

Draft Parking Strategy 2015-26

CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON BEHALF OF THE TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Compiled by the Transport Working Group of the Town Forum and endorsed as the collective view of the Tunbridge Wells Town Forum by Alastair Tod, Chairman, on 13th March 2015

Transport Working Group Members: Jane Fenwick (acting chair), Calverley Park Association; Sally Balcon, Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rustall Commons, Lorna Blackmore, Grantley Court, London Road Residents Association, Stephen Bowser, Residents First; Pat Morris, Inner London Road Residents Association, Peter Perry, Calverley Park Crescent Residents Association; Katharina Mahler Bech, Telephone House Neighbours Association, David Wakefield, Inner London Road Residents Association

The Town Forum represents 43 residents associations, business associations and Borough Councillors in the un-parished area of Tunbridge Wells. The Draft Parking Strategy was circulated to Town Forum members on 4th February 2015 who were urged to respond to the on-line consultation and/or respond to this Working Group. Some of the Town Forum feedback is in the Appendix 4. This Draft Consultation Response was circulated to members of the Town Forum management committee for comment. It was endorsed by the Chairman on behalf of the Town Forum on 13th March 2015.

The Transport Group of the Town Forum has been able to discuss parking issues with members of the Parking Department in a listening and understanding culture. We trust that the comments, criticisms and suggestions we offer in our response to this Draft Parking Strategy will be welcomed in the same way, and we are ready to discuss further anything contained in this Consultation Response in detail.

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Executive Summary

A. Questions and omissions

- 1. Inadequate data:** The data provided in this Draft Parking Strategy is inadequate and/or inconsistent. Some of the data has been taken directly from Peter Brett Associates report prepared for TWBC in February 2011, and not updated for this Strategy. We found that Horsham District Council's parking information to be fuller and easier to understand while also fulfilling the requirements of the DCLG for data. <https://data.horsham.gov.uk/View/parking>
- 2. How empty are the MSCPs?** Using the data provided in the Draft Strategy we show that the overall occupancy rate for RTW MSCPs is just 41% compared to 63% in the Draft Strategy (see page 44) when we adjusted the data to allow for the spaces that we assume to have been 'reserved' for the season ticket holders.
- 3. Spare spaces in MSCPs:** The draft Parking Strategy appears to take pride in the fact *that "For a large part of the year this leaves approximately 1,000 parking spaces available on most days of the week that will help support increased demand into the future."* These 1000 empty spaces are needed NOW to relieve congestion on heavily parked residential streets, and to earn TWBC much needed income. (See Appendix 1 and 3 to this Consultation response.)
- 4. Season ticket income:** Data is provided for Pay & Display and Pay by Phone Income by each hour segment for each of RTW MSCPs, but not for the income from season tickets sales. Why is this? (See our Appendix 2 where this data has been included)
- 5. No costings of parking operations:** No useful information has been provided on the costs of running the parking operations. It is conspicuous by its absence.
- 6. No consideration of the 'forces of change'** affecting parking in RTW has been included. (Our assessment is in 1.2 below)

B. Our Main Proposals

- 1. Amend Objectives 1-3 as follows:**
 - OB1:** To develop a parking strategy and operations that uses controls and pricing to ration the use of road space, reduce congestion and promote economic activity.
 - OB2:** To enforce parking restrictions so as to protect the residential environment and the safety of pedestrians and other road users.
 - OB3:** To research and understand the effects of parking policy, particularly the use of public car parks and on street parking, and develop it in consultation with residents and stakeholders.
- 2. Abolish 'free' parking on all streets within central zone/s** to reduce congestion and provide more space for residents only parking. (see 3.0 below).
- 3. First hour free in MSCPs** to compensate for the loss of 'free' spaces on street for the casual and quick stop visitors. (see 3.0 and 4.5 below)
- 4. Fundamental review of car parking and season ticket charges** to take account of the impact on congestion and the reputation of RTW, and maximise the usage of MSCP's and the revenue they generate.
- 5. Abolition of night time charges** in MSCPs when 'free' on street parking is abolished in central zone/s.

6. **Residents to be able to use their residents parking permits in under-used MSCPs** or take this option where parking permits are over-subscribed. Premium spaces could be offered in secure 'residents only' floors/sections.
7. **Enforce zero tolerance of pavement parking** particularly on red bricks in the conservation area and use enforcement and other parking income to contribute to repair costs. (See 3.6f below)
8. **Extend parking in RPZs to carers:** NHS staff and all recognised KCC and private care organisations should be able to park in residents parking zones to visit the elderly, infirm and disabled to be better cared for in their own homes.
9. **Abolish MSCP payment systems using coins** in favour of credit/debit/pre-payment card type payment systems (see 4.6b)
10. **Invest in modern payment systems in MSCPs and abolish the current mobile phone payment systems** which is unpopular, largely unworkable and disadvantage the elderly, tourists (without UK phones), and those without 'smart' phones.
11. **Promote in partnership with bus operators a free to use inner town 'park and ride' bus service** part funded by parking income, to link both ends of the town and their car parks, maximise the use of the spare MSCP capacity at the top of the town, reduce the impact of a shortage of parking at the bottom to the town and minimise vehicle movements while cruising to park. (See 10.0 below)

1. What the Parking Strategy should do

- 1.1 The Town Forum welcomes the development of a Parking Strategy for the town and residential areas that form Royal Tunbridge Wells. The town has developed a reputation for congestion and expensive parking fees that is damaging to its role as a business, shopping, tourism and residential centre. This strategy must work to change this.
- 1.2 This Draft Parking Strategy has not analysed all the forces of change that directly affect parking and transport in general in RTW and therefore fails to provide a 'strategic' pathway forward. Changes include traffic volumes, population size and age profiles, retail and work environments, and advances in technology that will all create challenges for the town. An understanding of the scale and scope of the challenge is not demonstrated.
 - **Housing:** Para 3.2 states a target of 6,000 new homes, but many thousands more will be required within the time span of this strategy.
 - **Traffic:** The Department of Transport forecasts a 41% rise in traffic on all roads between 2010 and 2040. TW has limited ambition to increase bus and cycle use and is considering driverless pods as a public transport alternative, but neither option will outpace the growth of traffic or reduce the need for parking places.
 - **Parking:** The average car is parked at home for 80% of the time, parked elsewhere for 16% of the time and in use for only 4% of the time. (*Source: Spaced Out: Perspectives on Parking policy*). Tunbridge Wells is a car park!
 - **Car park occupancy** in RTW is claimed to be 63% on average, with one MSCP at only 30% (see 4.3 below and Appendix 1) We calculate the average is 41% occupancy at best. By contrast there is not enough space for residents' on-street parking.
 - **Retail:** The retail environment is changing fast although RTW is fortunate to be prospering and with low vacancy rates in the central shopping area. This Parking Strategy does not consider the impact of £millions spent on improving access to out-of-town shops that have free parking, or the growth of internet shopping and 'click and collect' on the traditional retail offer in RTW, its parking facilities and fees, and traffic congestion.
 - **Coinage:** In 2016 changes to UK coinage and notes will require up-grading of parking payment units to take account of changes to size, weights and measures.

- 1.3 The potential for policy to manage congestion outcomes by parking policy alone is limited, in particular because of the number of parking spaces not under TWBC control, and the need to keep key employers happy. Pursuing any of the Objectives (2.0 below) really needs a combination of actions, including traffic restraint by administrative or fiscal means.
- 1.4 Nevertheless, this Draft Parking Strategy is a welcome start to a more effective parking environment for residents, workers, shoppers and rail commuters alike. The Transport Group of the Town Forum welcomes the opportunities that it has been offered to discuss issues with the Parking Department in a listening and understanding culture. We trust that the comments, criticisms and suggestions we offer in our response to this Draft Parking Strategy will be welcomed in the same way.

2.0 The Objectives

- 2.1 The purpose of having 'objectives' is to provide a standard against which all subsequent plans and actions will be measured. We do not agree that the Four Key Objectives "*have been identified to improve customer service*".
- 2.2 The 'Objectives' should reflect those of RTW as a whole – where the town is going, what it wants to be and what it will look like in future. Since there is no such stated vision, it is hardly surprising that this Draft Parking Strategy fails to know quite what its objectives should be. However, the quote in *Para 4.1 The Future* taken from the draft Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations DPD 2013/14 seems a good place to start. "*The existing quality of the Royal Tunbridge Wells built environment makes the area particularly unique and an attractive place to live, work and visit and that over the next 12 years to 2026, Royal Tunbridge Wells is expected to continue to develop, with the built environment and the town's natural assets being enhanced.*"
- 2.3 Parking facilities, fees and enforcement are an important tool against the blight of traffic congestion that threatens this "*...unique and attractive place...*" now and in the future. RTW should be a destination of choice and not a destination to avoid. Town Forum members have frequently raised the inability to park near their homes, pavement parking, commuter parking in residential streets and inadequate and out of date payment systems in the car parks, as undermining this 'vision'. This Strategy's 'Objectives' are not focussed on improving this.
- 2.4 **We suggest amending the Objectives as follows:**
 - OB1:** To develop a parking strategy and operations that uses controls and pricing to ration the use of road space, reduce congestion and promote economic activity.
 - OB2:** To enforce parking restrictions so as to protect the residential environment and the safety of pedestrians and other road users.
 - OB3:** To research and understand the effects of parking policy, particularly the use of public car parks and on street parking, and develop it in consultation with residents and stakeholders.
 - OB4:** To improve navigation, payment and digital systems as well as parking performance data to ensure transparency to all stakeholders. (*no change*)
- 2.5 The Town Forum argued in its response to the Draft Transport Strategy that in the long term, RTW needs to designate existing routes or build new relief roads around the town to relieve congestion. Without proposals for relief roads, RTW will be swamped by the growth in vehicles numbers predicted by the Department for Transport. Congestion will get worse and impact on all aspects of life and business in RTW including parking. This Parking Strategy should, therefore, be more forward thinking and be involved in consideration of longer term options that will enable RTW to achieve its vision.

3.0 On-street Parking

- 3.1 The availability of 'free' and time limited on-street parking, together with unrestricted loading and inconsiderate 'blue badge' parking, are major contributors to congestion and additional traffic as motorists cruise around to find parking places. We are blessed with plenty of MSCPs in

RTW and for most of the year some 1000 available spaces within – many similar towns must envy this level of provision. So, what is the logic in allowing drivers to enjoy one hour’s free parking on-street and then charge £1.40 per hour for the same privilege in the TWBC car parks? It is essential that this situation is changed as residents will not tolerate it any more.

- 3.2 Furthermore, we recommend that no business parking should be allowed in residential parking zones (5.3.2.2) when there is already such pressure on on-street parking places. It is not logical to do this when the Strategy states in this same paragraph that *“circling traffic looking for available spaces does create ... higher emissions and congestion..... and some permit holders complain they cannot park close to their homes during the day....”*.
- 3.3 We propose the creation of **central zone/s where ‘free’ on-street parking is abolished leaving residents only parking places.** This will be counter-balanced by **one hour’s free parking in the car parks (see 4.5a)**: This would free up spaces for residents parking near their homes, and eliminate variable street by street and day by day restrictions. The zone would be residents parking only and have double yellow lines where single yellow lines exist now. The zone would largely align with the residents parking zones A, B, C, D, D1, D2 and G (see map below) and could equate to ‘5-10 minutes walk to the shops’. Peter Brett Associates Urban Parking Study contains useful analysis of walking times within the town centre that could be used for determining the zone/s we propose.
http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/26508/Urban-Parking-Strategy-Appendix-1-Walking-Isochrones.pdf
- 3.4 **Simplify restrictions:** Consolidate the variable time and day restrictions for on-street parking elsewhere to reduce confusion and on street signage clutter.
- 3.5 **Priority roads:** The priority roads designated to reduce congestion should be those that are:
- on bus routes,
 - part of the arterial network for entering and leaving the town centre
 - secondary arterial roads through residential neighbourhoods which can be heavily parked by largely non-residents , impeding movement within the town’s road network. Examples could include Queens Road, Woodbury Park Road and St James Road.

We propose that the following roads be added to Priority Road list in the Draft Parking Strategy: Upper Grosvenor Road, North Farm Lane and Sandrock Road. They should have double yellow lines throughout.

3.6 Residents Parking:

We dispute the statements on page 20 that sharing residents parking zones with non-permit holders*“works well in the main...”*. There is plenty of evidence and complaint that residents are under severe pressure to get parking spaces within their zone, let alone near their homes. Action is needed urgently.

- a) Reduce the size of the parking zones to enable residents to park nearer their homes
- b) Remove ‘free’ on-street parking in the central zone/s (see 3.1 above) and elsewhere extend the restrictions on ‘free’ parking..
- c) Limit the issue of residents permits to align with the number of available spaces within the zone, and/or offer residents car park season ticket permits as an alternative (see 4.4 below)
- d) Residents parking permits should also cover overnight and long term parking in MSCPs. (see 4.4 below) . Consider differential rates for residents parking if they choose to not park on the street but park in the car parks instead.
- e) Abolish or reduce fees for Sunday parking in car parks to reduce congested on-street parking (outside the proposed no ‘free’ parking zone/s)
- f) Enforce zero tolerance of pavement parking on red bricks in the conservation area and use enforcement and parking income to help fund repairs these historic features in RTW.

- g) As healthcare policy aims to deliver care to elderly patients in their homes, the current parking concessions to NHS staff should be extended to all recognised KCC and private care organisations.

4.0 **Off street parking in RTW MSCPs**

- 4.1 The provision of car parks is adequate for central RTW, and will probably be sufficient for the near future. However, the Strategy notes a deficit of 300 parking places particularly to the south of the town but offers no potential sites and no investment proposals have been identified. The capacity of car park at Union House which is due to be redeveloped could be increased and the car park 'hidden' behind the petrol station in Sainsbury's could be considered. To the North of the town at High Brooms station TWBC and Network Rail should consider 'double decking' (as in Tonbridge station car park) to increase capacity for rail commuters and potentially reducing demand in the south from visitors and commuters using the main TW station.
- 4.2 The connection between car park fees and usage is clear. Since the increase of fees in 2013, and subsequent Sunday charging and the £1 night-time charge, 'free' on-street parking has reached a crisis level, cluttering our streets and congesting the traffic. A Town Forum member's comment reinforces this state of affairs: *" I would like to stress the change in neighbourliness caused by overcrowded parking. I have lived here for 38 years and up to the last couple of years it never was 'every man for himself'. The face of Tunbridge Wells is changing."*
- 4.3 The car parks generate income that is increasingly vital to RTW in the current economic climate. However, income reported to DCLG fell from £3.17m in 2013 to £2.82 in 2014, which amounts to fall of £346,000 for the year ending March 2014. Over the five years to March 2014, the surplus reported to DCLP by TWBC for its parking operations was over £13.m. (See Appendix 1 and 2)
- 4.4 It is claimed that occupancy averages 63% in our car parks, however, our analysis shows that occupancy averages far less than that. We suggest that the true figure ranges somewhere between 31% and 41%, depending on the number of seasons tickets being sold. The car parks are not generating income at their full potential and the RTW has developed a damaging reputation for costly parking. (See Appendix 2 for our analysis)
- 4.5 Season tickets in MSCPs: In 3.6d above we argue for more season tickets to be made available and promoted in the RTW MSCPs for commuters (see 6.0 below) and residents (see 3.6d above). The availability of season ticket places across the MSCP estate is variable and obscure. For example, Meadow Road is the least used of any of our carparks and on any day there are only a few vehicles parked on its top three floors. But according to the TWBC website, there are no season tickets available for purchase. Indeed, there seems to be a waiting list of 11 for season tickets!

<http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/parking-travel-and-streets/parking-permits/car-park-season-tickets>

- 4.6 **Car park fees:** We suggest that a **fundamental review of car parking charges** should be undertaken that will assess how fee strategies impact on on-street parking and congestion, and on the reputational damage to the RTW brand. This Parking Strategy only allows for an annual monitoring of car park fees *"to ensure our revenue keeps pace with our costs".... "get the right balance to ensure both quality of service and a buoyant economy""adequate revenue to maintain essential services for the people of TW and its visitors."* This is clearly not enough and does not take account of congestion and reputational damage.

Our proposed changes to car park fees:

- a) **First hour free in MSCPs** to compensate for the loss of 'free' spaces on street for the casual and quick stop visitors. The town could capitalise on this feature in its marketing offering first

hour free parking to all. We calculate that revenue for parking for less than one hour in five of the MSCPs accounted for just 5.1% (£781,603) of total MSCP revenue, and this despite - or because of - a tariff increase of nearly 17% in 2013. We believe that by spreading the cost of the first 'free hour' is the other four tariffs (excluding the all day tariff), and attracting more users to the MSCP, the loss of income could be minimised.

- b) **Remove the £1 night time charge.** With no 'free' parking in the central zone/s, this charge will inhibit the evening and night-time economy.
- c) The imposition of car park charges on Sundays has had a very detrimental impact on local roads on-street parking and congestion. Offer a **simple low flat rate charge on Sundays** in addition to the first hour free to boost the retail economy and reduce on-street parking congestion.
- d) We welcome the introduction of residents season ticket rate in car parks in 2014, and suggest that more should be done to **encourage off street residents parking particularly in the under used MSCPs.** Residents could be offered a choice of permit such as all day or night time only, and have premium reserved floors with secure parking and CCTV monitoring.
- e) Season ticket and payment terms must reflect the flexible working needs of local workers who may not work 9-5 weekdays only, and should accommodate car share schemes.

5.0 Car park payment systems and investment:

- 5.1 **Investment in modern car park payment systems is long overdue** and must be a priority. Smart technology allows drivers to make informed decisions and operate quick, easy and reliable payment. A flexible, efficient and cost effective parking operation is not possible without a modern Smart system that can meet a fast changing economic environment. Furthermore, Smart payment systems offer flexibility in charging to facilitate offers such as free parking late night shopping in the festive period, and special event parking rates, which should be part of the marketing offer for RTW.
- 5.2 Cash payments are not cost effective and should be abolished in favour of credit card/debit card/pre-payment card and ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) based systems which are increasingly commonplace. All drivers pay for fuel by credit/debit card and contactless technology makes for easier payment of small sums at kiosks.
- 5.3 There is no future in the telephone-based pay by phone system in operation in RTW. This has proved to be unpopular, cumbersome, unreliable and often unworkable due to poor signal coverage where the machines are located, and particularly disadvantageous to the elderly, the technically challenged and tourists. The take up has been derisory. Furthermore, foreign tourists may not have a UK phone requiring them to make an international call to register to park, but they do have credit cards for use in the UK.
- 5.4 Car park payment systems using credit cards already exist in several TW private car parks. However, the trial in Great Hall car park of a new payment system that covers cash, card and phone has a convoluted and long-winded log in and log out system using the same machine. We envisage frustrating queues arising in busy car parks. Information about the cost of installation and running this system should have been provided in this Strategy for valid comparison with other systems such as ANPR based systems.
- 5.5 Sevenoaks: new MSCPs for Waitrose and M&S have much better payment systems. The Waitrose car park is essentially pay on foot and free for shoppers who can get their payment offset against their shopping bill. The M&S car park uses ANPR which is simple and requires payment on exit at a machine that displays an image of your vehicle entering the car park and the time. This is the way forward as non-payers are automatically fined via their registration details. Wycombe District Council in Buckinghamshire has successfully been operating the Veri-Park car park management system – an ANPR based system - in all of its MSCP car parks in three of its town centres: High Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough. (see Case Study and 9.1 below)

- 5.6 Variable messaging system: The VMS in Tunbridge Wells which has not worked for years must be upgraded as in Sevenoaks which now can display vacancies on roadside signs and also supports a smart phone App that updates the vacant spaces in each car park in virtually real time.
- 5.7 The number and availability of disabled parking spaces should be displayed outside each car park and on the website. Blue badge parking on Priority roads should be politely discouraged by perhaps a windscreen leaflet indicating the closest available disabled bay in a car park. In addition the number of disabled bays provided should be monitored.

6 **Private car parks**

- 6.1 Planning: Car parking should have a greater role in the planning approvals process. Permissions for new flats or conversions providing more accommodation should require balancing parking provision. Developers must not be allowed to offset inadequate on-site parking by being guaranteed season tickets to public car parks for the future occupants of buildings.
- 6.2 Front garden parking. According to *Spaced Out: Perspectives on Parking policy*, 80% of the 26m dwellings in GB were built with front gardens, and now almost a third of these have been turned over to hard standing for car parking. This can degrade the local environment, remove on-street parking places and endanger pedestrians. However, we suggest that 'priority roads' could see front garden parking approved to reduce congestion. Parking and planning should liaise closely on each application and use Article 4 directions, to remove development rights where 'the character of an area of acknowledged importance is threatened' such as throughout the RTW conservation area.
- Where permission is granted, front garden parking should be only for the occupant's vehicles. There is evidence that some 'front gardens' are used by vehicles other than the homeowner's on a 'free' or paid for basis.

7 **Commuters:**

- 7.1 Traffic and on-street parking arising from rail commuters and local workers is recognised in this Strategy as a significant problem in RTW but the 'problem' is not defined. There is no analysis in this Strategy of the scale of the problem or actions to counter its impact particularly in partnership with Network Rail. Councils do have the power to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy which is an option to consider for those employers who fail to discourage commuting by car through car sharing schemes or who subsidise workplace car parks. Nottingham is a prime example of this strategy
http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Library/parking%20news/PN_Dec_08_pt2.pdf
- 7.2 A more structured approach is needed to tackle the causes of congestion, investment in public transport alternatives, and promotion of car sharing and car park season tickets for individuals and businesses.
- 7.3 Proposals exist for park and ride (P&R) along the Pembury Road to reduce congestion, and recently revived by calls for a 'pod and ride' futuristic public transport alternative. This Strategy must consider the impact of both 'exporting' RTW parking facilities into Pembury and other local communities. Any massive increase in parking charges in town centre car parks necessary to induce drivers to use the P&R facilities would be completely unacceptable.

8 **Parking for other vehicles**

- a) **Motorbike** parking facilities should be available in all the RTW car parks. Currently spaces are in only 5 of the 13 car parks and these are often full.
- b) **Bicycle** parking in car parks is available but there is no information on the TWBC website or on car park signage where these facilities are located. There should be secure facilities in all car parks to meet the expected growth in cycling arising from TWBC transport policy.

- c) **Coaches** have parking facilities near Sainsbury's which appears to be adequate capacity. Better signage to this site would help as coaches dropping at the far end of the Pantiles appear to be confused how to get there. The coach stands beside the Commons on London Road should be withdrawn and converted to residents only parking to help alleviate the pressure for parking places. Furthermore, it is an unsafe location to allow passengers to get on or get off coaches as there is no footway.
- d) **Taxis:** The station taxi rank is chaotic. It faces the wrong way and too many taxis want to use it. Reduce the number of licences to fit the rank spaces. Remove taxi spaces marked on Calverley Road (a priority road) as they are never used for that purpose.

9 **Parking Controls and Enforcement**

- 9.1 The Town Forum welcomes strengthening of enforcement of illegal and inconsiderate parking on grounds of contributing to congestion, endangering pedestrians, impeding the efficient running of public transport and access for emergency and other public services. We believe that enforcement is a vital tool in changing parking behaviours.
- 9.2 It would have been useful to have had current and historic data on income from enforcement
- 9.3 There is considerable evidence that parking abuse and parking on pavements occurs 'after hours'. Enforcement action should cover 7 days a week including evenings.
- 9.4 Changing to ANPR technology in car parks would enable fines to be automatically imposed and collected from the car owner, enabling enforcement offices to concentrate on on-street parking.
- 9.5 A system for the public to report parking abuses must be established and be effective in penalising the offenders and changing parking behaviours.

10 **Town centre 'Park and Ride' service**

The completion of Fiveways shared space project will move the centre of gravity of town uphill, towards the main retail zone at the top of the town, pulling business away from the bottom of the town. It is crucial, therefore, to provide much better links between the top and bottom of the town, and the main car parks. The Shopper Hopper service which currently provides a link for £1 for any number of journeys could develop into an inner town free bus service that could help to maximise the use of the spare MSCP capacity at the top of the town and reduce the impact of a shortage of parking at the bottom to the town. It would simultaneously minimise the number of movements of people driving between both ends of the town while cruising to park. Working in partnership with local bus companies, and financed by income generated by the MSCPs, a modern hop-on/hop-off inner park & ride service linking car parks, train station and shopping areas, could be provided at no cost to the traveller and/or be included in the car park fee.

11 **Parking Services**

- 11.1 This document provides no data on the costs of the current in-house TWBC operation and assumes, therefore, that this structure will continue going forward. There are other models of management available in the market and these options should be considered within this Strategy document so that any change in parking management and costs, revenues, facilities and personnel could be properly appraised and assessed.
- 11.2 Embracing new technologies is vital. New 'Free Flow' parking technologies were demonstrated at Parkex 2014 which bring the prospect of barrier-less and ticketless parking and payment systems that are based on proven ANPR technology and flexible payment channels to fruition. For example, Veri-park was been adopted by Wycombe District Council for use in all of its off-street and town centre MSCPs, where it has been in use for the past eighteen months. Veri-park operates without 'barriers' and allows the 'free flow' of traffic in and out of car parks and vehicles are no longer impeded by them. 'Free flow' works for the both operators and the councils and improves the overall experience for customers. It is a complete management system which caters for all payment options, both pre and post

payment options, season tickets and 'drive-in and out' debit card processes. Customers only pay for what they use, increasing both compliance and revenues. (see High Wycombe case study below).

12 **Appendix B**

The Town Forum's response to this Draft Parking Strategy has looked at the strategic issues raised rather than focus on particular streets or zones. We have reviewed the projects proposed in Appendix B. We object to Item 10 that aims to include business parking permits in the Residents Parking Policy for the reasons expressed in 3.2 above.

Errors and omissions in the Draft Parking Strategy

General: A map of the residents parking zones must be included in the Strategy.

Page 14 and 18 "Quaint" is not a description that RTW would recognise. Suggest change to "The individual shops and brasserie style restaurants..."

Page 14. These maps are unreadable.

Page 18 Summary states "Commuter Parking causes problems for visitors and residents... " yet there is no analysis within the text of what commuters (rail travellers or local workers), how many, employers or employer groups that cause the "problems".

Pages 19-20 A map showing the extent of residents parking zones should be included together with a list of the streets included in each zone

Page 32 Beneath the map, "...Warwick Road are designated residents only " should read "Warwick Park..."

Page 39 The table relates to the headline on the bottom of page 38 Pay by Phone Transactions and not Pay and Display Transactions

Page 44. Table Occupancy of full time car parks: Additional columns showing (1) the total number of places and (2) the number of season tickets per car park should be included to give the full picture.

Page 45 "John Street Carpark to the north of the borough..." should read "... to the north of Royal Tunbridge Wells ."

References

New measures on parking announced 6th March to be enacted before the General Election.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-delivers-on-parking-promises-to-help-local-shops>

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408867/draft-statutory-guidance.pdf

Workplace parking in Nottingham

http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Library/parking%20news/PN_Dec_08_pt2.pdf

Travel Planning

<http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Library/position%20papers/Position%20Paper%2007.pdf>

Technology in parking

<http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/IPP/Asset%20Skills%20Intelligence%20Paper%2019%20-%20Technology%20in%20the%20Parking%20Industry.pdf>

Parking on the High Street

http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Re-thinking_Car_Parking.pdf

Retail Futures

http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Retail_Futures_2018_-_Centre_for_Retail_Research.pdf

Keep the Nation Moving

[http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Library/Reports%20and%20research/RAC_Foundation_Parking_Fact_Sheet_\(Oct_2012\).pdf](http://www.britishparking.co.uk/write/Documents/Library/Reports%20and%20research/RAC_Foundation_Parking_Fact_Sheet_(Oct_2012).pdf)

TWBC Urban Parking Strategy by Peter Brett Associates.

http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/26509/Urban-Parking-Strategy-Main-Report.pdf

Nothing has changed in more than 10 years – only worse – in York Road

<http://www.tunbridgewellscitizens.org.uk/twyorkroad/parkingtraffic.html>

APPENDIX 1 TWBC parking analysis

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - DRAFT Parking Strategy
Car Park Transactions for the year ending March 2014 (Pages 38 & 39)**

Sellable Hours Per Day 10
Days Per Year 365
(All day) or 24 Hour Proxy 6
Number of Hours Sold

PAY BY COIN & BY PHONE- ALL TRANSACTIONS										
	Crescent	Great Hall	Meadow	RVP	RVP +1	Torrington	TOTAL ALL TRANSACTION			
1	100661	20426	72122	332778	574	74029	600590			
2	117548	23427	69667	317094	859	53114	581709			
3	57929	10769	26027	104905	411	59918	259959			
4	22792	5173	8471	30191	249	12484	79360			
5	10226	2470	3780	11283	286	8584	36629			
6	524	1585	1548	4448	141	1265	9511			
All Day	63362	5420	2782	5331	23171	18634	118700			
Total	373042	69270	184397	806030	25691	228028	1686458			

Percent	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<=1	27.0	29.5	39.1	41.3	2.2	32.5	35.6		
<=2	31.5	33.8	37.8	39.3	3.3	23.3	34.5		
<=3	15.5	15.5	14.1	13.0	1.6	26.3	15.4		
<=4	6.1	7.5	4.6	3.7	1.0	5.5	4.7		
<=5	2.7	3.6	2.0	1.4	1.1	3.8	2.2		
<=6	0.1	2.3	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6		
All Day	17.0	7.8	1.5	0.7	90.2	8.2	7.0		
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		

Percent Sold	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Three Hours or less	74.0	78.9	91.0	93.6	7.2	82.0	85.5	
Number of Spaces	1085	205	450	1000	230	248	3218	

No. of Hours Sold										
	Crescent	Great Hall	Meadow	RVP	RVP +1	Torrington	TOTAL ALL TRANSACTION			
<=1	100,661	20,426	72,122	332,778	574	74,029	600,590			
<=2	235,096	46,854	139,334	634,188	1,718	106,228	1,163,418			
<=3	173,787	32,307	78,081	314,715	1,233	179,754	779,877			
<=4	91,168	20,692	33,884	120,764	996	49,936	317,440			
<=5	51,130	12,350	18,900	56,415	1,430	42,920	183,145			
<=6	3,144	9,510	9,288	26,688	846	7,590	57,066			
All Day Parking	380,172	32,520	16,692	31,986	139,026	111,804	712,200			
Total	1,035,158	174,659	368,301	1,517,534	145,823	572,261	3,813,736			

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - DRAFT Parking Strategy
Analysis of MSCP Revenue on an Hourly Basis for the year ending March 2014

MSCPs	Crescent	Great Hall	Meadow	RVP	RVP +1	Torrington	Total number of Spaces
Total Number of Spaces	1085	205	450	1000	230	248	3218
Hours Available Per Year (Ten hours per day)	3,960,250	748,250	1,642,500	3,650,000	839,500	905,200	11,745,700
Annual Percentage Hours Sold	26.14	23.34	22.42	41.58	17.37	63.22	32.47
Analysis of Hours Sold by Hour	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<=1	9.72	11.69	19.58	21.93	0.39	12.94	15.75
<=2	22.71	26.83	37.83	41.79	1.18	18.56	30.51
<=3	16.79	18.50	21.20	20.74	0.85	31.41	20.45
<=4	8.81	11.85	9.20	7.96	0.68	8.73	8.32
<=5	4.94	7.07	5.13	3.72	0.98	7.50	4.80
<=6	0.30	5.44	2.52	1.76	0.58	1.33	1.50
All Day	36.73	18.62	4.53	2.11	95.34	19.54	18.67
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Tariff Rate per Hour							
<=1	£1.40	£1.40	£1.40	£1.40	£1.40	£0.60	N/A
<=2	£2.40	£2.40	£2.40	£2.40	£2.40	£1.00	N/A
<=3	£3.40	£3.40	£3.40	£3.40	£3.40	£3.40	N/A
<=4	£4.40	£4.40	£4.40	£4.40	£4.40	£4.30	N/A
<=5	£5.20	£5.20	£5.20	£5.20	£5.20	£5.60	N/A
<=6	£5.90	£5.90	£5.90	£5.90	£5.70	£10.00	N/A
All Day	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£10.00	£5.70	£10.00	N/A
Revenue -No. of Hours Sold x Tariff							
<=1	£140,925	£28,596	£100,971	£465,889	£804	£44,417	£781,603
<=2	£564,230	£112,450	£334,402	£1,522,051	£4,123	£106,228	£2,643,484
<=3	£590,876	£109,844	£265,475	£1,070,031	£4,192	£61,164	£2,651,582
<=4	£401,139	£91,045	£149,090	£531,362	£4,382	£214,725	£1,391,742
<=5	£265,876	£64,220	£98,280	£293,358	£7,436	£240,352	£969,522
<=6	£18,550	£56,109	£54,799	£157,459	£4,822	£75,900	£367,639
All Day	£3,801,720	£325,200	£166,920	£319,860	£792,448	£1,118,040	£6,524,188
Total	£5,783,316	£787,464	£1,169,937	£4,360,010	£818,208	£2,410,826	£15,329,760

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - DRAFT Parking Strategy
Analysis of MSCP Revenue on an Hourly Basis for the year ending March 2014

MSCPs	MSCP Revenue						Total Revenue
	Crescent	Great Hall	Meadow	RVP	RVP +1	Torrington	
Revenue -No. of Hours Sold x Tariff							
<=1	£140,925	£28,596	£100,971	£465,889	£804	£44,417	£781,603
<=2	£564,230	£112,450	£334,402	£1,522,051	£4,123	£106,228	£2,643,484
<=3	£590,876	£109,844	£265,475	£1,070,031	£4,192	£611,164	£2,651,582
<=4	£401,139	£91,045	£149,090	£531,362	£4,382	£214,725	£1,391,742
<=5	£265,876	£64,220	£98,280	£293,358	£7,436	£240,352	£969,522
<=6	£18,550	£56,109	£54,799	£157,459	£4,822	£75,900	£367,639
All Day	£3,801,720	£325,200	£166,920	£319,860	£792,448	£1,118,040	£6,524,188
Total	£5,783,316	£787,464	£1,169,937	£4,360,010	£818,208	£2,410,826	£15,329,760
Percentage of Revenue							
Hourly Basis							
<=1	2.44	3.63	8.63	10.69	0.10	1.84	5.10
<=2	9.76	14.28	28.58	34.91	0.50	4.41	17.24
<=3	10.22	13.95	22.69	24.54	0.51	25.35	17.30
<=4	6.94	11.56	12.74	12.19	0.54	8.91	9.08
<=5	4.60	8.16	8.40	6.73	0.91	9.97	6.32
<=6	0.32	7.13	4.68	3.61	0.59	3.15	2.40
All Day	65.74	41.30	14.27	7.34	96.85	46.38	42.56
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council - DRAFT Parking Strategy
Analysis of MSCP Revenue on an Hourly Basis for the year ending March 2014

Sellable Hours Per Day **10**
 Days Per Year **365**
 (All day) or 24 Hour Proxy **6**

MSCPs	Crescent	Great Hall	Meadow	RVP	RVP +1	Torrington	Total number of Spaces
Total Number of Spaces (Page 33)	1085	205	450	1000	230	248	3218
Total (B/F)	1,085	586	450	1,000	230	248	3,218
Hours Available Per Year (B/F)	3,960,250	748,250	1,642,500	3,650,000	839,500	905,200	11,745,700
Total Hours Sold (B/F)	1,035,158	174,659	368,301	1,517,534	145,823	572,261	3,813,736
(Ten hours per day)							
Annual Percentage Hours Sold (B/F)	26.14	23.34	22.42	41.58	17.37	63.22	32.47
Public Spaces Available (Page 44)	547	135	380	1021	209	248	2540
THEREFORE:							
Hours Available Per Year (Public Spaces))	1,996,550	482,750	1,387,000	3,726,650	762,850	905,200	9,271,000
ANALYSIS							
Spaces Available for Season Tickets (Page 44)							
Total Number of Spaces (P33)	1085	205	450	1000	230	248	3218
Public Spaces Available (Page 44)	547	135	380	1021	209	248	2540
THEREFORE:							
Spaces Available for Season Tickets	538	70	70	-21	21	0	678
Total Hours Sold (Pay & Display & by Phone)	1,035,158	174,659	368,301	1,517,534	145,823	572,261	3,813,736
(Ten hours per day)							
Annual Percentage Hours Sold	51.85	35.45	26.55	40.72	19.12	63.22	41.14

APPENDIX 2 Analysis of parking income from RTW MSCP's including season ticket revenue

Analysis of	Parking Income	
	Income	Percentage
Total Income	£amount	of Total Income
Pay & Display Income	£3,616,139	81.02
Pay by Phone Income	£548,576	12.29
Car Parks Seasons	£298,731	6.69
Total Income - All carparks	£4,463,446	100.00
MSCP		
Pay & Display Income	£3,295,500	73.83
Pay by Phone Income	£493,680	11.06
Car Parks Seasons	£250,857	5.62
Total Income - MSCPs	£4,040,037	90.51
Other Car Parks		
Pay & Display Income	£423,409	9.49
Pay by Phone Income	£54,896	1.23
Car Parks Seasons	£47,874	1.07
Other CP Adjustments *	-£102,770	0.00
Total Income - Other Car parks	£423,409	9.49
Check Sum	£4,463,446	100.00

* Stone Street (P&D), Little Mt Sion & Town Hall Yard (Season tickets)

Appendix 3 Analysis of the surpluses on parking by all of the District Councils in Kent as reported to DCLG. Tunbridge Wells has consistently topped the list in Kent.

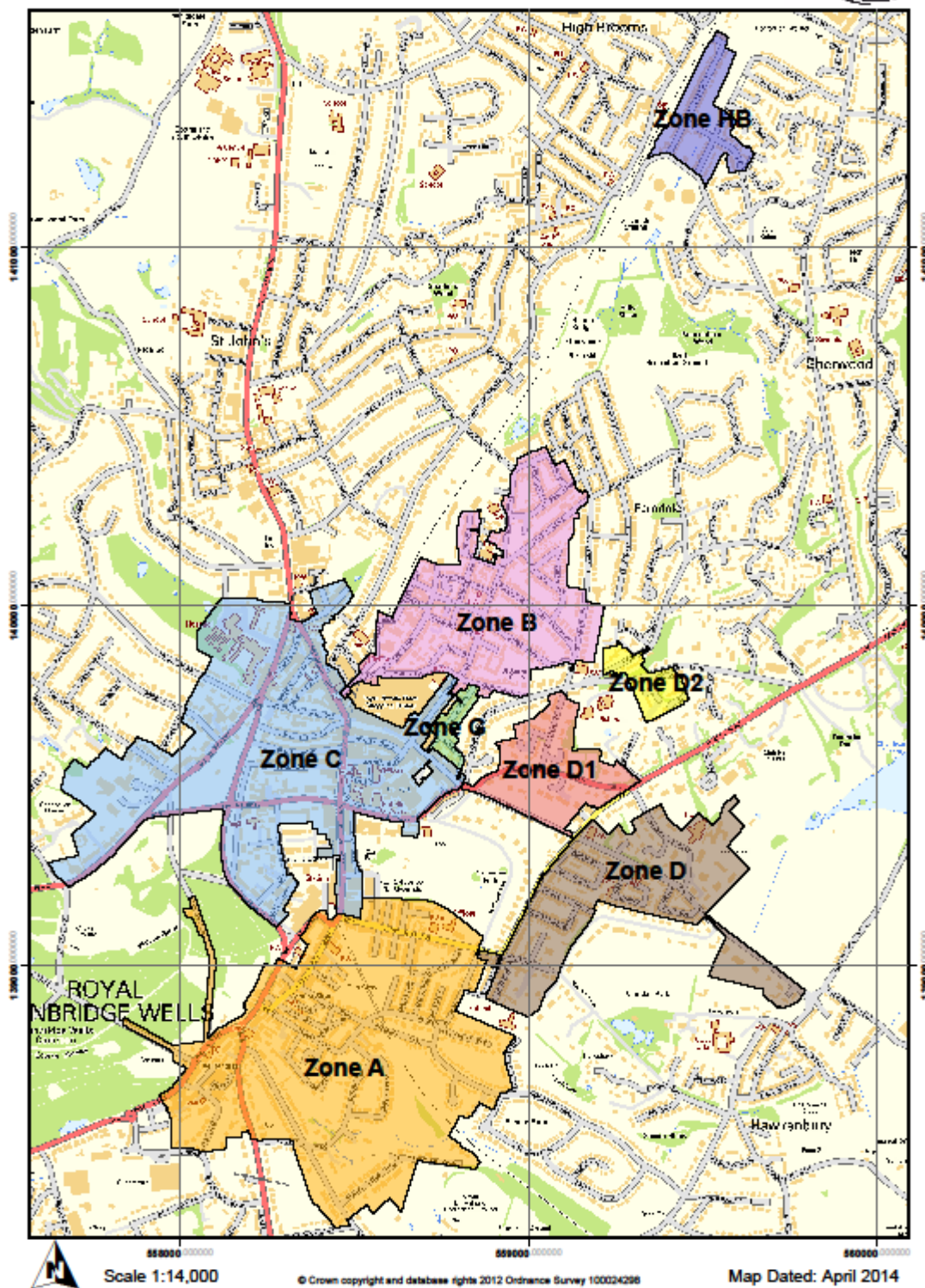
County		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Five Year	2013	2014
Kent	Local authority	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	Surplus	National Ranking	National Ranking
	1 Tunbridge Wells	£2,598	£2,356	£2,490	£3,170	£2,824	£13,438	44	57
	2 Medway Towns UA	£2,100	£2,010	£2,090	£2,917	TBA	£9,117	50	TBA
	3 Canterbury	£1,997	£2,164	£2,564	£2,729	£3,113	£12,567	53	52
	4 Sevenoaks	£1,238	£1,431	£1,568	£1,473	£1,641	£7,351	106	103
	5 Maidstone	£447	£495	£557	£1,304	£1,164	£3,967	117	133
	6 Dover	£757	£719	£1,040	£1,024	£977	£4,517	133	162
	7 Gravesham	£611	£679	£917	£913	1,177	£4,297	149	132
	8 Swale	£745	£544	£840	£862	£815	£3,806	155	167
	9 Tonbridge & Malling	£858	£685	£744	£790	£843	£3,920	165	164
	10 Thanet	£465	£431	£202	£234	£393	£1,725	251	218
	14 Wealden	-£317	-£317	-£301	-£404	-£328	-£1,667	-346	346

Sources : Department Communities & Local Government

Data for Medway Towns UA 2013/14 does not appear to be available

£346

RESIDENTS PARKING ZONES



PAY-AS-YOU-GO ANPR CASE STUDY

ANPR technology brings improvements for customers of Wycombe District Council car parks installed for 18 months.

Following the successful trial of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) technology in High Wycombe's Easton Street and Railway Place car parks, it has been installed in car parks around the district. The ANPR system replaces the majority of the existing pay and display machines. The new system provides a host of extra benefits to customers and local businesses which will include:

- no need to rush back worrying if your ticket will run out, allowing you to spend longer for shopping or business
- no need to ever risk getting a fine or penalty again

More options on how to pay, these are:

- pay on return via the machine using coins or cards
- register for automatic payments through [Flexipark](#) (external website)
- pay online up to 24 hours after leaving the car park
- pay by mobile phone via RingGo on arrival into the car park

The ANPR system uses advanced technology. On driving into the car park a camera logs your vehicle registration number and relays this to the pay machine system. When leaving the car park visit the pay machine and follow the instructions on screen, insert your vehicle registration number and it tells you the amount to pay.

Disabled users will still receive free parking concessions, but you must register your Blue Badge with Wycombe District Council.

<http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/news/press-release/22may14-new-anpr-technology-car-parks.aspx>

Flexi-Park is the name of the automated pay-as-you-go service that car park operator's can make available for their car park/s through Veri-Park software. Drivers have to register a payment card with the car park operators chosen payment service provider. This is done by logging on through the 'My Account' link, 'Your Payment details' screens. Once registered a payment card and connected it to your chosen vehicle; Flexi-Park allows you to drive in, park and leave. It's as simple as that! Flexi-park will spot your visit, calculate how long you spent in the car park and apply the tariff and any associated fees set by the car park operator for the car park. The total value will then be taken from your nominated payment card*.



- WDS is larger than TWBC in terms of its population; they have a population of 172,000 compared whereas our population is circa 112,000.
- There are three main towns within the district: High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Marlow, each of which has one or more MSCPs.
- Veri-park is the software system– that is used to manage all the MSCPs on behalf of the council (WDS) : <https://veripark.co.uk/?q=content/how-pay-your-parking>
- WDS owns all the MSCPs: <https://veripark.co.uk/?q=content/who-owns-or-runs-car-park>
- Veri-park is owned by ParkingPal Ltd a company that was bought recently by Aptcontrols group which has several District and County Councils among its customers - including KCC . <http://www.aptcontrols.co.uk/apt-controls-group/casestudies.asp>.

Veri-park works in the same way at the system in use at the M&S carpark in Sevenoaks. We tested both the Sevenoaks system and the system on trial in the Great Hall Car Park, and it is far simpler to use.

APPENDIX 4 *We are grateful for these comments from Town Forum members and organisations.*

The Tunbridge Wells Over Fifties Forum

Denise Watts, Chair, Tunbridge Wells Over Fifties Forum

“One of the most common complaints from members is obstructions on pavements, so it’s not surprising that the biggest response was about cars parked on pavements; most important to the elderly and sight-impaired. *(Without pavement-parking the town couldn’t function but distinctions should be made on pavements which drivers shouldn’t exceed. i.e. white line or change in brickwork)*

Other comments;

- Not enough disabled parking on streets (no one responded about such places in car parks)
- Many older people are penalised by not being able to pay parking fee by phone. All methods of payment should be simplified.
- Parking by schools causes a nuisance to nearby residents. Schools should be planned with pick-up/ drop/off points.
- Many people would vote for a 20 MPH limit in all our streets. One mentioned that it may cause more pollution and would be costly due to fitting humps etc.
- Nearly everyone was stressed over the parking in their road; some could never park near their home. It was not thought that residents’ permits would solve the problem as permits cover several streets, therefore no guarantee they could park nearby. Perhaps a ban for a couple of hours mid-day would permit cleaning of our gutters. (another common complaint)
- Many of TWOFF members in their 80s still want to drive; ‘don’t try to get us out of our cars, make cars and parking better’.
- All T/Wells residential roads are now single file due to cars parked on both sides. Many drivers don’t want to reverse their cars, causing hold-ups and arguments.
- Too many flats built in residential areas have caused over crowded parking on the streets. It must be accepted that residents, all over the town, may have more than one car.
- There is a need for Park & Ride at both ends of the town, this could attract more visitors.

At a public meeting on 13th February, TWOFF members were asked if, with people living longer, there should be a case for Carers having a free residential parking permit for visiting elderly people at home. It was unanimously agreed that they should.

From one member who is resident in Culverden Park Road. “I and my neighbours realise that we don’t own the road outside our houses but lately we are lucky to park in the road at all. Some nights, after driving round the streets, we are forced to park on yellow lines and run back in early morning and try to find another space. John Street car park is often used by residents as a last resource; we are all bracing ourselves for the soon-to-come construction work, meaning that workers and shoppers will try to park in our roads.

“One thing I would really like to stress is the change in neighbourliness caused by overcrowded parking. I have lived here for 38 years and up to the last couple of years it never was ‘every man for himself’. The face of Tunbridge Wells is changing.”

Town Forum member, Marlene Lento

5.3.5.4 Residential Zones

Residents must be fully informed at the outset of any consultation if permits could reduce parking capacity in the area (especially on narrow roads where large reductions would be inevitable). Residents must be allowed to vote on any schemes the council proposes based on the consultation, and there must always be the option of voting against a permit on seeing the detail proposals.

5.3.7.1 School Run

As a matter of great importance TWBC needs to collaborate with KCC on identifying future sites for schools in the Allocations DPD.

Increasingly parents are forced to own second cars, or drive when they would prefer to have walked, because there is no school provision for primary school children in walking distance- or siblings have been assigned different schools due to a lack of foresight in planning.

The lack of school provision geographically overlaps with the areas of greatest pollution, congestion and population density along the central arteries of the town.

With increasing residential developments and deteriorating school provision pressure on residential parking and parking around schools only increases and any control measures will be symptomatic.

5.7.5 Car Park Season Tickets for Businesses

TWBC must take away from planners the option of bargaining away public parking provision in the planning process of new office/commercial building construction.

Developers must not be allowed to offset inadequate on-site parking by being guaranteed season passes to public car parks to the future occupants of their buildings.

6. Green Parking

TWFS needs to work and budget holistically and with a long term view across all departments, and adhere to the guidelines it set for itself in the sustainability document, to provide services close to where they live (see example set regarding school run). Only then can car ownership and the ensuing issues of parking and pollution be reduced in the future.

6.2 Car Club

In order for a car club to be successful there needs to be a critical mass of available vehicles. A trial might prove unsuccessful for that reason but the long-term goal is to achieve a culture change. This might incur cost now but will pay off in future, TWBC needs to take the long view.

Details that need to be considered carefully for such a scheme to be successful, e.g. where could the fleet cars be sited if this scheme rolls out?

7 Parking space for the future

Caution should be exercised in accepting optimistic and outdated data on occupancy.

There has been much development in town since 2008, when some of the data was collected.

Much of the data in the report by Peter Brett Associates has also been proven to be factually incorrect (see comments on the original consultation, e.g. St. John's car park total spaces), or found to be skewed and non-representative, e.g. occupancy of town centre car parks measured only in February.

12.2 Funding to support the Draft Parking Strategy

The council should seriously consider to reclaim the significant cost of the report by Peter Brett Associates, which has been widely discredited due to significant factual errors and lack of due diligence.