

# **St Albans City and District Council**

## **Parking Strategy 2014 - 19**

### **1.0 Summary**

The parking issues experienced in the City Centre reflect the mixed residential/commercial use, where demand for on-street parking will often outstrip supply.

The multi-storey car parks are often not used to capacity, and public feedback indicates dissatisfaction with the ease of parking and the perceived cost of parking.

The current off-street parking offer is inflexible, with a “one size fits all” approach, which does not encourage users to park in the most appropriate car location. The key principle of the parking strategy is;

**“Parking in the St Albans City and District Council is a Service for residents, businesses and visitors”**

### **1.1**

It is supported by 7 objectives:

1. To make the most of existing car parking spaces, and to create more where practical, both on-street and off-street, for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.
2. To support the local economy, particularly small to medium businesses and retail outlets, working in partnership with other parking providers.
3. To balance traffic flows, to and from and across the district by ensuring parking facilities are available at key entry points across the District for the benefit of businesses and visitors.
4. To ensure the parking service is flexible to allow for long term growth over the next 10 to 15 years, for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.
5. To influence developers of new properties to provide appropriate parking provision for the high level of car ownership within the District.
6. To provide clean and safe car parking facilities, including the surrounding area.
7. To continue parking enforcement services on the basis of being cost neutral

### **1.2**

This strategy has identified the following main actions;

- Re-categorisation of the car parks from short/medium/long stay with a uniform tariff structure, to Leisure/Shopper, Commuter/Worker, Mixed use, with tariffs to encourage usage according to the category
- Review of signage and advertising
- District's car parks to achieve and maintain Park Mark
- Encourage turnover of on-street spaces by limiting maximum stay where located next to retail hubs
- Development and use of Key Performance Indicators by parking contractors.
- Identification of underused on-street spaces, and consideration to release these to support local businesses, following consultation.
- Consideration by the Car Parking Working Party of changing the CPZ permit charges to reflect vehicle based emissions.

## **2.0 Introduction**

The attractiveness of St Albans as a retail centre and tourist attraction, along with the drive to support its economy, has led to increasing pressures on parking in and around the city centre. An average of 30,513 cars per week use the district's public car parks, equating to around 1,525,650 per year.

### **2.1**

Regulated parking provision, driven by a cohesive strategy, can contribute to the effective management of congested urban areas. However this must be balanced against the need for parking for residents, businesses, and visitors in a well-populated area.

### **2.2**

Parking presents complex issues, which often require the right balance to be found rather than a single solution. Control over parking and the issues that lead to parking are not in the hands of one authority, and a partnership approach is required. Therefore this strategy has been developed by both Officers and Members from the Council and amended following consultation with interested parties, stakeholders and individuals.

### **2.3**

The Council delivers its parking service via an agency agreement of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2001 between Hertfordshire County Council and St Albans District Council (SADC). This agreement stipulates that SADC act as agents of the County to exercise Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ's) and other auxiliary parking schemes.

## 2.4

Decriminalised parking enforcement has to operate within the legal framework of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and the guidelines set out by the Department for Transport. Any income derived from enforcement has to be ring fenced to transport initiatives/environmental improvements.

## 2.5

The contract from St Albans to outsource Car Park Management and Controlled Parking Zones commenced on 4th October 2004, and covers the management of Council owned car parks, and decriminalised parking enforcement, both on-street and off street.

The current contract term is for 10 years, and ends on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 with an option to extend a period of up to 5 years.

In 2011, Parking Services became part of the Environmental Compliance Team within the Regulatory Services Section.

## 3.0 Purpose of Strategy

The purpose and overarching principle of this strategy is to set out how;

**Parking in St Albans City and District Council will be a service for residents, businesses and visitors.**

## 3.1

It is supported by the Council's vision, aims and commitments as set out below;

- *Planning for the future*
- *Attracting and developing business and the visitor economy*
- *Enabling and delivering transport improvements*
- *Keeping the District cleaner, greener, healthier and safer*
- *Ensuring value for money and excellent customer service*

## 3.2

It is also specifically set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and Budget Strategy 2013-18, as part of Commitment 6, "Enabling and delivering transport improvements".

## 3.3

This strategy also supports the aims and key principles of the following Council Strategies;

- St Albans Visitor Economy Strategy 2013 - 2018
- St Albans District Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2013/2014

**4.0 Current position:**  
See Appendix A

**5.0 Where we want to be:-**

**5.1**

The overall principle of the parking strategy is;

**“Parking in the St Albans City and District Council is a Service for residents, businesses and visitors”**

**5.2**

This aim is supported by 7 key objectives:

**Key Objective 1:**

To make the most of existing car parking spaces, and to create more where practical, both on-street and off-street, for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

**Key Objective 2:**

To support the local economy, particularly small to medium businesses and retail outlets, working in partnership with other parking providers.

**Key Objective 3:**

To balance traffic flows, to and from and across the district by ensuring parking facilities are available at key entry points across the District for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

**Key Objective 4:**

To ensure the parking service is flexible to allow for long term growth over the next 10 to 15 years, for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

**Key Objective 5:**

To influence developers of new properties to provide appropriate parking provision for the high level of car ownership within the District.

**Key Objective 6:**

To provide clean and safe car parking facilities, including the surrounding area.

**Key Objective 7:**

To continue parking enforcement services in the basis of being cost neutral.

## 6.0 How this will happen:-

### 6.1

#### ***Key Objective 1***

To make the most of existing car parking spaces, and to create more where practical, both on-street and off-street, for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

### 6.2

Re-define the classification of the car parks, to reflect main use, and review tariff structure accordingly.

### 6.3

The current charging strategy of “one size fits all” for those car parks managed by the Council’s contractor, results in the majority of car parks being indistinguishable from each other in terms of their primary use.

### 6.4

All car parks (with the exception of Verulamium) within the NCP / St Albans Parking Management Contract have the same tariff and there is no restriction on a maximum stay.

### 6.5

This strategy and ongoing discussions relating to the current parking management contract provide an opportunity to define the main use of the car parks. (NB: Westminster Lodge and Civic Centre Car Parks are not part of the NCP Contract)

### 6.6

#### ***Leisure Use – Short to Medium Stay***

Car parks defined as Leisure use will have their primary use associated with the nearby leisure activity.

It is anticipated the level of tariff will reflect the “out of town” location and be set at a level that does not discourage users of the facilities.

Long term parking by commuters or non users of the facilities will be discouraged by way of limiting the maximum period of stay and/or by a high long stay tariff.

### 6.7

#### ***Shopper Use – Short to Medium Stay***

Car parks defined for shoppers use will be those located near to key retail areas.

The aim of these car parks will be to provide convenient and high turnover of spaces providing a reasonable opportunity for drivers to park without circulating looking for a space adding to congestion and increasing damaging emissions.

These car parks will generally be classed as short/medium stay car parks and are likely to have a maximum stay of between 2 - 4 hours, or a high all day tariff.

It is assumed that on-street parking close to retail hubs will fall into this category.

## 6.8

### ***Commuter Car Parks – Long Stay***

Commuter car parks will generally be located near to centres of employment, and railways.

The car park would encourage all day parking by having a reduced all day tariff when compared to a shopper car park and fewer tariff bands to discourage short term parking.

## 6.9

### ***Mixed Use – Short to Long Stay***

Car parks defined as mixed use will generally be the larger car parks and situated in the heart of economic activity.

Mixed use car parks will cater for all users whether short stay or long stay.

The tariff structure for mixed use car parks will neither, encourage or discourage one type of user over another as the larger car parks are likely to have sufficient capacity to cope adequately with all types of user.

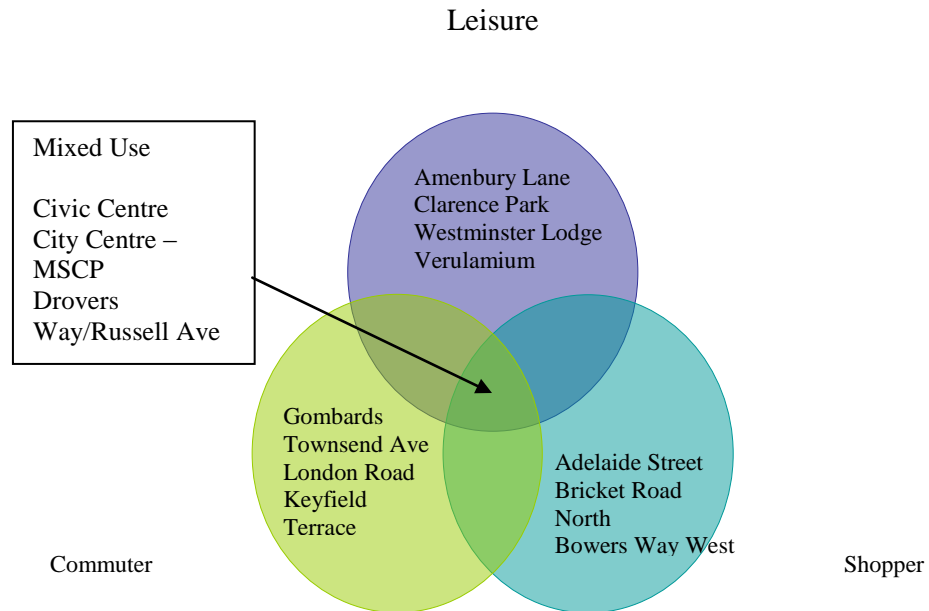
## 6.10

The Council will review annually the categorisation, and applicable tariff structure of its car parks, to ensure that their use remains current, and of most benefit to residents, businesses and visitors.

## 6.11

Table 2.0 sets out which car parks sit within each category.

**TABLE 2.0: -**



**6.12**

***Park and Ride***

The Council will consider the feasibility of possible park and ride options in association with the County Council if planning rules in Green Belt areas are changed and also in response to events triggering peak usage.

**6.12**

***On Street parking***

Each year the council receives a considerable number of requests for new or for the revision of existing parking restrictions.

**6.13**

On street parking will be controlled either at the request of residents and ward councillors where uncontrolled parking causes congestion/capacity or safety concerns for residents.

Any such requests for the review of existing schemes or implementation of new schemes will be considered by the Car Parking Working Party.

#### **6.14**

In order to provide an objective decision making framework to consider each request, the Council will assess by applying a score. This currently considers the following;

- The type of request
- The type of problem
- Proximity to something that creates a demand for parking
- Funding available
- Level of complexity.

#### **6.15**

The application of this scoring framework will generate a score to enable a decision to be taken to proceed with considering requests for new or revised parking schemes.

#### **6.16**

The Council will review this scoring framework when necessary to ensure that it meets the needs of the district.

#### **6.17**

It is the Council's policy to proceed with a request for parking restrictions when the consultation exercise has a response rate of more than 60%, with also the majority of respondents in favour of parking controls (over 50%). Therefore if 50% +1 or more of residents, who responded, support the need for controls, draft scheme will be prepared.

#### **6.18**

Requests which do not reach this level of support are not progressed.

#### **6.19**

Where on street parking is located close to retail areas, this will be controlled by way of a maximum stay to encourage turnover of spaces. If appropriate, parking will be provided free of charge.

#### **6.20**

Clarify policy on use of parking spaces by businesses situated within controlled areas, or near to car parks.

#### **6.21**

In areas where unused space in controlled area is evident throughout the day, consideration will be given to releasing some of these spaces to support proprietors of local businesses or commuters. Residents will be consulted on any proposals which are under consideration.



## 6.22

Any released spaces are likely to be charged on the basis of “the cause of the problem, pays to solve” and will be set at a level higher than local resident parking permits.

## 6.23

The Council recognises that there are some properties, commonly known as “orphan properties” that are within controlled parking zones but are outside a permit zone and do not have access to off street parking. The Council will review this when the permit policy is next reviewed.

## 6.24

Parking Scheme Assessment

## 6.25

The current assessment policy is to be reviewed by the Car Parking Working Party to enable new requests to be prioritised and evaluated effectively. This review will take place during 2014/15.

## 6.26

Parking Permit Policy

## 6.27

As set out in the preceding section the on-street Parking Permit Policy will be reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of both residents and businesses. The policy will consider the balance of needs which can in some locations be conflicting. The policy will look at (not exhaustive) eligible properties, zone capacity, times of operation and size. Specific local area needs will be addressed during specific scheme design and consultation with stakeholders.

## 6.28

This policy will be developed through the Car Parking Working Party during 2015/16. Any scheme changes to the Permit Policy will receive separate consultation.

## 6.29

### **Key Objective 2:**

To support the local economy, particularly small to medium businesses and retail outlets, working in partnership with other parking providers.

## 6.30

The demand for parking in and around the City Centre often exceeds the supply. and therefore the way space is used has to be regulated. There are difficult decisions to be made about how space is prioritised. The aim should be to balance the needs of businesses, visitors and shoppers, by placing the emphasis on shorter stays in the centre, and longer stays in

peripheral car parks, with the exception of Westminster Lodge, which is categorised as a Leisure car park given its proximity to the districts biggest leisure centre, and Verulamium Park, which provides a hub for many community events. However, it is recognised that “essential users”, those who need a vehicle to conduct their business should be a special case, and that some provision should be retained in and around the city centre.

### **6.31**

#### ***Visitor Economy and parking***

The Visitor Economy Strategy has identified that tourism supports 2,580 jobs in the district, and that this sector is nationally the fourth fastest developing sector. Coupled with the fact that 74% of visitors travel into the area by car, means that parking can contribute to the re-vitalisation of the local economy. The research supporting the Visitor Strategy also identified that visitors perceived the ease of parking and the cost of parking in the city centre to be an issue.

### **6.32**

The Visitor Economy Strategy aims to increase the number of visitors by approximately 40% to 2.2 million 2018 and to boost visitor value by 55% to £250 million (including inflation).

### **6.33**

At the present time we do not know what percentage of car park users are visitors to the area, as historically this information has not been collected.

### **6.34**

The Visitor Economy will be supported by ensuring that our contractors are aware of the Councils programme of high profile community events which are likely to attract visitors from outside the district, and will actively seek opportunities for partnership working.

### **6.35**

Under any new contractor arrangements Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO'S) will be required to undertake mandatory customer care training. The feasibility of CEO's undertaking training similar to Community Services “Welcome Host” training programme will be investigated, as they are also front line staff. Similarly any new contractor will undertake, where possible to investigate the feasibility of employing locally.

### **6.36**

The Council will consider the needs and demands of the visitor economy when conducting any review of tariff structures.

**6.37**

The Council will update advertising of car parks, so shoppers will know which car parks are categorised as suitable for them.

**6.38**

The Council will be able to utilise the parking contractor's technology to elicit more detailed information with regard to users of the city centre car parks.

**6.39**

***Parking for Businesses***

The breakdown of small to medium businesses in the district compared nationally is as follows in Table 3.0

**TABLE 1.0 :-**

	St Albans City and District		England
<b>Micro (0-9 staff)</b>	7,000	87.2%	83.1%
<b>Small (10-49)</b>	835	10.4%	13.6%
<b>Medium (50-249)</b>	175	2.2%	2.9%
<b>Large (250+)</b>	20	0.2%	0.4%

SOURCE: ONS [UK Business: Activity, Size and Location](#) (2012)

**6.40**

In order to support this sector from a parking perspective the needs of any small/medium businesses will be sought during the consultation process of new car parking schemes, where this is deemed appropriate.

**6.41**

Similarly, any reviews of existing car parking schemes (on or off street) will seek the views of local businesses in the area affected.

**6.42**

It is proposed to continue to investigate potential locations for free short stay on-street parking locations in the city centre as per the Corporate Plan, where there is deemed to be robust evidence of surplus capacity.

However residents potentially effected will be consulted on any proposals.

**6.43**

To support businesses in their day to day trading, an effective means of communication will be identified, to advise of changes to enforcement and parking restrictions which may significantly affect their business.

**6.44**

It is also proposed to link in to any developing proposals around the Drivers Way Site and City Centre Opportunity Site in St Albans.

**6.45**

The Council will actively work with the parking contractors to identify flexible products to assist part-time and low paid workers.

**6.46**

**Key Objective 3:**

**To** balance traffic flows, to and from and across the district by ensuring parking facilities are available at key entry points across the District.

**6.47**

It is essential that car parks are situated in locations that are easily accessible to drivers entering the city and district on each of the major routes. If this is not the case drivers will be forced to make unnecessary cross-settlement journeys to find spaces, adding to the congestion, particularly in the city centre. Any proposals for significant planning applications that could substantially alter existing patterns of traffic flow would need to address their impact in relation to existing parking facilities.

**6.48**

***Provision of local signing to direct drivers, including visitors and tourists to the most appropriate car parking facility.***

Develop "last chance" signing with car park operators to enable drivers to make an informed choice about parking destination.

The ability for drivers regardless of their reason for visiting St Albans to easily identify and locate the most suitable and convenient car park is paramount to ensuring further visits and recommendation that St Albans is an easy place to visit if travelling by car.

Quality and relevant signing to aid drivers is paramount, in particular visitors and tourists. Therefore signage should be clear and easy to understand.

The Council's website will be updated to reflect the new categories of car parks, and will actively work with the parking contractors to take advantage of emerging technological developments including Visitor Mobile Phone Apps.

There are 4 levels of parking related signs currently used to assist drivers coming into the City Centre.

**6.49**

***Level 1 - Variable Message Signs – (VMS)***

## TABLE 2.0

There are 11 signs located at the following locations;

<b>Sign Number</b>	<b>Location</b>
V0161	Comet Way outside Galleria
V0162	A414 North Orbital Road nr Little Thicket
V0163	A1081 London Colney bypass nr Five Acres
V0164	A414 North Orbital Road o/s New Park House Hotel
V0165	A4147 Hemel Hempstead Road nr Bedmond Lane
V0166	A1081 St Albans Road nr West Common
V0167	A5183 Redbourn Road nr Bluehouse Hill
V0168	Coopers Green Lane nr Sandpit Lane
V0169	North Orbital Road nr Lye Lane
V0170	Watling Street approaching Park Street roundabout
V0171	A414 North Orbital Road approaching Park Street roundabout

These signs are provided, maintained and managed by Hertfordshire County Council, Network Management.

The signs also provide the facility for Traffic Related messages regarding delays.

### 6.50

#### **Level 2 - Car Park Management and Guidance Signs – (CPMG)**

##### **TABLE 3.0:**

There are 6 signs located at the following locations;

<i>Sign Number</i>	<i>Location</i>
V0079	St Peters Street nr Hall Place Gardens
V0080	Hatfield Road nr Granville Road
V0081	Victoria Street nr Ridgmont Road
V0082	London Road nr Approach Road
V0083	Holywell Hill nr Griffiths Way
V0084	Verulam Road nr Oysterfields

The CPMG signs are provided, maintained and managed by Hertfordshire County Council.

The signs provide real time car park occupancy figures for the following car parks.

### 6.51

##### **TABLE 4.0:**

<b>Car Park</b>	<b>Operator</b>
Bricket Road (Civic Centre)	St Albans City and District Council
The Maltings	The Maltings Shopping Centre
City Centre MSCP	NCP on behalf of St Albans City and District Council
London Road	NCP on behalf of St Albans City and District Council
Christopher Place (not yet active)	Christopher Place Shopping Centre

In addition to the number of spaces available useful traffic related information is also displayed to notify drivers of any issues ahead.

The operator of the car park is responsible for providing the data link to Hertfordshire County Council to enable the data in an agreed format to be provided.

## **6.52**

### ***Level 3 – Named Distributor Signs***

Once the driver has passed the CPMG signs, named distributor signs are then placed at relevant junctions to direct the driver to the relevant car park.

The distributor signs name the car park, e.g. London Road, Bricket Road and The Maltings.

These signs are provided and maintained by Hertfordshire County Council.

## **6.53**

### ***Level 4 – General Parking Signs***

General “P” signs will be in place close to the entrance of the car park to act as a final guide for drivers.

Once, at the entrance of the car park there will be a number of additional signs specific to the car park, e.g. lane direction, tariff and opening hours.

These general signs will be the responsibility of the car park operator or St Albans City and District Council.

In support of the St Albans City and District Visitor Strategy the locations of the level 3 and 4 signs along with the brown tourist signs are to be reviewed to ensure they are effective in their aim of directing drivers to the

appropriate car park. Also where appropriate they are to be explicit in their reference to visitors and tourists.

The Council will proactively work with the parking contractors to achieve this principle, where appropriate.

#### 6.54

##### **Key Objective 4:**

To ensure the parking service is flexible to allow for long term growth over the next 10 to 15 years

#### 6.55

The work carried out by the Car Parks Contract Working Party developed a number of conclusions and recommendations. The following have been adopted as furthering this particular key principle.

- Any new contracts to be partnerships with contractors, and partners to be proactive in suggesting improvements rather than being reactive.
- Consider flexible tariffs to change behaviour e.g. encouraging greater use of car parks at times of low occupancy, using different tariffs for different car parks
- The contract is flexible enough to cope with changes to the local commercial operating environment. e.g. Annual review to see what is working and what can be improved, with particular emphasis on taking advantage of emerging technologies that can improve service delivery and be of benefit to the customer
- The contract needs to allow the use of data collected by new technology to improve services to residents. e.g. adjusting CPZ's.
- New contract(s) to allow Council to benefit from service improvement and cost saving opportunities offered by technology developments.
- Use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in the contract to ensure monitoring is more effective than using defaults.

#### 6.56

All on-going negotiations with existing or new contractors will require that the above form a framework of pre-requisites upon which any future parking contract is based.

#### 6.57

##### **Key Objective 5:**

To influence developers of new properties to provide appropriate parking provision for the high level of car ownership within the District.

## 6.58

Through the pre-application and planning application processes, planning officers seek to influence developers of new properties to provide appropriate parking provision; including taking into account the high level of car ownership within the District. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that Local Authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate.

## 6.59

The NPPF advises that in setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the accessibility of the development;
- the type, mix and use of development;
- the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- local car ownership levels; and
- an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

## 6.60

When new standards are set, this will provide practical opportunities to acknowledge the different roles of different settlements and parts of settlements across the district. For example, the availability and opportunities for public transport vary both between and within settlements and this should be acknowledged through appropriately varying standards.

## 6.61

### **Key Objective 6:**

**To** provide clean and safe car parking facilities, including the surrounding area.

Ensure all car parks achieve and retain British Parking Association standard of "Safer Parking Scheme"

Parking is able to support the aims of the St Albans City and District, Community Safety Partnership Strategy. The strategy has a stated objective of

*“Preventing and reducing crime in particular burglary and motor vehicle crime.”*

## 6.62



*The Partnership will prioritise the prevention, reduction and detection of burglary offences with a particular focus on dwelling burglary and theft from motor vehicle offences.*

The safer parking scheme managed by The British Parking Association provides an opportunity to support the Community Safety Partnership Strategy.

### **6.63**

#### ***Safer Parking Scheme***

The safer parking scheme is an initiative of the Association of Chief Police Officers aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime in parking facilities.

The award of Safer Parking Status, “Park Mark” means that the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the Police have been met.

Achievement of the assessment will require the Council to ensure it has measures in place that help to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, thereby demonstrating that we are doing everything we can to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime within our parking facilities.

It is the intention that all District Council car parks managed by a contractor will achieve and maintain the Park Mark standard

.An opportunity exists to work with the parking contractor to develop Key Performance Indicators which will contribute to this objective.

### **6.64**

#### ***Parking for Disabled Residents and Visitors***

### **6.65**

It is recognised that cars are often the only viable form of transport for some residents and it is essential that those drivers with mobility problems have sufficient parking provision. It is also important that a sufficient number of blue badge holder spaces are situated close to the city centre.

### **6.66**

Disabled parking and designated spaces is available in all fee paying Council and NCP car parks, with the exception of Townsend Avenue car park which only has 30 spaces. In addition disabled drivers can park in any parking space within a car park free for the first 3 hours when displaying a valid disabled badge and clock set to the time of arrival.

### **6.67**

If a disabled driver requires longer than 3 hours they must pay and display. The council currently recommends that drivers pay for any additional time and display the pay and display ticket alongside their disabled badge and clock.

**6.68**

The Council will seek to increase the amount of disabled spaces (including elongated spaces) where possible and will ensure that if some city centre parking spaces are reduced in line with the local plan allocations, then this will not result in an overall reduction in the number of dedicated disabled bays provided. All disabled bays will comply with the applicable legislation.

**6.69**

The Council's parking contractors will meet with the Access Group annually to discuss any emerging needs.

**6.70**

St Albans District Shopmobility has been operating in St Albans for ten years and is funded by St Albans City and District Council and through donations. Visitors with limited mobility (people with temporary mobility are also welcome e.g. a person with a broken leg) can take advantage of the free Shopmobility scheme, providing manual wheelchairs and battery-powered scooters. There is no charge for the scooters or one day loan of manual wheelchairs, however the scheme welcomes donations to help them to meet the running costs. A wheelchair can be hired for up to 4 weeks at a cost of £5 per week or part week. Shopmobility is conveniently located behind BHS in the Drover's Way car park.

**6.71**

Shopmobility schemes actively encourage inclusion and equality by providing wheelchairs, and power scooters for people to use them. They have also been shown to increase retail footfall as they encourage not just the disabled users but their family and friends to visit retail outlets.

**6.72**

**Key Objective 7:**

To continue parking enforcement services in the basis of being cost neutral

**6.73**

Ensure all contractors are flexible and adaptable to political and legislative changes.

**6.74**

Consideration of the introduction of new charging strategies, e.g. emissions based or variable charges.

## **6.75**

### ***Fees and Charges***

The Department for Transport's Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans, states that local authorities should have policies aimed at tackling congestion and changing travel behaviour. These can include restricting and/or charging for car parking.

## **6.76**

It is St Albans City and District's Policy to review all fees and charges relating to parking on an annual basis and to ensure they are set at the appropriate level to reduce car use, reduce congestion and maintain use of car parks in accordance with their designated primary use.

## **6.77**

The control of on street parking is maintained by the use of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's). These are generally implemented following requests from local Councillors and/or residents, who have raised concerns regarding unregulated parking which results in an unmanageable demand for parking.

## **6.78**

By using TRO's demand can be reduced and prioritised in favour of specific groups; e.g. residents. Within the TRO, charges can be introduced and used to further dampen demand by limiting the number of permits and/or the cost.

## **6.79**

With increasing pressures to reduce the environmental impact of our day to day activities there is an opportunity to consider the part parking could play in reducing greenhouse emissions.

## **6.80**

Since March 2001 the cost of a vehicles tax disc (Vehicle Excise Duty) has been based upon the CO2 emissions of the vehicle. This results in a higher charge for the most polluting vehicles. Smaller cleaner vehicles pay lower charges and in some cases are exempt.

## **6.81**

With the concept of differential charging for VED established, a review of whether it is appropriate or desirable to introduce emissions based charging structure for residential permit and general car parking is to be considered by the Car Parking Working Party

## **6.82**

Details of the briefing note discussed at Full Council can be viewed at

<http://stalbands.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=184&MId=6923&Ver=4>

**This document will be revised and updated 31<sup>st</sup> April 2015.**

<b>Action Plan Summary</b>	
1	Re-categorise car parks to reflect main use (K.P 1) Implementation date: - 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014
2	Review tariff structure to change car park user behaviour (K.P 1) Implementation date: - 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014
3	Review Parking Assessment Scoring Framework and Permit Policy (KPI 1 ) Implementation date: - 2014.
4	Clarify policy on use of parking spaces by businesses located within CPZ's (K.P 1) Implementation date: - 2014
5	Continue current work, as per Corporate Plan, to identify on-street under used parking spaces to support local businesses subject to consultation. (K.P 2) Implementation date: - On-going
6	Share information with contractor on future high profile community events (K.P 2) Implementation date: - On-going
7	Civil Enforcement Officers to have mandatory customer care training and the feasibility of "Welcome Host" training is investigated. (K.P 2) Implementation date: - 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2014
8	Update advertising of car parks to direct shoppers and visitors to appropriate car parks. (K.P 2) Implementation date:- Annual Review – next review date 31 <sup>st</sup> April 2015
9	Actively work with parking contractors to identify flexible products to assist part-time and low paid workers. (K.P 2) Implementation date:- Due to be implemented by NCP 2014/15
10	Develop "last chance" VMS signing with car parking contractors to enable drivers to make informed choices regarding parking destination (K.P 3) Implementation date: - September 2014
11	Work with parking contractors to develop mobile phone apps to encourage smarter use of car parks (K.P 3) Implementation date: - Due to be implemented by NCP 2014/15
12	Review locations of level 3 and 4 signs, along with brown tourist signs. (K.P 3) Implementation date:- September 2014
13	Develop Key Performance Indicators with parking contractors reflect

	<p>recommendations of the Car Parking Contracts Working Party. (K.P 4)  Implementation date: - KPI's completed and due to be implemented once extension agreement is signed.</p>
14	<p>Planning department to work with developers to provide appropriate parking facilities which are clean secure and safe (K.P 6)  Implementation date: - On-going commitment</p>
15	<p>Planning department to work with developers to ensure that planning applications reflect The National Planning Policy Framework (K.P 5)  Implementation date: - On-going commitment</p>
16	<p>Actively work with parking contractors to improve the appearance of the multi-storey car parks (K.P. 6) Implementation date: -April 2014</p>
17	<p>Parking contractors to meet annually with the Access Group (K.P 6)  Implementation date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014</p>
18	<p>Annually review categories of car parks and tariff structure. (K.P 7)  Implementation date: - 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015, and on-going commitment</p>
19	<p>Consider the options for changing CPZ permit charging to reflect vehicle emissions. Report to be submitted to the Car Parking Working Party with recommendations (NB: Report to contain examples from schemes used by other local authorities). (K.P 7)  Implementation date: July meeting of the Car Parking Working Party</p>
20	<p>Consider "orphan properties" during the next planned review of the Council parking permit policy.  Implementation date: - On-going as each CPZ requires review – this will be carried out as part of this work.</p>

## **Bibliography**

1. "Findings of the Car Park Contract Working Party – Principles for Future Contracts"
2. St Albans Visitor Economy Strategy 2013 – 2018
3. The St Albans District Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2013/2014
4. The Community Survey 2012.
5. Full Council Briefing Note: Emissions based permitting

## **Appendix A**

### **The Current Position**

The scope of the service covers the management of Council owned car parks and the enforcement of CPZ's on-street, and enforcement of parking in car parks (off-street), through the drafting and implementation of Traffic Road Orders (TRO's)

The car parks outlined in Table 1.0 are managed under the existing Car Parks Management contract, currently awarded to NCP.

On-street and off street parking enforcement is carried out under contract by NSL.

Developing and implementing TRO's is carried out in house, by the Council and processing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) is carried in partnership with the parking enforcement contractor NSL

### ***Car Parks in the district.***

There are a total of 48 car parks in the district

7 owned by the Council and managed under the current car parks contract (See Table 5.0)

24 owned and managed by the Council (See Table 6.0)

17 privately owned/or leased by external organisations (See Table 7.0)

The Council is responsible for the management of the following car parks under the existing car parks contract.

### **TABLE 5.0: Car Parks owned by the Council and managed under the car parks contract.**

The current contractor has been granted a 10 year lease agreement for the following car parks.

#### **Harpenden**

Amenbury Lane  
Bowers Way West  
Bowers Way East

#### **St Albans**

Drovers Way / Russell Avenue  
(Multi-storey)  
Adelaide Street  
Bricket Road North  
Gombards



Keyfield Terrace  
 London Road  
 Townsend Avenue  
 Verulamium (St Michaels)

**TABLE 6.0: Car Parks owned and managed by the Council**

<b><u>St. Albans/Park Street/Sandridge/London Colney</u></b>	<b><u>Harpenden/Redbourn/Wheathampstead</u></b>
Clarence Park (St. Albans)	Cravells Road (Harpenden)
MSCP – Civic Centre (St. Albans)	Cumberland House (Redbourn)
London Road (St. Albans)	High Street (Redbourn)
Townsend Avenue (St. Albans)	Marquis Lane (Harpenden)
Verulamium (St. Albans)	Nomansland Common (Wheathampstead)
Westminster Lodge (St Albans)	-
Batchwood Hall (St. Albans)	-
Church End (Sandridge)	-
Haseldine Road (London Colney)	-
Park Street (Park Street)	-
The Ridgeway (St. Albans)	-
Southview Road (St. Albans)	-
There are a further 7 car parks which are held for residents via license in the City Centre.	-

**TABLE 7.0: Car parks privately owned/or leased by external organisations**

<u>St. Albans</u>	<u>Harpenden</u>
MSCP – Station way (FCC - APCOA)	Harpenden Station (West) (FCC – APCOA)
MSCP- Charrington Place (FCC – APCOA)	Harpenden Station (East) (FCC – APCOA)
Ridgemont Road (FCC – APCOA)	Lydekker – (Harpenden Town Council)
The Maltings	BAA Lambs (Harpenden Town Council)
Christopher Place	Leyton Road (Harpenden Town Council)
The Quadrant	Harpenden Public Hall (Harpenden Town Council)
Bricket Road (RCP)	Kinsbourne Green (Harpenden Town Council)
M & S (Euro Car parks)	-

The lease agreement provides the Council with guaranteed revenues, each year, over the 10 year term, rising year on year. The agreement details a schedule of parking tariffs relating to car parks which can be varied only with the agreement of the Council. Under the lease the contractor is responsible for all operating costs and commercial risks. During the first 18 months of the contract the contractor invested approximately £2.7m with £1.8m relating to the multi storey car park in Drovers Way.

Under the lease, the contractor is responsible for all operating costs and commercial risks.

Any variations from the agreed schedule of future charges will need the agreement of the Council. They will also need the consent of the contractor as changes may impact on the financial model that has been agreed.

The current position of the car park revenues is that the contractor states they are not achieving the original forecast revenues. The consequence is that if the tariffs were increased by an amount over and above the agreed schedule and £100,000 additional revenue was generated, the Council would not receive any of this. The additional income would pass directly to the contractor and would merely close the gap between the forecast and actual revenues. Note: the above statement does not relate to Council run car parks e.g. Westminster Lodge and Civic Centre.

The current tariff structure can be found on the Council's website. At present, it provides a one size fits all approaches and does not take account of the main usage of the car park in question.

To date, certain car parks, for example; Gombards and the multi storey car parks have been under utilised, and other car parks such as London Road and Westminster Lodge are regularly over subscribed.

The present approach to categorisation of car parks is to identify them as Long/Medium and Short term, this is not reflected in the tariff structure or its type of customer.

### **Parking enforcement in the district**

St Albans City and District Council presently has 6 CPZ's (including 27 zones) in operation across the district:

#### **Details of the CPZs and zones within each CPZ**

CPZ 1 - consists of approximately 21 residential zones (zones T, U, PR1 & PR2 were added to the zones that were in operation in 2004)

CPZ 2 - area around the Hospital in St Albans (zone HA)

CPZ 3 - covers only Orient Close (zone OC)

CPZ 4 - covers only Havercroft Close (zone HC)

CPZ 5 - covers some residential streets in Harpenden (zone 1)

CPZ 6 - covering additional streets in Harpenden (zone 2 & 3)

In 2012/13 the Council has currently issued;

- 3, 925 Residents permits

- 156,200 Residents vouchers
- 3,066 Business and other permits

The average recovery rate of Penalty Charge Notices, 2012/13, increased to 91.83%, from 83.33% the previous year.

The number of Penalty charges notices served over the previous three years is;

2010/11 – 21,408

2011/12 – 20,433

2012/13 – 17,709

The existing contractor is required to provide Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's - previously known as Parking Attendants or Traffic Wardens) to patrol the District and enforce the relevant parking restrictions within these CPZ's. The patrolling rationale and policy is set by the Council, through the Car Parking Working Party which advises the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Localism.

A public enquiry counter (the Parking Shop) is provided in the multi-storey car park at Drovers Way. This deals with the sale and issuing of all permits, processing of payments, correspondence and provides general advice. The Parking Shop is closed on Sundays and has been closed for the last 8 months on Tuesday and Thursdays. The increase of on-line services across the country has resulted in most Councils closing their Parking Shops.

A dedicated IT system is provided to manage and process permits and penalties. This enables drivers who have received penalties to view and manage the case on line, including viewing photographs taken by the CEO's. The system has just been upgraded to enable the public to make payments and apply for permits online.

The system is now out of date and other providers now produce systems which are much cheaper and more flexible. An efficient enforcement process requires two key elements to function in a co-ordinated way: on street enforcement to issue PCNs and the timely processing of PCNs after issue using the IT system.

The Parking enforcement service also currently provides a 24 hour telephone payment lines. There are no anticipated additional costs to the Council in the change to this system

The District is currently responsible for 37 pay and display machines that are not situated within one of the NCP car parks. The contract provides for NSL to maintain and service these machines. The regular cash collection and banking is also provided by the current contractor.

Our present stock of Pay and Display machine are old, and require investment. All of our machines are the basic models do not provide real-time information and require regular maintenance.

At the start of the parking contract in 2004, the contractor submitted a Deployment Plan which no longer reflects the demands upon the service, or the needs of residents and businesses operating within the district.

### ***The Contracts***

The contract from St Albans to outsource Car Park Management and Parking Enforcement to NCP commenced on 4th October 2004. In 2005, the contractor's parent company decided to demerge the off-street parking business into National Car Parks –which was subsequently sold in March 2007, to be known as NCP Services. In April 2009 the company rebranded as NSL. Since 2009, NSL have dealt with on and off street enforcement and NCP have managed the car parks. In terms of payments, NSL invoiced NCP, who in turn invoiced the Council. Both companies have been separately monitored by the Council.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013 the contract was novated to reflect corporate restructuring, and a recommendation from an Internal Audit Report resulting in the car park management contract being held by NCP and the Civil Parking Enforcement contract being held by NSL Services Limited. The contract was for 10 years, and ends on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 with an option to extend of up to 5 years.

The Council currently operates a contract monitoring framework, and receives an internal audit approximately every 12 months.

### ***Local Democracy at work in parking***

Parking within the district, falls under the remit of the Community Engagement and Localism Portfolio. The Portfolio Holder also chairs a cross party Car Parking Working Party, which meets each quarter to discuss new and on-going parking schemes. These meetings are open to the public.

Any aspect of the work carried out in parking can and is subject to call in by the two Scrutiny Committees in operation (Internal Performance and Local Services). The Internal Performance Scrutiny Committee formed a Working Party to consider how both parking Contracts were working, and

developed a suite of recommendations and improvements which were agreed by Cabinet and where applicable incorporated into this document.

### ***External Stakeholders***

The Council works with Hertfordshire County Council to develop Road Traffic Orders and Controlled Parking Zones. It also meets every six months with officers from County Road Traffic Section, to discuss new and on-going initiatives.

### ***External Drivers for action***

The survey supporting St Albans Visitor Economy Strategy 2013 – 2018 identified reduced levels of satisfaction compared to the level of importance, for;  
Ease of Parking

Cost of Parking

The St Albans District Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2013/2014 has identified as one of their six priorities to tackle during 2013/14; “Preventing and reducing crime in particular burglary and motor vehicle crime”

The Community survey results identified a 13% drop in levels of satisfaction in relation to parking between 2010/11 and 2012.

The Internal Performance Scrutiny Committee, Car Parks Contract Working Party, commissioned a survey which identified the following area of concern to residents and visitors to the district;

- Less than 50% of respondents were satisfied with the security of the car parks.
- Qualitative comments suggested that the cost of car parking in the district is perceived as high compared to Welwyn and Watford, discouraging some from parking here.
- Of the 80% of respondents who had used controlled on-street parking in the last six months, 35% found it easy to pay, and 33% found it difficult.

## Appendix B

### Car Parks within St Albans District

