement (CPE) is regulated.

The Secretary of State’s Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (November 2015) and;

The Secretary of State’s Operational Guidance to Local Authorities on Parking Policy and Enforcement (March 2015) provide additional regulation and good practice for traffic authorities operating CPE.

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) prescribes the traffic and parking signs to be used on the highway.

4. Management of public parking

The decriminalisation of parking enforcement (DPE) under the provisions of the RTA enabled traffic authorities to have, for the first time, control over parking and traffic policy and its enforcement. At the same time, it made the process a civil matter and put in place measures to enable a motorist to challenge enforcement that was free to use and avoided having to go to Law.

Buckinghamshire (like the majority of county councils) adopted the enforcement model whereby the county on-street enforcement was carried out under agency agreements by the district councils along with their off-street car park enforcement. Initially all districts except South Bucks took on DPE powers. A further, later application extended powers to include the South Bucks district highway network while excluding the South Bucks District Council's car parks from the civil parking enforcement regime.

The current operational model (as at February 2018) is:-

- Buckinghamshire County Council is responsible for countywide on-street parking enforcement under CPE;
- Aylesbury Vale District Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council (from April 2017) (managed by Chiltern District Council) and Wycombe District Council, each operate off-street parking enforcement under CPE;

5. Buckinghamshire on-street parking management

Day-to-day operational management and formal representations are undertaken by the Parking Services team sitting within Transport for Buckinghamshire.

On-street enforcement, administration of permits and first-line representations of appeals are carried out under contract by NSL Services Ltd.

6. Decision Making and the Parking Governance Board

The Secretary of State's Operational Guidance to Local Authorities on Parking Policy and Enforcement requires enforcement authorities to formulate, publish and review its parking policies and enforcement operation. In Buckinghamshire, policy decisions are made by the Cabinet or are delegated to a specific Cabinet Member. In the case of parking, this is the Cabinet Member for Transport.

The key advisory body to the Cabinet Member for Transport on Parking Issues is the Parking Governance Board, who are also part of the governance structure for the management of the On-Street Parking Enforcement Contract. The Board is made up of Councillors, Officers and Contractor representatives and meets quarterly.

7. The Parking Delivery Plan

7.1 Reducing the parking service deficit

One of the key principles of decriminalisation of parking was that schemes should be at least self-financing. Part 6 of the TMA replaced the RTA in England and Wales and changed DPE to civil parking enforcement (CPE). Under the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance published under s.87 of the TMA, the requirement that parking regimes should be at least self-financing also changed with the advice that CPE enforcement authorities should run their civil parking enforcement (CPE) operations "efficiently, effectively and economically". It goes on to say that it is still a sensible aim to make the operation self-financing as soon as possible, and that traffic authorities "will need to bear in mind that if their scheme is not self-financing, then they need to be certain that they can afford to pay for it from within existing funding. The Secretary of State will not expect either national or local taxpayers to meet any deficit".

Since civil parking enforcement was adopted in Buckinghamshire it has operated at a financial deficit. Enforcement and first line notice processing is contracted out (currently to NSL Services Ltd until 2021) while the County Council retains responsibility for parking policy, formal representations and contract management and the introduction of new waiting, loading and parking schemes through Transport for Buckinghamshire. These measures have significantly reduced the operational deficit to its current level.

Parking Delivery Plan 1: Civil Enforcement to be self-financing over time

PDP.1 – The County Council believes civil enforcement should aim to be self-financing. It will implement strategies that aim to significantly reduce or ideally eliminate the deficit over time.

Options to reduce the deficit

Reducing the deficit and balancing the account can only be achieved by either:-

- a. Reducing expenditure
- b. Efficiencies
- c. Increasing the income

Or a combination of all three.

- **Reducing expenditure**

Bringing on-street parking enforcement into a single centralised operation and contracting out enforcement and first line representation has delivered significant efficiencies and reduced operational expenditure. The existing contract and contractor works well and a recent negotiated extension of the contract to August 2021 has delivered an additional 5% overall saving without any loss of service. There is little opportunity for further efficiencies on the current contractual model.

Reducing the number of deployed civil enforcement officers (CEOs), the main cost element of enforcement, is not an option. The current level of CEOs (23 CEOs as at 2017) is stretched thinly to adequately enforce the existing restrictions over a predominantly rural county and any reduction could result in a loss of income and a deterioration of our primary objective of maintaining safe traffic flow on the highway network and increase levels of dissatisfaction from residents and Members where parking issues are a problem.

- **Efficiencies – online applications and virtual permit options**

There are opportunities for greater efficiencies particularly where technology can streamline or eliminate resource intensive activity. Opportunities exist to move to online applications which will be quicker to process. There is also the opportunity for a number of our paper-based permits to be replaced by virtual permits which will potentially save on the cost of stationary and postage as well as giving significant enforcement advantages.

Parking Delivery Plan 2: online applications and virtual permits

PDP.2 – Actively work towards the Delivery of improved on-line application procedures and the introduction of virtual permits during 2018.

Parking Delivery Plan 3: cashless parking

PDP.3 – Formulate the terms of reference and contractual process for implementing cashless parking during 2018.

Parking Delivery Plan 4: review of limited waiting bays

PDP.4 – The provision of free on-street limited waiting bays shall be reviewed in a case by case basis, commencing in the town centres and areas of greatest parking stress.

Free limited waiting bays are inefficient and time consuming to enforce. Even where we do issue a penalty charge notice (PCN) there is an increasing trend that appeals are being lost due to the reliance of evidence such as tyre valve position that a vehicle has not moved.

Because of this, they may not deliver the turnover of parking spaces needed for the vitality of local communities.

As such, we will be reviewing the provision of limited waiting bays, including investigation of potential alternative methods of enforcement through new, innovative, technology that do not rely on valve-position evidence or lengthy visits by CEOs.

Parking Delivery Plan 5: streamlining the TRO Process to improve delivery times

PDP.5 – The process for making a TRO by signature has been adopted for all Traffic Regulation Orders. Further opportunities to improve delivery times will be sought during 2018.

As well as bringing the traffic order making process in-house, we have introduced the process of making the order by signature rather than by seal. This has reduced the amount of time and cost involved in making new Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Further opportunities to improve delivery times will be sought during 2018.

- **Increasing income to reduce the deficit**

Parking income comes from four main sources:-

- Increasing parking controls.
- Resident and other permit charges;
- Penalty charge notice (PCN) income;
- On-street parking charges

- **Increasing parking controls**

The demand from residents for increasing areas of parking controls, particularly in our towns and built up areas, continues and is only constrained by available resources. In principle, this should mean that with more restrictions, the potential is there for more income from permits sold and PCNs issued provided that enforcement levels are increased to take account of the greater area.

Where new controls are adjacent or close to others the likelihood is that the enforcement cost would be covered by the income from the new controls. This is less certain where new controls are isolated, involving greater travel time to and from the area to be enforced.

- **Resident and other permit charges**

Prior to 2017, resident permit charges were not been reviewed or changed for about a decade. Most enforcement authorities regularly review their permit charges to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Increasing permit charges does increase income, but unless they are very significant it would not have a significant effect on reducing the deficit.

Parking Delivery Plan 6: charges to be reviewed annually

PDP.6 – Parking and permit charges will be reviewed annually as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan Process. Any changes will be implemented for the start of the next financial year.

- **Permit options: Limiting the number of permits per household**

In built up areas where kerb space parking is at a premium, multiple car ownership per household causes problems for neighbours who find it difficult to find a parking space particularly where properties are only wide enough for at most one parking space outside the property.

Buckinghamshire County Council has already implemented the principle of limiting the number of permits to 3 permits per household and a differential parking structure with higher charges for the second and third permit.

Having a maximum permit number provides a degree of fairness particularly in streets with no off-street parking and limited kerbside space. Where there is sufficient kerbside space for additional permits, these may be considered, and a review of this policy will take place in 2018

Parking Delivery Plan 7: revisions to permit eligibility criteria

PDP.7 – Revised permit eligibility criteria has been formulated to implement differential resident permit with a limit to a maximum of three per residence in locations where on-street parking is at a premium. This is to be further reviewed for impact and findings discussed with the Parking Governance Board and Members to establish whether the limit should be removed.

- **Penalty charge notice income**

Penalty charge notice (PCN) income is derived from motorists parking in contravention and getting a 'ticket' for doing so. The Secretary of State sets the level of the PCN and there are higher and lower charges dependent on the contravention type.

The stated objectives of CPE are a move towards 100% compliance which would mean motorists never parking in contravention. The ideal that all motorists will park legally may seem far-fetched but authorities who have been operating CPE for longer than ourselves and whose enforcement area restrictions have not grown in size have reported more compliance and a downward trend in the number of PCNs issued.

In recent years the PCN income in Buckinghamshire has remained fairly static but this is mostly as a result of more areas of enforcement being introduced rather than a tendency for motorists to ignore the restrictions – although this of course does still happen. The demand for more restrictions to tackle parking demand and inconsiderate and dangerous parking continues to grow in the county and is only restricted by the limited availability of funds to develop and implement such schemes. This has meant that the trend towards better compliance and less PCNs issued has been masked by the increase in areas of restrictions which has kept PCN numbers broadly the same. Over time this situation will change and as a result the income from PCNs cannot be relied on as a key means of reducing the parking account deficit.

7.2 Objectives of on-street parking control

7.2.1 Parking Guide for LAFs

The development of parking schemes is primarily promoted locally through the Local Area Forums (LAFs). We have produced guidance covering the formulation of parking schemes and local engagement in the 'Parking Guide for LAFs' which sets out the detail for parking scheme development and the practical delivery of the Council's first two policy statements:-

'1. provide parking where appropriate and 2. control parking where necessary'

LAF funded schemes will be progressed where there is the demonstrable need to:-

- Remove dangerous or obstructive parking
- Reduce congestion caused by parked vehicles
- Make best use of kerb-side parking space available by:
 - Prioritising parking for permit holders over others for the available spaces
 - Improve access and reduce congestion in residential streets
 - Reduce the number of commuters restricting local parking
 - Short-stay parking (1 - 2 hours) prioritised in locations near shops and businesses
 - Provision for the delivery of goods
 - Blue Badge provision made in line with standards

7.2.2 Scheme development and local engagement

Parking issues have the potential to be very contentious, partly due to the difficulty in gauging the problem area and level of support for 'something to be done' locally. Looking at too small an area often results in solving one problem by displacing it to another adjacent street resulting in more calls to do something about the parking.

Individuals or local groups may believe or give the impression that they are representing the views of the wider community but this is not always the case. Experience has shown that some local informal consultation is beneficial and can help inform the decision making process along the way. Localised engagement also helps in potentially resolving contentious aspects and has the potential to reduce the number of objections at the Statutory Consultation stage when the traffic orders are formally advertised.

For parking schemes other than purely highway safety waiting and loading restrictions we will standardise the consultation process stages as 'opinion survey', 'detailed design survey' and 'statutory consultation' stages.

Opinion Survey

It is intended that the opinion survey will use a standard questionnaire designed to establish the extent of the parking problem and inform the design process. The respondents will be focused on

the parking issues in their street and will be encouraged to respond online. The consultation period will mirror the statutory timeframe when the traffic orders are advertised of 21 days.

The analysis of the opinion survey will enable the scheme details to be finalised without abortive work for measures unlikely to be supported locally. The results of the opinion survey, the parameters of the detailed design area will be reported in an appropriate formal decision report.

Detailed Design

The detailed design consultation will be based on the tried and tested measures out below. Once the preliminary design is finalised and agreed, a second, detailed, design consultation will be carried out to gauge if we have come up with the right solution and the extent of support for the scheme. As with the opinion survey, we will use a standardised questionnaire which will allow the local community to express their view via the online questionnaire on the proposals for their street. The consultation period will mirror the statutory timeframe when the traffic orders are advertised of 21 days.

The results of the detailed design consultation, amendments to the finalised design will be reported in an appropriate decision report. As part of the approval, the decision to advertise traffic orders will be agreed along with the statement of reasons for doing so.

Localised highway safety schemes

A significant number of requests to 'do something about parking' actually relate to dangerous or obstructive parking where motorists are breaking the Highway Code rules.

Where it is proposed to introduce waiting restrictions to reinforce only the Highway Code rules set out in more detail below, it is intended to dispense with informal consultation stages and proceed directly to the Statutory Consultation stage when the traffic orders are formally advertised. As part of the formal approval process, the decision to advertise traffic orders will be agreed along with the statement of reasons for doing so.

Inconsiderate, as well as dangerous, parking in these circumstances also needs control and where a LAF funded scheme primarily aims to control such measures it should not have to go through the extensive informal consultation stages that are necessary for other parking schemes before they are implemented.

Statutory Consultation

The Statutory Consultation stage is when the draft traffic order is formally advertised and the local community have a statutory 21 day period to make written objection to the proposals. The process involves placing street notices in the area, adverts in the local press and a letter drop to affected frontages. We also publish details on the Council's website.

Any objections have to be in writing and must specify the reasons for objecting. We have to consider all written objections and test against the statement of reasons for proposing the scheme. Any decision to overrule objections will be taken in agreement with the Division Councillor and will be reported in an Officer Decision Report, which will include a recommendation to either Make the traffic order and bring the scheme into operation or agree further revisions to the proposed scheme.

Parking Delivery Plan 8: business permits

PDP.8 – During 2018, we will produce further options for a business permit for vehicles essential to the efficient operation of the business. The business permit criteria will be reviewed by the PGB at its second quarter meeting in 2018 following the trial in Cressex Business Park, and will make a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Transport

Parking Delivery Plan 9: Highway Code test schemes

PDP.9 – Parking schemes will be designed and implemented in accordance with the Parking Guide for LAFs with a view to streamlined implementation of measures that meet the “Highway Code” test.

Parking Delivery Plan 10: make best use of kerb space while tackling problem parking

PDP.10a – New parking schemes will be designed and implemented to tackle problems caused by anti-social and long-term, commuter parking, whilst making the best use of kerb-side space and considering the potential impact of displaced parking on the surrounding area.

PDP.10b – Existing restrictions will be reviewed and revised to make the best use of parking space where requested by the Local Member or Local Area Forum and appropriate funding is available.

Parking Delivery Plan 11: parking scheme delivery

PDP.11a – Complex and area wide parking scheme development will use local engagement with Opinion Survey, Detail Design consultation and Statutory Consultation as the standard procedure.

PDP.11b – Simpler parking schemes or those that pass the ‘Highway Code test’ will be progressed without the need for extensive informal consultation. Only the statutory (formal) consultation process set out in the traffic regulation order process will apply.

7.3 Tackling parking congestion

Parking congestion occurs when the number of vehicles parking is close to, or exceeds the available kerbside space. In residential areas, this type of congestion can cause access difficulties and delay for larger vehicles such as refuse lorries and emergency services, as well as increasing anti-social and thoughtless parking that directly impacts on local residents.

However, parked vehicles in appropriate locations can also be a very effective form of passive traffic calming. Removing parking entirely from areas where low speeds are desirable, such as residential roads, can often result in increased traffic speeds and hazards for pedestrians and other road users. Blanket restrictions can also tend to displace parking problems to nearby areas resulting in further demands for parking controls.

Parking schemes should seek to manage kerbside space effectively, to remove and manage problem parking without introducing additional problems. New schemes will be designed and implemented on the basis that parking may be allowed where it is safe for vehicles to park and this does not cause problems for local residents. Where the parking problem is primarily caused by residents themselves having more cars than there are available parking spaces, the parking scheme will need to consider how best to manage in the number of resident permits.

7.3.1 Commuter parking

One of the main and most irritating parking problems for a local community is caused by motorists parking all day and taking up kerb-side parking spaces to the detriment of local residents. The County Council receives a large number of complaints about anti-social and thoughtless commuter parking, with access to private drives made difficult, and obstruction of residential streets to large r vehicles such as refuse lorries and fire-engines. When this is coupled with banging doors and revving engines early and late at night it is probably the most common reason for requests for parking controls to be introduced. Commuters using popular destinations such as railway stations will walk considerable distances to avoid having to pay for parking. Introducing parking controls in just the immediate and current parking problem area will often displace the parking problem to the nearest unrestricted area. Care needs to be given to looking at a sufficiently wide area in scheme design.

Access protection markings (APM)

These are white elongated 'H' shaped lines (also referred to as 'H' bars) painted on the road to draw attention to a driveway or access. They are only advisory markings and have no legal standing but can work well where the issue is about inconsiderate or careless parking, or where driveways in rural locations are difficult to see. They are quick to install on request from residents. The current charge (correct at February 2018) for installation is £90 per driveway.

Curfew parking controls

Short term single yellow line waiting restrictions of one or two hour's duration can be an effective measure for eliminating commuter parking. One of the disadvantages of curfew measures is that the restrictions apply to all road users including local residents who are unable to park in their street during the restricted times. It should be noted that such restrictions can be resource intensive and difficult to enforce cost-effectively. They must be planned and managed appropriately to ensure a reasonable level of enforcement appropriate to the location. If the parking account were to operate

with a surplus, the option to increase CEO numbers could mean curfew parking scheme enforcement could be enhanced.

Parking Delivery Plan 12: curfew parking schemes

PDP.12 – Curfew parking controls can be an effective tool to control anti-social long-term parking. Where they are appropriate, operational hours will need to be carefully designed so as to be enforceable whilst meeting local needs

7.3.2 Controlled parking zones (CPZs)

Probably the most common form of parking restriction but also the most misunderstood. Technically a CPZ is an environmental measure to reduce the need for signs where a common waiting restriction is present. In its purest form, a CPZ does not contain parking places. The reality though, is that almost always parking bays are included in a CPZ but these are actually an ‘exemption’ from the common waiting restriction and therefore require having a sign with operational details for each bay. If a parking scheme is made up of mainly double yellow lines (which do not need to be signed) and parking bays it does not need to be introduced as a CPZ.

If a CPZ is deemed to be the best parking solution and is supported, consideration needs to be given to the operational hours and days of control. During the operational hours, residents who wish to park will need to buy a permit for their vehicle and potentially pay for a voucher for their visitors to park. Extensive operational hours may seem initially attractive but will not, in most circumstances, provide a greater level of protection. It will mean that residents who use their car to drive to and from work will have to buy a permit even though they do not normally park in the zone during the day.

Traditionally, CPZs have been implemented with working hour controls that replicate the ones typically used for single yellow lines where maintaining traffic flow is the priority, i.e. 8:30am-6:30pm. While these hours are necessary for maintaining vehicular access the hours do not have to be as long to remove all day non-residents parking from a permit area.

Shorter operational hours for permit holder bays have advantages insofar as they allow visitors to come and go at the start and end of the day without having to pay for a permit or voucher. For the resident who uses their own car to commute to and from work, the shorter operational hours could mean they do not need to buy a permit. A number of enforcement authorities have adopted shorter operational hours for CPZs of 9:30am-4:30pm and have reported that they work well and are generally popular with residents. It is recommended that a similar approach is adopted in Buckinghamshire for new schemes.

Extended operational hours should only be considered where there is compelling evidence that extensive non-resident parking pressures are present and would make it difficult for a resident to find a parking space without longer controls.

Parking Delivery Plan 13: standard operational hours

PDP.13a – New on-street parking schemes will be implemented with standard operational hours agreed as part of the scheme decision making process.

PDP.13b – Longer operational hours will only be considered where there is compelling evidence of need and agreed with the Cabinet Member for Transport.

7.3.3 Disabled Parking

Disabled parking bays in urban/town centre areas

The disabled badge scheme was originally introduced in 1971 and replaced by the current European Blue Badge scheme. The scheme aims to help those with severe mobility problems and who rely on a car for transportation to be able to park close to where they need to go. Apart from the concession to be able to park for up to 3 hours on yellow lines where it is safe to park and where there is no loading restriction in force, it also allowed traffic authorities to mark disabled parking bays on the highway.

The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) sets out the national requirements for signs and lines to be used on the highway network. Disabled parking bays backed by a traffic order (and therefore enforceable) need to be marked out in accordance with the relevant TSRGD diagram. In urban town centre settings there is a need to provide general enforceable Blue Badge within 50-100m of likely destinations such as Banks, Post Offices or shops. These bays should be regularly enforced to prevent misuse.

Disabled parking bays in residential areas

In residential areas our current procedure is to only consider installing a disabled bay if there is a Blue Badge holder living at the property and the car that the Blue Badge holder uses is registered at the address. We do not install a bay if there is suitable off-street parking or it is within 10m of a junction, or if the road is not wide enough to accommodate the bay and still allow the free flow of traffic.

The disabled bays are installed as advisory. This means they do not have a traffic sign or traffic order and have no legal standing. In the main they are generally well respected by other drivers and left for the use of those that need them. The main advantage of using advisory bays is the speed of installation. The existing procedure of using advisory disabled bays is proposed to continue.

Previously the advisory disabled bay markings were a Buckinghamshire creation which includes a saltire and wheelchair logo within the bay marking. This does not match the standard disabled bay marking set out in the TSRGD. One of the disadvantages of the Bucks bay is that it is very difficult to ascertain if the bay is a disabled bay when a vehicle is parked in it whereas the TSRGD bay has 'disabled' painted outside the bay. We have adopted the TSRGD diagram for all new advisory disabled bay markings and will re-mark existing advisory bays as part of the lining maintenance programme.

Blue Badge enforcement

Civil enforcement officers can be given the power to inspect and retain Blue Badges if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the badge is stolen, a fake or is being misused. The County Council's Blue Badge Team who vet and issue Blue Badges do not have the resources themselves to undertake such checks and are concerned that Blue Badge misuse occurs in Buckinghamshire.

Genuine Blue Badge holders are widely supportive of action to tackle the misuse of the badge scheme and recognise that lack of action has the potential to bring the whole scheme into disrepute.

The Blue Badge Team has asked that NSL Ltd be authorised to undertake these powers and NSL have undertaken a trial of this.

Further development of this will incur a cost and require a variation to the contract for NSL setting up and carrying out such enforcement. Evidence from other authorities who already undertake Blue Badge enforcement indicate that with time, the cost of enforcement can be covered by the fines imposed by the Court resulting in a cost neutral position.

Parking Delivery Plan 14: Blue Badge misuse

PDP.14 – We will undertake enforcement against Blue Badge misuse commencing in 2018.

Any surplus over and above the cost of enforcement will be shared between the Blue Badge Team and the Parking Account. The enforcement effectiveness will be reviewed in Q3.

Parking Delivery Plan 15: advisory Blue Badge bays

PDP.15 – We will continue the current policy of providing advisory Blue Badge bays for residents meeting the eligibility criteria. The carriageway markings will comply with TSRGD diagram 1028.3.

7.3.4 Footway and verge parking

Footway and verge parking is an issue at many locations across the county. Motorists often do so in the belief that they are keeping the carriageway free for passing vehicles. What many motorists fail to take into account is the problem it causes for pedestrians and wheelchair users trying to walk on the footway or the potential damage to the footway itself and assets under the footway.

Under current legislation, taking action against vehicles parking on the footway or verge is not straightforward. Where a yellow line restriction is in place it also covers the footway and/or verge and we can enforce. Where no restrictions are in place, CEOs cannot enforce unless there is a specific footway parking restriction in place (unless it is a HGV). This may change in the medium to long term as the DfT (Department for Transport) are considering options to extend the blanket-wide footway parking bans that apply in London and some other cities.

The 2016 edition of the TSRGD has allowed the option to create an area-wide footway/ verge parking ban which is signed in a similar fashion to a CPZ. This is a potentially attractive option to consider but before adopting we will need to define some standardised protocols to be used in the consideration of future schemes. Preliminary discussions with the DfT indicated that the Brexit negotiations had impacted their ability to progress the primary legislation for a national footway parking ban. The decision to delay by a year consideration for specific measures for Buckinghamshire was taken and this item will be considered further in 2018.

Parking Delivery Plan 16: footway parking ban

PDP.16 – An options paper for the potential delivery of area-wide footway/ verge parking ban zones and the protocols for delivery will be brought to the PGB for consideration at its 2Q2018 meeting, with a view to making a recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Transport.

There are certain locations where vehicles have traditionally parked partly or fully on the footway in order to maintain a wide enough thoroughfare on the carriageway or where the footway is sufficiently wide that footway parking would not be a problem. Certain tests need to be applied before allowing footway parking. It is proposed that a rule of thumb will be applied whereby a double buggy or wheelchair can easily pass a parked vehicle – in essence the unobstructed footway width would be around 1.2m.

In some locations where the footway and carriageway is particularly narrow, consideration will be given to allow footway parking on one side of the road provided the other footway is unobstructed. Where footway parking is allowed, traffic signs complying with the TSRGD will be placed to indicate the extents where footway parking is allowed. Verge parking would not be allowed.

Parking Delivery Plan 17: footway parking schemes

PDP.17 – Footway parking measures will only be implemented where damage to the footway construction and underground services is unlikely and after the 'double buggy' test and only with agreement from local councillors. Where allowed, appropriate signing in accordance to the TSRGD diagram 667/668 will be installed.

7.3.5 School-run parking

This is an issue close to many schools where problems are generated by parents dropping off or picking up their children. Although in many instances the schools do all they can to encourage parents to park lawfully and considerately, it is also clear that often this does not happen.

Residents living close to schools can be subjected to inappropriate and antisocial parking and obstruction and calls for 'something to be done' are regularly received. There is however only a limited amount that can be achieved by the introduction of parking restrictions, as there are exemptions to most restrictions that allow stopping for a short time to drop off or pick up passengers. In addition, as all the children tend to arrive and leave at the same time and parents try and park as close as possible to the school, it is a concentrated problem for a relatively short period of time.

The school run is a problem that requires a broad approach and the county council works with schools across the county to produce school travel plans which are designed to promote sustainable travel and reduce the reliance on the use of cars for the school run. Any restrictions designed to tackle parking problems near schools will require careful analysis. They should only be installed if they are certain to achieve the desired result. The PGB at its 3Q17 meeting recommended that a cross organisational working group be formed and chaired by the Deputy cabinet member for Transportation to formulate and recommend policies and actions relating to the management and control around the school run for consideration further during 2018.

7.3.6 Street clutter reduction

Parking schemes can lead to an increase in signs and lines and care and consideration needs to be given to the negative impact they can have on the environment. In rural and village locations particular care needs to be given to minimise urbanisation. The Traffic Signs Manual published by the DfT gives advice and guidance. Chapter 5, published in 2003 provides guidance on waiting and parking installations. Since its publication things have moved on. English Heritage published 'Streets for All' in September 2004. Its aim was to advocate looking at streets as a whole and to reduce unnecessary street clutter on the basis that 'less is more'. Since then, Historic England has published regional 'Streets for All' documents providing advice and guidance on paved surfaces, street furniture and traffic signs.

The DfT published a Traffic Advisory Leaflet, Reducing Sign Clutter (TAL 01/13) in January 2013. This document advocates engineers to 'use their engineering judgement' on the number and location of signs and street furniture. This advice does not engender a particularly consistent approach and it is down to individuals and organisations to establish its own design principles. Further work needs to be done to produce a clear, design guidance for Buckinghamshire but the principles will be an aim to:-

- reduce the number of signs to a minimum
- combine signs where possible
- fix signs to existing street furniture
- avoid marking lines on cobbles or granite setts – instead use restricted street process
- consider using 'permit holder parking only' zones where appropriate
- Conservation signing and lining where appropriate

Parking Delivery Plan 18: reduction in street clutter

PDP.21 – Parking schemes will be designed and implemented with the aim to reduce street clutter.

- Minimise the amount of signs used while still maintaining enforceability;
- Fix signs wherever possible to existing street furniture;
- New signs positioned at the back of footways;
- In environmentally sensitive areas, consider using 'restricted street' or 'permit holder parking area' zones;
- In environmentally sensitive areas, consider applying for special signs approval from the DfT to use a reduced height for signs and consider wayleaves for fixing to garden walls and buildings
- In environmentally sensitive areas, consider reducing the number of pay and display machines in favour of cashless payment options.