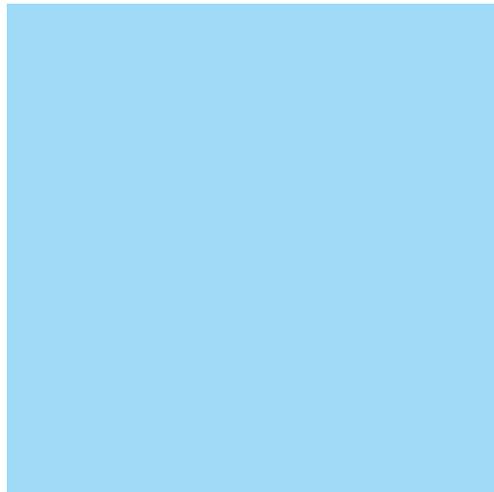




Parking Implementation Plan

Traffic & Highways



September 2022

Parking Implementation Plan (PIP)

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1. Introduction

Southend-on-Sea City Council's shared ambition to transform the City by 2050 is aligned to five themes, with related desired outcomes: -

- **Pride & joy** - By 2050 Southenders are fiercely proud of, and go out of their way, to champion what our city has to offer;
- **Safe & well** - By 2050 people in Southend-on-Sea feel safe in all aspects of their lives and are well enough to live fulfilling lives;
- **Active & involved** - By 2050 we have a thriving, active, and involved community that feel invested in our city;
- **Opportunity & prosperity** - By 2050 Southend-on-Sea is a successful city and we share our prosperity amongst all of our people;
- **Connected & smart** - By 2050 people can easily get in, out, and around our city and we have world class digital infrastructure.

This Parking Implementation Plan (PIP) supports the more specific desired outcomes for each theme, including: -

- Our streets and public spaces are valued and support the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors. People in all parts of the city feel safe and secure at all times.
- A range of initiatives help increase the capacity for communities to come together to enhance their neighbourhood and environment.
- We are leading the way in making public and private travel smart, clean, and green.

To help achieve these goals, our approach requires effective joined-up regulation and compliance.

This PIP is a living document and cannot cover every eventuality, especially where there are specific local or national standards which have to be met but the approach is consistent with national and local policy.

In doing so we will follow the principles of: -

- The Regulators Code www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulators-code;
- The Enforcement Concordant (Central and Local Government Enforcement Concordat, March 1998);
- Enforcement contained in the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 (enforcement is proportionate, targeted, transparent consistent and accountable).

2. Executive summary

The PIP is designed to help shape, manage, and deliver Southend-on-Sea City Council's Vision for Parking. The PIP sets out our approach for the delivery of Civil Parking Enforcement of on-street parking, waiting, and loading, and the provision and enforcement of off-street car parks and acknowledges and shapes the future following the responses of the parking strategy consultation concluded in December 2021.

3. Background

The Council consulted on the draft parking strategy (October to December 2021). The PIP sets out our vision for parking in Southend, and underpins the strategies, policies, and action plans for its implementation over the next 10 years.

The PIP is a living document and will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary or regulation requires. It will consider innovation and new practices, changes in legislation, and will also monitor and compare policies of neighbouring authorities.

4. Vision for parking

Southend's Vision for Parking is:-

- 1) To provide parking where possible;**
- 2) Control parking where necessary;**
- 3) Enforce parking fairly and consistently;**
- 4) Operate parking efficiently and cost effectively.**

5. About Southend

Southend-on-Sea is a large coastal city and unitary authority in southeast Essex on the north side of the Thames Estuary and 40 miles east of central London. Considering the primary urban area (PUA), Southend-on-Sea is defined as one of 63 cities in the UK¹.

Southend-on-Sea developed as a seaside resort in the 19th century and is home to the world's longest pleasure pier. Good rail links and its proximity to London have meant that as tourism has declined it has become a dormitory town for London city workers with good rail links via two mainlines into London (Liverpool Street and London Fenchurch Street Stations).

Southend-on-Sea covers approximately 41.7 hectares (16 square miles) and has a population of 183,125² living in 74,678³ households. Southend-on-Sea is the 7th most densely populated area in the UK outside the London boroughs with around 38.8 people per hectare compared to a national average of 3.77.

Unlike most cities in the UK, wages for residents of Southend-on-Sea are greater than the UK average and greater than for its workers which were the second lowest among UK cities in 2015. Around 20% of the working population commute to London each day. Southend-on-Sea also has the 4th highest proportion of people aged over 65 among the UK cities. Southend-on-Sea's attractiveness as a place to live for London commuters and older people makes it the 11th most expensive place to live in Britain⁴.

6. Vehicle ownership

Vehicle ownership per household in Southend-on-Sea is 109%⁵. This is below the average for Essex (136%) and the east region average of 126%. The urban makeup of Southend-on-Sea does mean a greater concentration of cars and parking stress on the road network. There are 27.3% of households without access to a vehicle, 44.5% with one vehicle, 28.2% with 2-3 vehicles and 14% with 4 or more vehicles in the household.

¹ Centre for Cities 2016

² Office for National Statistics 2019

³ 2011 census

⁴ Cities Outlook report 2015 – City Monitor – Paul Swinney 2016

⁵ 2011 census

7. Parking Strategy

In 2021 the Council published a draft ten-year parking strategy and undertook public consultation in the autumn with residents, businesses, and external stakeholders to help define the future aspirations for the delivery of parking services in the next decade. The analysis of the public consultation was reported to the February 2022 Cabinet meeting who referred it to the Transport, Asset Management, and Inward Investment Working Party for consideration in September 2022.

The November 2022 Cabinet meeting received back the report along with the recommendation to approve the Southend Vision for Parking, the finalised Parking Strategy 2022 – 2032, the Parking Implementation Plan 2022 – 2032 and the Parking Implementation Action Plan 2022 – 2032.

The link to the Cabinet Report and decisions can be viewed here: (before publishing - insert link to democracy pages once they are available)

8. The need for a Parking Implementation Plan

Managing parking is one of the most effective means of tackling congestion and its more serious consequences:-

- increased air pollution,
- delay, and
- unreliability of public transport services.

Parking on the public highway leads to conflict and tension. On the one hand, motorists want to park conveniently close to their homes and destinations; on the other hand, they do not want delayed journeys, or the roads obstructed by parked vehicles. Balancing these conflicting demands whilst recognising that access by car and convenient parking can have a major influence on a location's overall success and in particular its economic vitality and viability is not always easy.

The Vision for Parking aims to achieve this by providing parking where possible and controlling parking where necessary.

9. Legal background

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) (RTRA) makes it the duty of the local traffic authority (Southend-on-Sea Borough 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 practicable⁶”. The Act empowers the 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 March 2008) (TMA) replaced the RTA for England and Wales and is the current legislation under which civil parking enforcement (CPE) is regulated.

(enacted May 2022) and Schedule 7 gives local authorities in England outside London the power to enforce ‘moving traffic offences’. This includes incorrectly driving into a bus lane, stopping in a yellow box junction, banned right or left turns, illegal U-turns, going the wrong way in a one-way street, ignoring a Traffic Regulation Order.

The Secretary of State’s Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions (June 2020) and;

Right to challenge parking policies (March 2015) is the statutory instrument requiring local authorities to adopt specific policies for the acceptance and management of parking petitions over and above the local authority’s general petition policy.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 sets out information local authorities are required to publish including the requirement to publish an annual parking account and the number of marked out parking spaces both on- and off-street.

⁶ S.12 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

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

Parking Places Variation of Charges Act 2017 is amending legislation that requires local authorities to carry out consultation on any proposed changes to parking tariffs.

10. 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.

In March 2008, the legislation changed when Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 was enacted and DPE became civil parking enforcement (CPE) and parking attendants became civil enforcement officers (CEO).

The adoption of CPE reinforced the links between parking enforcement reinforcing wider transport objectives. It also required a greater clarity and transparency about how local authorities administered CPE and introduced the requirement to publish information. Some additional powers to enforce parking across dropped kerbs and double parking were introduced along with the ability to serve a PCN by an approved device (camera enforcement), where a CEO feels threatened or where they are prevented from issuing a PCN by a 'vehicle drive away'.

11. The economics of CPE

Parking Implementation Plan 1

PIP.1 – We believe civil enforcement should be at least self-financing. The Council's parking account delivers a modest operational surplus which is reinvested in the service.

One of the tenets of decriminalisation under the RTA was that parking regimes 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"⁷. 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"⁸.

12. CPE operational model

Parking Implementation Plan 2

PIP. 2a – Review all existing contracts to ensure they remain fit for purpose, achieve best value and are future proofed.

PIP. 2b – Work with stakeholders and suppliers to ensure innovation and enhanced service offerings are at the core of all new contracts.

Legislation allows local authorities to operate as a totally in-house operation or to outsource a number of the enforcement processes. Outsourcing can include on-street and car park enforcement, the consideration of informal representations and debt collection either as a single contract or a number of contracts. The only part that must remain the direct responsibility of the local authority is the consideration of formal representations (also known as appeals). This is to ensure that decisions are impartial. In totally in-house operations there should be a clear separation between staff that decide on representations and those that decide on appeals.

⁷ s.2.6 of the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions

⁸ s.2.9 of the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions

The Council have outsourced parking enforcement services for many years as it believes this is the most efficient operating model and currently outsource all parking services to APCOA parking Ltd. This contract is due to expire in March 2023.

The Council will be re-tendering its parking and parking enforcement operations during 2022 based on a 10-year contract period which will enable and provide a more fluid and fit for purpose contract.

13. Paid for Parking & Fees & Charges

Parking Implementation Plan 3

PIP.3 – Parking fees and charges will be reviewed, benchmarked and amended annually.

As a rule, motorists don't like paying to park, yet want to be able to park close to their homes or other destinations at the start or end of a journey. In reality, there is no such thing as free parking, particularly in areas of high density and/or where there are popular or high demand visitor attractions.

The costs of developing and maintaining parking spaces and then enforcing proper use have to be borne by somebody. In the case of local authority operated parking any costs that are not covered by parking revenue falls to local council tax payers.⁹ The RAC Foundation stated... "Proper parking management demands that the authorities impose parking charges, in order to cover the cost of administering the schemes and impose penalty charges to deter those who disobey the rules."¹⁰

There will be claims that to do so will damage businesses, force people to shop elsewhere and damage the local community. In the very short term, there may be some change but Mary Portas in her review into the future of high streets said "I understand that to offer free parking all day is not the solution. I recognise that this would be potentially open to abuse by local workers."¹¹

Shopkeepers consistently overestimate the share of their customers coming by car. Walking is generally the most important mode for accessing local town centres. Walkers and bus users spend more over a week or a month; car drivers spend more on a single trip.¹²

⁹ The Relevance of Parking in the Success of Urban Centres (London Councils 2012)

¹⁰ The control of parking by local authorities – RAC Foundation August 2010

¹¹ The Portas Review – An independent review into the future of our high streets – Mary Portas December 2011

¹² The Relevance of Parking in the Success of Urban Centres – London Councils 2012

Evidence shows that average personal expenditure by the [individual] motorist on parking is very low. The primary aim of any charging should be to avoid capacity problems; the secondary aim of charging is as part of travel demand management.¹³

A good mix of shops and services and a quality environment are some of the most important factors in attracting visitors to town centres. If these are poor, then free parking or changes to accessibility are very unlikely to make a town centre more attractive. Our aim should be for parking spaces to be readily available to support the vitality, vibrancy, and resilience of town centres with high turnover of spaces to allow more users to be accommodated per space. We should also encourage shoppers and visitors to travel during inter-peak periods when there is usually spare capacity on the road network.

We will consistently review and adopt parking charges, at least annually to encourage shoppers and visitors to travel and park during inter-peak periods in Southend wherever it is considered to be appropriate.

We currently review parking fees and charges annually. This involves research, reports and internal consultation. This approach will be used in conjunction with the internal dialogue with stakeholders and debated with elected members so as to agree and contribute to shaping a balanced budget.

14. Existing controls & charges

Parking Implementation Plan 4

PIP.4 - Extended operational and charging hours – will only be considered where there is compelling evidence of its need particularly around locations with evening/late night activity.

The Council carried out a comprehensive and thorough review of parking charges and designated the borough into zones and modelled parking charges around the locality, placement, and demand. Since its inception in April 2021, it is evident that this has simplified the charging structure and has the right foundations in place so as to further review the needs with a zonal approach.

¹³ Spaced Out – perspectives on parking policy – RAC Foundation July 2012

15. The Seafront

Parking Implementation Plan 5

PIP.5 – A comprehensive review of the central seafront to assess and consider whether the existing parking controls and infrastructure are fit for purpose.

The central seafront is a fundamental part of Southend on Sea and attracts a high number of visitors to the city. Whilst parking pressure increases significantly in the summer months, visitors continue throughout the year and particularly when seasonal events and or attractions are open. To ensure the seafront remains attractive, safe, and viable, it is recommended and the intention that a comprehensive review is undertaken of existing parking facilities, parking controls and traffic management and aspire to maximise the number of spaces available and to ensure they continue to meet the ever-evolving demands and be effective.

16. Town Centres

Parking Implementation Plan 6

PIP.6 – We will carry out a review of town centre parking provisions, business and loading bay facilities to ensure the right placement and service the right groups.

Town centres and shopping parades remain vital and an integral part of the city and what it has to offer, and shopping behaviours may have changed due to the impacts of Covid19.

Customer engagement enables any parking and traffic myths be alleviated and to ensure businesses understand what the signs mean and advise their customers in terms of loading, unloading, and parking and understand how important turnover in parking bay usage is for them.

We remain committed to the review of limited waiting bays with the vision to change the restriction to something better suited dependent on location and need and to also encourage the turnover of spaces.

17. Emissions based permit charges

Parking Implementation Plan 7

PIP.7 – To consider adopting a vehicle emissions-based permit tariff and/or diesel surcharge. If adopted, it is anticipated that such measures could form part of the review of parking fees & charges on an annual basis.

Tackling air quality is increasingly important for our health and wider environmental reasons. The Government has tasked local authorities to work to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels to assist in meeting its air quality targets. Vehicle emissions are one of the main sources of NO₂ and are exacerbated when combined with traffic congestion. A recent report from scientists at Kings College London has revealed that London's Oxford Street has the highest levels of NO₂ in the world which is produced by diesel fumes and can trigger asthma and heart attacks. Noticeable symptoms include wheezing, coughing, colds, flu, and bronchitis.¹⁴

Local authorities are increasingly adopting differential charging for permits based on car emissions whereby cars with low or zero emissions pay a very low rate compared to vehicles with high emissions and some are going further by imposing a surcharge for diesel fuelled vehicles. The adoption of emissions-based permit charges is most common in the urban enforcement authorities where NO₂ levels are highest but increasingly, other authorities are adopting this approach as part of its wider commitments to tackle air quality. While it is recognised that such measures on their own are unlikely to have a significant effect on reducing air pollution, it is a measure that raises the awareness of air pollution to motorists and encourages the switch to less polluting vehicles.

The Council is embarking upon its Air Quality action plan and so it is right that we consider adopting an emissions-based permit pricing structure, terms and conditions to encourage less polluting vehicles in Southend.

¹⁴ David Carslow, Kings College London

18. Virtual permits

Parking Implementation Plan 8

PIP.8 – We will replace all paper-based parking permits/vouchers with virtual permits during 2022/23. All new applications/renewals will receive a virtual permit upon renewal of the permit or upon expiry.

In 2020/2021, we changed from a paper-based permit to virtual permits for residents. This has several benefits; it saves on paper, printing and postage costs and enables the resident to obtain a permit quicker than before. We intend to phase out all paper-based parking permits and vouchers (except in exceptional circumstances) with virtual permits. Any existing paper visitor voucher will still be able to be used up to the date agreed and communicated with those affected and or upon its expiration date.

19. Cashless payment options

Parking Implementation Plan 9

PIP.9 – An options paper and business case will be produced during 2022 for the phased removal of pay and display machines in Southend and outline the benefits and efficiencies.

We already have a cashless payment facility which has proved popular with customers and shows increased uptake over time, more so following Covid and its associated impact. The public are less reliant on cash generally and do not carry around loose change as they did in the recent past. Motorists prefer the convenience of cashless payment and the ability for the topping up of parking time if the motorist is delayed returning. Cashless paid parking at 2022 accounts for 82 percent of all transactions and is increasing.

Benchmarking with other local authorities who have operated cashless parking for a longer period has shown that pay and display machine usage decreased significantly to a point where they are no longer financially viable to operate. This has resulted in their removal from on-street locations and a reduction in number within car parks.

If Southend were to follow this trend it could deliver efficiencies by eliminating capital costs for pay and display machines and revenue costs for the maintenance of machines, the cost of tickets and cash collection. We will produce a business case in 2023/24 to consider the phased removal of pay and display machines in Southend.

20. Southend Pass

Parking Implementation Plan 10

PIP.10 – A report on the performance of the Southend Pass will be produced in late 2022 following a 12-month period of operation in a post-Covid-19 environment.

In response to requests from motorists and residents to be able to move more freely around the city and to be able to park in multiple parking locations during a day we worked on the introduction of the Southend Pass. In essence it is an all-zone permit that allows a motorist to park in any on-street paid parking bay or car park for up to 3 hours a day, in any zone for a monthly charge of £8.50.

The Southend Pass was launched in April 2021. The service will continue to monitor the operation and uptake of the Southend Pass and provide a report of its operation once a full 12-month period of post-launch or post-covid recovery has passed.

21. Objectives of on-street parking control

Parking Implementation Plan 11

PIP.11 – Undertake a review of enforcement and existing controls to ensure enforcement priorities reflect the local need.

A request to “do something about parking” is one of the most frequent issues for local authorities across the Country and has the potential to be one of the most contentious. Not everybody will have the same viewpoint, and petitions or group held views, however strongly expressed, may not represent the collective view of the silent majority. The need for community engagement and statutory consultation before any proposals are introduced is essential.

The most common types of parking issue can be broken down into four categories: –

- **Dangerous and inconsiderate parking: –**
 - Parking around junctions;
 - Parking on bends;
 - Blocking driveways and accesses;
 - Affecting free flow of traffic.

- **School parking: –**
 - Inconsiderate/dangerous parking during the school-run;
 - School access controls;
 - Student parking.

- **Commuter and tourism parking on local roads: –**
 - Clogging up local streets;
 - Restricting residential parking.

- **Parking priority schemes: –**
 - Where residents have limited/no off-street parking and want priority over other motorists to park on-street;
 - A turnover of parking spaces to serve local businesses and stop all-day parking.

Taking things one step at a time, we need to assess:-

- **Who is raising the issue?**
- **What is the evidence of a problem?**
- **Who or where is the source of the evidence?**
- **What actual safety risks are there?**
- **What is the potential impact on the wider area?**
- **How is the request to be funded?**

22. Safety around our primary schools

Parking Implementation Plan 12

PIP.12 – We will review primary schools and the surrounding streets with the vision of installing stronger parking controls or schemes in the area where necessary.

The Council are regularly contacted by residents, schools, and parents asking for additional support to tackle illegal, inconsiderate, and dangerous parking in and around the school gates at dropping off and pick-up times. Despite our best efforts it is challenging, and the enforcement resource is simply unable to meet the demand or be omni-present.

Proactive solutions like the school streets scheme and attended or unattended CCTV enforcement improves the levels of compliance and keeps our children safe whilst travelling to and from school. It is our utmost priority and these recent innovations have proven to be incredibly popular with schools, pupils, parents, staff, and residents. We know that not every school is in a location suitable for School Streets, so trials should be undertaken for alternative approaches including that of CCTV enforcement.

23. Tackling parking congestion

Parking Implementation Plan 13

PIP.13 – A Parking Zone (PZ) will only be added to the waiting list where there is evidence of parking stress and indicative public support for some form of parking controls and the required budget.

Parking congestion occurs where parking stress (the number of vehicles parking) is close to or outweighs parking capacity (the amount of available kerbside space). Where the parking stress is caused by a variety of users; resident, shopper, commuter, it is relatively straightforward to develop proposals that make the best use of the kerbside space and improve traffic flow.

Parking can be a very effective form of passive traffic calming. Removing parking entirely (except on roads that form part of the strategic highway network) generally is not a good idea as it can result in increased traffic speed and increasing hazards for other road users. It also tends to displace parking to other, adjacent streets resulting in further demands for parking controls. This in itself does not represent value for money.

Parking schemes must make the best use of kerbside space. We will not consider implementing a parking scheme unless there is evidence that at least 85% of available kerbside parking is occupied for most of the working day. All schemes will be designed and implemented on the basis that parking will be allowed where it is safe for vehicles to park. Schemes will not be progressed if the primary aim is to remove all non-resident parking from a street unless there is overwhelming evidence that there is insufficient parking space for residents on that street, irrespective if residents support that approach.

Where residents primarily cause the parking problem themselves by having too many cars for the available parking, the only way to resolve the matter is to introduce a parking scheme which also restricts the number of resident vehicles through price and eligibility. This may not be popular, and it may be better to do nothing in terms of parking restrictions.

24. Parking zones (PZs)

Parking Implementation Plan 14

PIP.14 – A Parking Zone (PZ) will be developed in order from the PZ waiting list and only if there is sufficient budget within the parking account.

A Parking Zone (PZ) is an area where all kerbside space is controlled by either zone entry plates or yellow lines or parking places which generally have the same operational hours and days of control. The most common types of parking zones currently used in the UK are:-

1. A controlled parking zone (CPZ) is the most common form of PZ and is where zone entry plates indicate the operational days and hours of the single yellow lines within the zone. Any parking places within a CPZ are technically exceptions and have to be separately signed with the operational controls of the parking bay.
2. A PZ is where there are no entry signs and all single yellow lines within parking zones are accompanied by signs or where there are only double yellow lines surrounding the parking bays which are also signed with the operational controls of the parking bay.
3. Restricted parking zones (RPZs) are where there are no lines at all; instead, the restrictions are individually plated, and any bays are shown by road studs or other markings. RPZs are only used where there are special circumstances such as narrow streets or special carriageway materials (such as cobbles) that make lining inappropriate.
4. Permit holder parking only (PHPO) is a more recent type of zone where 'permit holders parking only past this point' signs are used to indicate a whole area which is used by permit holders only. Generally, no white or yellow road markings are allowed in a PPA. The only exceptions are for disabled bays or double yellow lines.

25. Identifying the need for a PZ

The most common indicators of the need for a parking zone in an area are:

1. **Parking stress.** An initial indicative assessment will be undertaken to determine if an uncontrolled area is deemed to be suffering from high parking stress, which is deemed to be at or above 85% of available kerbside space.

2. **Public support.** The level of public support will be determined by requests received from residents and businesses in a particular area. This includes petitions from two or more streets within the area with at least 20 signatories, email requests, complaints and feedback provided through Ward Members.

Officers will use the level of public support and parking stress to determine whether an area should be included on the PZ waiting list. Work on PZs will be progressed in order and subject to there being sufficient funds in the parking account to allow for the development.

26. Parking petitions

Parking Implementation Plan 15

PIP. 15 – A valid parking petition will be set at a minimum of 20 signatures.

A parking petition review can take 12 months before the report is finalised and considered by Members.

Parking petitions will not be considered:-

- within 3 years of the adoption of the Area Parking Plan;
- less than 1 year after the adoption of a new traffic regulation order;
- less than 1 year after the implementation of an on-street parking scheme and within 2 years of consultation of a previously requested scheme.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG – now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) produced statutory guidance in 2015 to local authorities under section 18 of the **Traffic Management Act 2004** requiring them to set policies for petitions challenging parking policies. The statutory guidance recognises that local authorities should already have policies for petitioning about council run services but requires specific and additional policies and procedures to be published with respect to parking policies. The DCLG have provided guidance and best practice advice on what policies should be adopted and provided illustrative examples for a rural district and/or county council that covers:-

- **The minimum number of signatures for a valid petition;**
- **Information that needs to be provided by and about the petitioners;**
- **How the petition will be managed on receipt;**
- **The timeframe for a review;**

- **The circumstances when a petition will not be considered;**
- **Definition of vexatious petitions.**

We have set a minimum number of 20 signatures for valid parking petitions. The DCLG guidance does require the use of discretion rather than imposing a minimum threshold as an immovable hurdle.¹⁵ “Some parking issues may most directly affect a particularly small number of people – such as residents on a street. In these cases, local authorities should take this into account when considering the appropriate thresholds for specific petitions.”

The guidance suggests an achievable threshold would be around 10% - 20% and it is our intention to apply this in appropriate circumstances.

How a parking petition will be managed

- 1) A valid parking policy petition will be managed in the following way. An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving it and confirming that it is a petition. In most cases this will involve:-
 - **undertaking a review;**
 - **possibly public consultation;**
 - **analysis of results;**
 - **Delegated Authority report on the outcome of the review with recommendations;**
 - **The petitioner will be notified of the outcome.**

The timeframe for a review

The timeframe for a review of a petition is recommended to be set at 12 months from the date of acknowledgement of the petition.

When a parking petition is inappropriate

The circumstances when a parking petition will be inappropriate are generally linked to where public consultation has already taken place in the formulation of a policy, traffic regulation order or prior to the introduction of a parking scheme. In these circumstances the public have had an opportunity to influence the decision prior to it being adopted. It would not be a good use of

¹⁵ Right to challenge parking policies – DCLG (March 2015) page 6

council resources to carry out further reviews until a reasonable time has lapsed from the adoption or implementation of a scheme. The proposed time restraint on accepting petitions on parking polices are set at:-

- 3 years following the adoption or review of policies within the Parking Implementation Plan;
- 1 year following the adoption of new traffic regulation orders;
- 6 months after the implementation of an on-street parking scheme.

In setting a time limit where a petition would not be considered the Councils will not use this as an immovable hurdle if local circumstances have changed and will use its discretion to ascertain if there is merit in accepting a petition and commencing a review of the issues raised in the petition.

27. Disabled parking bays

The disabled badge scheme was originally introduced as the Orange Badge scheme in 1971 but was replaced by the current European Blue Badge scheme. The scheme was introduced 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 TSRGD diagram 661A (sign) and diagram 1028.3 (line). In urban town centre settings, there is a need to provide general enforceable Blue Badge bays and the DfT traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/95 provides guidance. Blue Badge bays should be provided within 50-100m of likely destinations such as Banks, Post Offices or shops and advises that these bays are regularly enforced to prevent misuse.

28. Disabled parking bays in residential areas

Parking Implementation Plan 16

PIP.16 – We will continue the current policy of providing advisory Blue Badge bays for residents meeting the eligibility criteria. The carriageway markings will comply with the TSRGD

In residential areas our current procedure is to only consider installing a disabled bay if there is a Blue Badge holder in receipt of the higher level of attendance allowance living at the property and the car that the Blue Badge holder uses has to be registered at the address.

We will not install a bay if:-

- there is suitable off-street parking; or
- 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 (including larger vehicles).

The disabled bays are installed as advisory disabled bays. This means they do not have a traffic sign or traffic order and have no legal standing but 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 will continue.

29. Blue Badge enforcement

Parking Implementation Plan 17

PIP.17 – We will continue to enforce and take action against any Blue Badge misuse in accordance with the powers given to the local authority. We will work in collaboration with colleagues and partners in tackling and mitigating the risks of abuse.

Civil enforcement officers (CEOs) are 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. Genuine Blue Badge holders are widely supportive of action to tackle the misuse of the Blue Badge scheme and recognise that lack of action has the potential to bring the whole scheme into disrepute.

The Council have the powers to and do inspect blue badges regularly. During 2021 CEOs have engaged and worked in collaboration with colleagues within the Counter Fraud & Investigation team so as to demonstrate that the Council will not tolerate such abuse and take a robust approach to any fraudulent activity.

30. Dangerous and obstructive parking

Parking Implementation Plan 18

PIP.18 – Parking schemes that pass the Highway Code test will be progressed without the need for extensive informal consultation. Only statutory consultation as set out in the Traffic Order Procedure Regulations will apply.

Highway safety will always be our main priority. We are proposing revisions to the current process for tackling these problems to make the development and implementation quicker and cheaper. The Highway Code rules for waiting and parking sets out rules for motorists in the UK.

Highway Code Rule 242 states: - “You must not leave your vehicle or trailer in a dangerous position or where it causes any unnecessary obstruction of the road.”

Highway Code Rule 243 states: - “do not stop or park:-

- near a school entrance;
- anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services;
- at or near a bus or tram stop or taxi rank;
- on the approach to a level crossing/tramway crossing;
- opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space;
- near the brow of a hill or hump bridge;
- opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle;
- where you would force other traffic to enter a tram lane;
- where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles;
- in front of an entrance to a property;
- on a bend;
- where you would obstruct cyclists’ use of cycle facilities except when forced to do so by stationary traffic.

Inconsiderate parking in these circumstances needs control and it should not have to go through the extensive informal consultation stages that are necessary for other parking schemes before they are implemented.

We propose a new procedure for schemes that pass the 'Highway Code test' (where the primary objective is to reinforce rules 242 and 243) will be:-

1. Agree proposed measures with Portfolio Holder and Ward Councillor(s);
2. Draft report to seek approval to advertise draft traffic Orders; and,
3. Carry out Statutory public consultation as part of the TRO process;
4. Draft report seeking approval to overrule objections (in consultation with Portfolio Holder and Ward Councillor(s);
5. Make traffic Order; and,
6. Implement measures.

31. Moving traffic enforcement

Parking Implementation Plan 19

PIP.19 – We will work towards the introduction of moving traffic enforcement starting in 2022/23 with the objective of undertaking enforcement from 2023/24 subject to the required permissions being granted under TMA powers being agreed and adopted.

The government from 31 May 2022 is to allow all local traffic authorities outside of London to apply for the necessary powers to enforce moving traffic offences. The Council have expressed their interest in adopting these powers with an intention to enforce when able. We will review existing restrictions and compliance during 2022/23 and produce a strategy and implementation plan for undertaking moving traffic enforcement across the borough.

The entire operation of moving traffic needs to be reviewed in order to reduce accidents and improve non-compliance across the borough. Existing CCTV enforcement is outdated with the use of CCTV vehicles and so an aspiration is to introduce attended or unattended cameras at key priority sites.

32. Objectives of off-street parking

Parking Implementation Plan 20

PIP. 20 – To retain and attain Park Mark accreditations for Council car parking facilities.

The Council operated off-street car parks primarily to provide capacity for longer term parking needs, but also cover the shortage of available on-street parking capacity for short stay parking. The balance changes over time and in some cases is not fit for purpose. The seasonal nature of Southend as a tourist destination means that during the summer and periods of good weather, car parks operate close to or over capacity while at other times they are relatively underused. The central car parks (particularly the surface level car parks) are also potential development sites so their long-term contribution to parking capacity is not certain.

Multi-storey car parks (MSCPs) provide significant capacity in a smaller ground footprint but require significant additional investment to maintain them properly.

During 2022 we will carry out a review of existing car parks and assess their condition, suitability, and produce a 5-year maintenance programme to ensure they secure and retain the industry standard 'ParkMark' accreditation for safe and secure car parks.

33. Electric vehicle (EV) charging points

Parking Implementation Plan 21

PIP.21 – We will engage with the Councils corporate EV strategy for Southend-on-Sea during 2022 with the objective of installing the required EV charging infrastructure within or at Council parking provisions

The Government has confirmed its intention to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles in the UK from 2030. The London Mayor is expanding the Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) from October 2021 to cover an area up to (but not including) the A406 North and A205 South Circular Roads. This will encourage more Londoner's to switch to EV and with Southend being in reasonable driving distance from central London the potential for additional tourism exists if there are fast EV charging points within Southend. Both measures will see an increase in electric vehicle sales and with it a demand for electric vehicle charging points.

We have begun the installation of EV infrastructure and charging points in town centre car parks during 2021 but more EV charging points will need to be provided as demand increases. At present there is no co-ordinated national strategy for the provision of EV charging points, nor is there a requirement for local authorities to provide EV charging points (although they do have a role to play). Few local authorities have published an EV strategy partly because it is a complex and rapidly changing environment. The Council intend to produce an EV strategy for Southend during 2022 of which parking services will engage with.

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