

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Plan E Examination Hearing
Further Actions to be completed by 15 October 2010
Local Transport Plan 3 – Parking Charges

Introduction

During the course of the discussion on Main Matter 2 Item 14, the Inspector requested further information relating to the emerging Surrey Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3). In particular, the Inspector sought further information on how, if at all, LTP3 would address parking charges. This area of questioning relates to Plan E Policy E12; specifically to policy text that states:

“New Town Centre parking provision will adhere to the management and charging regimes set out within this strategy”¹

Background

The Council has supplied the Inspector with information on work already undertaken by the Council and the County, which sets out the objectives for a future Town Centre Parking Strategy; this is set out within the Council’s response to Inspector’s questions during June 2010 (Plan E Parking Position Paper Supporting Document 2). This Position Paper sets out how the Council and County have formed a Task Group who are responsible for overseeing the preparation of a Borough wide Parking Strategy that will compliment the Council’s Local Development Framework (LDF) and the County’s emerging LTP3. The Task Group’s other role is to develop proposals for future arrangements for on-street and off-street parking, including a residents parking scheme. This is the strategy referenced in the Plan E Policy E12 policy wording.

The County Council is currently preparing LTP3, which will comprise a number of separate county-wide strategies. These focus upon a number of key transport issues including; climate change, congestion, freight and parking. Draft versions of these county-wide strategies are currently available for consultation. The County Council anticipate publication of the final version of the Surrey LTP3 during April 2011.

Surrey LTP3: Parking Strategy

The Council wish to emphasise that this document provides a County-wide strategy, and so by its nature does not address detail geographic differences. Surrey’s many town centres function differently from one another – particularly in terms of their relationships with their immediate neighbours and with Greater London. Consequently, the LTP3 draft parking strategy does not provide a great amount of detail on charging. However, it does set out the County Council’s approach to this matter and how it will use charging regimes to achieve wider objectives.

The draft LTP3 parking strategy executive summary states that:

“The proposed objectives of the Parking Strategy are:

- *Reduce congestion caused by parked vehicles*
- *Make best use of the parking space available*

¹ *“This strategy”* refers to work being undertaken by the Council and the County Council in preparing a Town Centre parking strategy.

- *Enforce parking regulations fairly and efficiently*
- *Provide appropriate parking where needed*

To achieve these objectives and realise the vision for parking, work will be channelled through three main policy strands:

- *Existing capacity – manage on street parking space to ensure optimum use*
- *Enforcement – fair and cost effective processes to reduce inappropriate parking*
- *Parking provision – new developments to have appropriate levels for their function and location*

At the same time, the policies are intended to help achieve other objectives of the council, such as improving journey times, sustaining and enhancing the vitality of town centres and contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions.

Partnership working with boroughs and district councils will be particularly important in this field, given their role in the administration of civil parking enforcement and off street car parks. Boroughs and districts also work with the county council in their capacity as local planning authorities to develop standards for new development, which can affect parking provision and travel choices.”

The draft LTP3 continues by setting out options for managing on-street parking provision². These include charging regimes associated with curfew parking³, residents permit schemes and controlled parking zones, and an integrated parking approach⁴. All of the above mentioned options feature in the County Council's preferred approach. In terms of delivery, the County Council state that they will continue to work with districts and boroughs in order to achieve LTP3 objectives.

The next section of the draft LTP3 parking strategy addresses the operation of a civil parking enforcement regime, and provides further detail on the County's direction of travel in respect of charging. This section provides further information on residents parking permits, residents' visitor permits, on-street parking charges, the role of civil enforcement officers, and other potential enforcement initiatives⁵. The County Council's preferred options provide an indication of how the future borough-wide parking strategy will address charging:

“The county council should:

- *run its civil parking enforcement operation in line with government guidance*
- *introduce a consistent and more realistic charge for residents' parking permits across the county and revise the permit allocation*
- *look to introduce a scale of charges dependent on a vehicle's CO2 emissions during the life of LTP3*
- *introduce a consistent and more realistic charge for visitors' permits across the county and increase the number available to residents*

² This is currently controlled by the County Council, although the Council provides enforcement in Epsom & Ewell.

³ This is a mechanism for controlling commuter parking within predominantly residential areas.

⁴ This seeks to encourage motorists to use public long stay off-street provision (particularly commuters) instead of parking on-street.

⁵ This includes the potential for remote enforcement using CCTV.

- *introduce on street charging for short and long term parking where demand is highest*
- *introduce a consistent charge for waivers and suspensions across the county*
- *explore all enforcement options with a view to providing the most efficient regime possible*
- *monitor the enforcement regime and its effectiveness*
- *embrace technological advances in payment processes, including 'pay by phone'*
- *regularly review all fees to ensure that they are set at the appropriate level"*

Conclusions

The Council understands that the draft LTP3 parking strategy will set out the County Council's broad objectives for on-street parking across the county; including charging, enforcement and the continuing collaboration with the Council on the integrated management with off-street provision. Whilst the LTP3 parking strategy does not set out detailed county-wide parking charges, the Council considers that it does provide direction for the subsequent borough-specific parking strategy.

The collaborative work between the Council and the County Council on the borough parking strategy is being progressed on the basis that it will set out an integrated charging regime for on-street and off-street provision. This will link into proposals for the management and enforcement of future controlled parking zones to be focused upon the residential areas surrounding the town centre.