

Central Dudley Area Committee - 18th January 2011

Report of the Director of the Urban Environment

Report in Response to a Petition: Car Parking in Dudley Town Centre

Purpose of Report

1. To respond to the comments made in a petition concerning car parking in Dudley Town Centre.

Background

2. On 21 September 2010, a petition was presented to your Area Committee. The two main petitioners are prominent shop owners in Dudley Town Centre, who expressed their views that there is insufficient car parking available to visitors to the town.
3. Within the vicinity of the town centre, there are approximately 1,590 off-street Council operated public car park spaces.
4. There are also substantial car parking spaces in the town centre's streets.
5. In addition, there are a number of privately operated publicly available car parks that provide approximately 270 additional spaces.
6. Most of the Council operated off-street car park spaces have the Safer by Design "Park Mark" Award. This scheme is managed by the British Parking Association and is sponsored by the Home Office and supported by the association of Chief Police Officers.
7. Occupancy surveys carried out in the town centre in 2010 indicate that, at any one time, in the region of 25% to 30% of Council operated off-street car park spaces are likely to be available. In particular, it was noted that spaces were available for short stay shoppers at Stafford Street and Flood Street car parks. Both of these car parks carry the "Park Mark" award mentioned above.
8. There are a large number of town centre streets with limited waiting places for shoppers to park on. The majority of these are time-limited to a one hour stay in order to encourage a high turnover of parking available for short duration shopping trips.
9. This level of short-stay high turnover parking seeks to support the economic vitality of Dudley shopping centre.

10. The regeneration of Dudley Town Centre is key to the economic vitality of the town. The views of the traders will help inform future strategic decisions in relation to parking.

11. Policies relating to parking in the Unitary Development Plan include: -

12. Parking (AM14)

The Council will require levels of off-street parking provision which:

- seek to reduce reliance on car usage;
- reduce congestion and enhance safety;
- encourage the use of other travel modes;
- reduce levels of non-essential traffic on the strategic highway network; and
- reduce adverse impact on the environment; and
- in town centres, is suitably located, attractive and convenient.

13. Car Parking In Town Centres (CR12)

Suitably located, attractive and convenient short-stay car parking will be encouraged in the Borough's town centres where it would:

- meet the operational needs of business;
- be essential for the viability of a new development;
- achieve a better balance and distribution of parking spaces across the town centre as a whole;
- enable ready access to each centre outside peak hours;
- improve the environment or safety of streets; and
- meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Issues relating specifically to town centre car parking will be considered within the development of each town centre's Area Action Plan.

Sustainable Transport

14. The contents of this report support the Council's Transport Policy by considering measures which could contribute to a reasonable turnover of car parking spaces.

Finance

15. Whereas the Council does generate income from car parking charges, there are no direct financial implications to the Council in relation to this report.

Law

16. Traffic Regulation Orders are made under powers contained in Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

17. The Council is empowered to improve highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980.
18. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to do anything calculated to facilitate or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of its functions.

Equality Impact

19. The contents of this report comply with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy whilst also considering benefits to vulnerable highway users including children, bus passengers, cyclists, pedestrians, older people, and persons with impaired mobility.
20. The Council's Road Safety and Travel Awareness Officers liaise directly with School Councils in the preparation of School Travel Plans and the identification of measures that could assist healthy lifestyles.

Recommendation

21. That the Area Committee considers the contents of this report.



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List of Background Papers

None