

Parking Strategy for Central Milton Keynes



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This document has been prepared by
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This document was publicly consulted on between 17th September and 12th November 2008. This is the final version following comments made during the consultation. This document will be used to inform future policy decisions on parking in CMK only, such as parking charges, permits and the future of multi-storey car parks.

This is the refreshed version issued November 2013.

Introduction

Parking in Central Milton Keynes is an emotive issue and any discussion on the subject will prompt vastly disparate views. It is vital that parking exists and is controlled, both in terms of numbers and price, to ensure the vitality of CMK. However, at the same time it has to be recognised that attempting to meet unfettered demand is neither realistic, considering the projected scale of future growth of the city, nor sustainable in terms of accessibility. This therefore demands that positive action is taken to review the provision and management of the parking stock.

A strategy is required that recognises that the availability of spaces in CMK, together with the price, is the major determinant of modal shift (the use of alternative transport modes that are more sustainable than the private car, such as walking, cycling and buses), and the two main issues that need to be addressed. This is perhaps more pertinent to work trips than leisure and is grounds for developing a strategy that recognises this difference and adopts measures that reflect the propensity for change within these two primary trip purposes.

There is no doubt however that any measures perceived to reduce the availability of parking will be unpopular with many.

This document will inform future decisions that need to be made about parking in Central Milton Keynes. It does not address parking borough wide.

This is the post consultation version of the CMK Parking Strategy. The amendments to this document as a result of comments made during the consultation held between 17th September and 12th November 2008 are shown in bold italics.



Structure

The structure of this Parking Strategy can be summarised as follows:



Vision, Aims and Objectives

Vision for Central Milton Keynes - The Local Plan

The Local Plan, adopted in 2005, and supporting planning guidance such as the CMK Development Framework (up to 2031) set out future visions for Milton Keynes and Central Milton Keynes, taking into account the principle of sustainability, the original goals of the Master Plan and the outcome of consultation. Both the Local Plan, which has been adopted as policy by the Council and CMK Development Framework were widely consulted on at the time.

The Local Plan states a vision for a Milton Keynes that

- Provides a high quality of life for all
- Encourages sustainable lifestyles
- Offers real choice for transport
- Promotes a dynamic, knowledge based economy
- Creates attractive, vibrant, successful town centres
- Enjoys a clean, green environment
- Stimulates diversity and innovation
- Welcomes growth to meet local needs
- Strengthens its role as a regional centre

Specifically relating to transport the Local Plan aims to

- Reduce the number, length and need to make trips
- Promote an integrated transport system that gives priority to walking, cycling, bus, rail and canals
- Allocate new developments at locations that are easily accessible by sustainable transport modes or are capable of being well served by such modes through transport enhancements.

CMK is set to develop as an emerging regional centre with a focus for retail, commercial, cultural (and housing) development within the city.

Key Objectives for CMK are to:

- Achieve a broader mix of uses within a finer grain of development, incorporating a high standard of design
- Promote a higher density of development leading to a greater intensity of activity supporting and supported by high quality public transport
- Reduce the influence of the car in the design and layout of the area
- Encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport for people travelling to, from and within the area with walking the first priority within CMK
- Integrate different facilities and quarters within the centre



The CMK Development Framework

Twelve strategic goals form the basis of the CMK Development Framework. These build on the six goals from the original 1970's plan. Two goals establish principles directly relative to car parking in CMK and provide a vision for the future.

Accessibility and Movement within CMK:

- Recognise the role of the car
- Reduce the impact of the car on the townscape
- Prioritise pedestrians
- Encourage pedestrian movement and activity throughout the centre
- Introduce intra CMK transport network/link from the station to Campbell Park

A Viable and Attractive Public Transport System:

- Provide a choice of transport modes available at all times
- Support access to CMK by high quality transport systems from across the new city into the centre that are reliable, frequent and attractive
- Actively encourage modal shift using clear and understandable 'carrots' and 'sticks'
- High quality interchange facilities
- Manage parking pressures – providing more clarity in provision responding to the needs of different CMK users

Aim of Parking Strategy

The aim of this parking strategy is to maintain the economic vitality of Central Milton Keynes as a place to shop, work and visit, whilst recognising parking management as a tool that can and will be utilised to promote a shift to more sustainable modes.

Objectives and Actions (by which achievable) of Parking Strategy

Both the Local Plan and the CMK Development Framework can be further dissected into aims and objectives, with related actions, for this Parking Strategy (not in order of priority).

Objective	Action by which Achievable	Short/Medium/Long Term
Effective management of existing parking stock	By ensuring optimal use of bays; reducing occupancy in bays considered to be full to capacity and increasing occupancy in under utilised bays, thereby spreading the load more evenly	Short term
Price parking competitively to maintain CMK's attractiveness as a regional centre	Introduce regular (annual?) charging reviews Index link parking charges to other neighbouring and comparative towns at all times keeping charges 10-25% (?) lower in MK	Short, medium and long term
Review and revise the parking permit scheme and lay foundation for better integration with passenger transport	Permit review – 2 stages Stage 1 to rationalise and simplify permit system, removing any unnecessary permits and increase permit cost proportionately to parking charge increase Consideration to be given to introducing a permit discount for more sustainable/greener vehicles, e.g. low emission or alternative fuel vehicles Stage 2 to review whole permit system, including concessionary discount, application method etc in order to facilitate web applications, direct debit payments and an overall simplified permit system offering an enhanced service but with less of a concessionary discount Combined parking permit and bus pass to offer more integrated approach to choice of transport modes	Stage 1 – short term Stage 2 – medium term
To change cultural behaviour of Milton Keynesians	Address the expectation that motorists should be able to park close to their chosen destination Improved wayfinding to facilitate better routes for pedestrians and cyclists Address expectation that parking supply should match demand by demonstrating the viability of alternatives to the car	Medium and long term

Objective	Action by which Achievable	Short/Medium/Long Term
Contribute towards modal shift (the use of alternative transport modes that are more sustainable than the private car, such as walking, cycling and buses)	Use 'carrot' and 'stick' methods to manage demand for parking and encourage use of other transport modes, including promoting alternatives such as enhanced bus services and travel planning for employers <i>Link closely with Bus Strategy to improve public transport services and perception of such</i>	Short, medium and long term
Support Local Plan and Local Transport Plan targets	<i>To promote and facilitate growth of CMK</i> To promote and deliver multi-storey car parks (MSCP's) in CMK <i>Review locations of MSCP's and decide whether edge or town peripheral locations or development integrated options (or a mixture of both) would be more suitable for CMK</i> <i>Aspire to achieve ParkMark Secure Car Parking Award for MSCP's</i>	Short, medium and long term
Inform and contribute to "Guidance for Delivery of the CMK Development Framework" document being produced by Milton Keynes Partnership.	Adoption of Parking Strategy to steer direction of this document	Short and medium term
Promote local parking standards	Increase number of parking spaces in CMK to 31,000, but overall ratio of development: parking spaces will increase therefore local targets achieved	Long term
Manage congestion into and within CMK	Enhanced Vehicle Messaging System to guide vehicles to available parking <i>A Park and Ride Strategy to be developed</i>	Long term

It must be recognised that some conflict exists between the aims and objectives, for example, encouraging modal shift conflicts with the multi-storey car park build programme as outlined in the CMK Development Framework. The Council tries to balance these conflicts and to prioritise in certain ways to maximise the overall benefits. There are however times, as with any conflict situation, where certain users may lose out when difficult policy decisions are made.

Current Issues



There are a number of issues currently preventing achievement of the overall aims and objectives. These are listed below.

- **Level of parking charges**

The current parking charges (at time of writing in November 2013) are as follows;

- 1 hour standard tariff pay and display - 40p
- 1 hour premium tariff pay and display - £1.40p
- All day commuter - £8 (£4 with MK resident discount).

These subsidised charges are significantly lower than those levied in neighbouring and comparable towns and do not encourage modal shift to other more sustainable forms of transport. Nor do they make the building of new car parks a viable option as it simply would not be possible to build or operate one with such low parking charges. In particular, the standard tariff charge of 40p per hour (further reduced to 20p per hour with an employee permit/scratch card) is significantly hindering the achievement of the desired aims and objectives.

The average bus fare into CMK is £2, therefore there is little incentive to use public transport, although the escalating cost of fuel may go some way to alter this balance.

- **Bureaucracy, inefficiency and cost of current parking permit scheme**

Employee parking permit £360 per annum equates to £1.60 per day (available monthly pro rata and part time and in daily scratch card format).

Commuter parking permit £888 per annum.

The employee parking permit and commuter parking permit both offer a 50% reduction on the daily cost of

parking and based on a 225 working day year equate to £1.60 per day (employee) and £4 per day (commuter).

The employee permit/scratch cards are approximately 25% of the cost of those offered by some neighbouring and comparable towns.

There are 16 different permit types available, some of which have little or no take up and most offering large discounts on the (already low) daily cost to park. There is no charge for resident parking permits and no upper limit on the number available per household (criteria is 1 per resident). Various types of scratch cards and part time permits are costly to supply and offered at a very low cost to the customer. The permit scheme is overly bureaucratic insofar as applying for a permit and does not offer a good level of customer service, however, there is an abundance of unnecessary flexibility regarding the types of permit available to minority users.

- **Parking bays take up too much prime location city centre space**

There are 21,000 publicly available parking spaces within CMK at time of writing, plus an additional approximately 4,000 private spaces belonging to companies for use by their employees and visitors.



When Milton Keynes was conceived it was built to old national parking standards that required a minimum amount of parking per SqM of development. In light of environmental factors, congestion, increased car usage and the desire for modal shift etc, new parking standards for development (Planning Policy Guidance 13) require a maximum number of parking spaces per development, of which CMK far exceeds. The Local Plan, whilst increasing the parking spaces within CMK to 31,000 will actually bring CMK broadly in line with PPG 13 standards upon completion. However, the ratio of development: parking spaces will increase due to the increased number of visitors, employees, shoppers and residents. Therefore, over time it will become harder to acquire a parking space and a modal shift to other transport modes must occur. However, as the development will not occur at the same time, the correct balance must be achieved between loss of surface parking spaces (to development) and provision of additional car parking spaces. An excess of the latter whilst surface parking is still available is likely to result in additional parking spaces, if located in multi storey car parks (MSCP) not being well patronised, whilst the loss of too many surface parking spaces not being replaced by MSCP spaces will result in pressure of parking and potentially have negative economic affects on the prosperity of CMK as a business and retail centre.

- **There is not an optimal balance of the usage of existing parking stock**

Quarterly parking capacity counts are undertaken and these display interesting information as to the occupancy of parking areas in CMK. There are several areas that are severely under utilised, mainly the Theatre multi storey car park located on Marlborough Gate and

the temporary surface car park located off Avebury Boulevard. Both of these areas are unpopular for different reasons but unless measures are taken to encourage more usage, the under utilisation of such may hinder achievement of wider aims and objectives.

- **Motorists culture in Milton Keynes**

This is perhaps the most difficult issue to overcome. Milton Keynes has always had an abundance of cheap and easily available surface parking, as well as high speed grid roads that facilitate travelling around easily. Because of this, a 'culture of the car' has developed and Milton Keynes is oft referred to as 'the city of the car'. It is not uncommon for people to drive from Marks and Spencer's at one end of the shopping centre to John Lewis at the other end. Cultural attitudes are different in Milton Keynes to other towns and cities and people are less willing to use their car less, opting for public transport instead. They also expect easily accessible, cheap and convenient parking. Multi storey car parks have historically been unpopular and unless suitable 'carrot and stick' measures are used, it is unlikely that motorists will choose to utilise MSCP's whilst surface parking is still available.

- **Absence of a Transport Model for CMK**

There is a transport model for Milton Keynes in which variables can be entered and tested to predict the outcomes of changes to the current infrastructure. However, there is currently not a micro simulation model for Central Milton Keynes and until one is available (anticipated for Autumn 2009) it will not be possible to test scenarios such as the impact of relocating parking stock to edge of city centre multi storey car parks.

Options

The options listed below could be adopted as general policies which will guide the way the Council achieves the objectives.

Some options to overcome the issues above are listed below;

- Implement regular (annual) charging reviews
- Implement a parking permit review (in two stages) with consideration to be given to a combined bus pass/parking permit
- Review of planning policies governing development parking provision to facilitate more MSCP parking as part of new developments
- Consideration to be given to more use of Park and Ride/Arrive and Ride
- Short term parking review to ensure optimal usage of existing parking stock
- Promotional schemes to encourage use of other transport modes, such as 'Park and Walk'
- ***Use of pilot schemes to trial options***

Time-Frame



It should be noted that the micro simulation transport model for CMK is unlikely to be ready to test input scenarios before Autumn 2009. **More empirical evidence is required to support many of the proposals.**

Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
Options that can be taken over next 18 months	Options that can be taken between short and long term, i.e. 18 months – 5 years	Post 5 year options
1st annual charging review	Further annual charging reviews	Further charging reviews
1st stage of parking permit review	2nd stage parking permit review	Provision of additional parking spaces as detailed in Local Plan
Short term parking review	Review of planning policies	
Promotional schemes such as Park and Walk	Park and Ride	

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