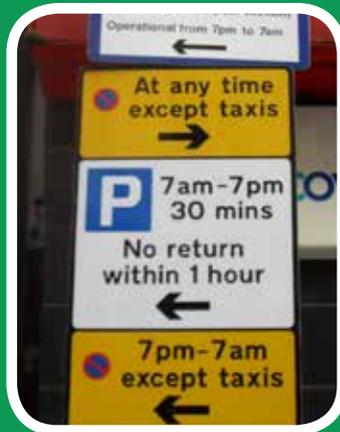
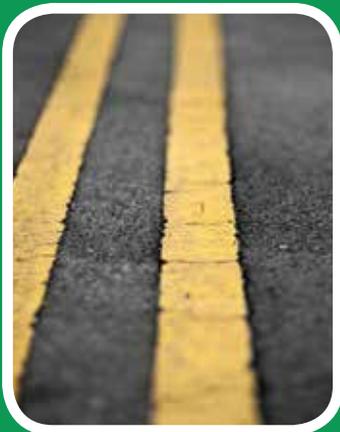




# Parking & Enforcement Plan 2013



**This information can be made available in other formats. If you require a copy in large print or on tape please telephone (01582) 547162**

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# LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL PARKING POLICY AND PLAN

<b><u>CONTENTS</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b>	1
<b>2.0 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES</b>	2
<b>3.0 POLICY CONTEXT</b>	
The National Level	
- PPS13	4
- White Paper - Creating Growth: Cutting Carbon	4
- Traffic Management Act 2004	4
The Local Level	
- Luton's Third Local Transport Plan	5
- Network Management and Congestion Strategy	6
- Sustainable Community Strategy	7
- Local Plan	8
<b>4.0 EXISTING PARKING PROVISION AND CONTROLS</b>	
Off-street Car Parks	
- Town Centre	9
- District & Neighbourhood Centres	10
- Luton & Dunstable Hospital Area	10
- Railway Stations	11
On-street Parking	
- Town Centre	11
- Controlled Parking Zones	11
Parking Control and Regulation	
- Yellow Lines & Kerb Marks	12
- Pavements & Verges	12
- School Keep Clear Zones	12
- Bus Lanes & Stops	12
- Electric Vehicle Charge Point Parking Bays	13
Parking Charges	
- Off-street Car Parks	13
- On-street Parking	14
Paying for Parking	14
<b>5.0 ENFORCEMENT AND REGULATION</b>	
Why Carry Out Enforcement?	15
Enforcement Regime	
- Town Centre	16
- Residential Areas	17
- Dispensations	18
- Parking Enforcement	18
- Other Enforcement	20
<b>6.0 ACTION PLAN</b>	
Parking Provision	
- Town Centre	21
- District & Neighbourhood Centres	21
- Residential Areas	21
- Parking for Disabled People	21

	Parking Charges	21
	Parking Enforcement - Other Enforcement Issues	22
	Action Plan Table	22
	Action Plan	23
<b>7.0</b>	<b>MONITORING AND REVIEW</b>	
	Use of Parking Spaces	24
	Parking Enforcement	24
<b>8.0</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	
	Parking Provision	25
	Enforcement	25

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Luton Borough Council Parking Policy and Plan ('the Plan') sets out the Council's parking policies, strategies and priorities. It updates the Council's first Parking Strategy (July 2003), and sets out how parking control and enforcement can help manage congestion and contribute to local economic well-being.
- 1.2 The Plan supports the Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) covering the period 2011-26, and has been developed to accord with other national policies and guidance. The Plan also links in particular with the Council's Network Management & Congestion Strategy (2008-2012) and the Local Plan, but also with other modal and themed strategies and plans linked to the LTP3.
- 1.3 Council parking operations are often seen as a simple way for councils to make money. Luton does receive income from its parking operation, but the Parking account is ring-fenced to contribute to the provision of on- and off-road parking facilities for residents, shoppers, businesses and others, and to provide measures that contribute to maintaining traffic flow and road safety. It would be better all round if parking regulations were simply obeyed by all drivers, but this does not mean that the Council will try to place more and more tickets on cars - this is demonstrated by the fact that the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Luton has fallen over the last 5 years.
- 1.4 Controlling the supply and cost of car parking encourages the use of alternatives to the car, thereby reducing the share of journeys made by car and thus reducing congestion, noise and air pollution. In addition, managing parking space in residential areas can improve the quality of the street scene and environment for residents. However, while it seeks to reduce the number and length of journeys made by car, it is stressed that the Council is not anti-car and fully accepts that many journeys will continue to need to be made by car.
- 1.5 This Plan will be posted on the Council's website\* along with supporting documents giving information about parking charges, penalty charges, car park locations, criteria for disabled and doctors parking bays, guidelines for cross-overs and associated bar markings, and the complaints procedure. The documents will also include contact details of officers who can provide further information and assistance.

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\* [http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport\\_and\\_streets/parking](http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport_and_streets/parking)

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

2.1 The main aim of the Council's parking operation is to manage the supply, cost and use of parking. The key objectives of the Plan in achieving this aim are to:

- 1) support the economic growth of the area, whilst helping to meet the Council's obligations to manage the transport network and congestion;
- 2) manage the demand for parking in residential areas in order to meet community needs; and
- 3) satisfy the Council's road safety and community safety obligations.

2.2 The priorities of this Parking Policy and Plan are to:

- Support the economic vitality of population centres and local businesses through the provision and management of appropriate car parking.
- Set a charging structure that will deliver the policy objectives of the Council, whilst maintaining a balance between economic, environmental and traffic management objectives.
- Regulate parking to ensure effective enforcement thereby protecting the parking needs of residents, visitors and businesses.
- Contribute to the effective operation of the highway network especially in relation to minimising delays to buses and emergency service vehicles.
- Ensure that car parking services are developed and delivered on the basis of consistent and reliable data on car park usage and customer needs.
- Ensure that car park services are carried out to a high standard in terms of economy, efficiency, safety and effectiveness.
- Ensure that adequate provision is made for those with particular requirements, including addressing the parking and loading needs of businesses, traders, carers and visitors.
- Contribute towards modal shift (the use of alternative transport modes that are more sustainable than the private car, such as walking, cycling and public transport).

2.3 The implementation of these priorities should help realise wider benefits, including improving safety and personal security, improving access for everyone to local services and facilities, and improving the town's environment. These benefits will be achieved using a number of different approaches that will be discussed in more detail later in this document, including:

- Pricing public off-street car parks peripheral to the town centre and park and ride sites to facilitate long-stay commuter car parking, and pricing central car parks to cater mainly for demand by short stay users.
- Making new parking provision only where it replaces or improves the quality of existing car parks.
- Providing pay & display parking at district and neighbourhood shopping centres, if requested.

- Introducing further Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), where required, to manage the available space in favour of local residents, local businesses and their customers and visitors.
- Providing and maintaining on-street parking bays for disabled people in the town centre and adjacent to day centres, hospitals and similar institutions.
- Setting maximum car parking standards for new developments.
- Use of enforcement regime to provide greater control over unauthorised or inconsiderate parking.

## **3.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

### **The National Level**

- 3.1 Planning Policy Statement Note 13: Transport (PPS 13) drew attention to the fact that car parking is an important determinant of travel choices and a major user of land, and stressed the importance of reducing the level of parking in new developments. Parking therefore represents one of the key strands in integrating land use planning with transportation decision-making at the national and local levels to:
- Promote more sustainable transport choices for moving both people and freight.
  - Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking, cycling.
  - Reduce the need to travel, especially by car.
  - Enables local authorities to adopt suitable parking policies for their local areas.
- 3.2 Central Government has now launched the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as part of the drive to simplify the planning process, and the policies contained within all PPS's, including PPS 13, have been subsumed into the Framework.
- 3.3 Paragraph 40 of the NPPF states that "local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including making appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate." These statements are supportive of the aims set out in para. 3.1 above.

### White Paper - Creating Growth: Cutting Carbon

- 3.4 This latest Government transport policy published in January 2011 introduces the "nudge" concept of enabling travel choice through a ladder of interventions. This starts near the bottom with providing a range of information/interventions so people can choose to travel more sustainably, on to a range of incentives to encourage travel choice, and at the top a range of disincentives or restrictions on travel particularly by car.
- 3.5 With regard to parking, Paragraph 7.10 of the White Paper states that: "Local authorities can set their own parking policies and charges to meet the needs of the local area. Local authorities will wish to consider how their parking strategy should best fit with their overall strategy for promoting sustainable transport choices and the efficient use of land, enabling schemes to fit into central urban sites, promoting linked trips and tackling congestion. The need for parking in city centres may be reduced through well-placed and well-used Park and Ride schemes. For new residential developments, a parking strategy can include setting minimum or maximum levels of parking places, depending on what is right for the area. To create parking provision

for electric vehicles, local authorities are encouraged to provide electric vehicle charging infrastructure in new developments, where this does not affect the development's overall viability. Local authorities may also wish to set aside some residential car parking spaces solely for car club vehicles.”

### The Traffic Management Act 2004

- 3.6 The Traffic Management Act (TMA) confers new requirements and powers on highway authorities, including the duty to “... secure the expeditious movement of traffic ...” or, in other words, to ‘maintain traffic flows’. Parking Management has an important role to play in this process. The Government has also stated that it wants local authorities to use parking enforcement powers to keep traffic flowing and not as a tool for raising money. These requirements are integrated into this Plan.
- 3.7 Under the Act the local Traffic Authority has a statutory duty to reduce the causes of congestion and disruption by, among other things, the management and control of parking and of the network as a whole. The TMA provides a single regulation-making framework for the civil enforcement of certain traffic contraventions, including those relating to parking and bus lanes and a selection of moving traffic contraventions, such as stopping in yellow box junctions. The TMA requires the Council to use other powers in order to meet its network management duty, including powers to manage traffic and enforce parking restrictions.
- 3.8 Whilst parking provisions are referred to in the other six parts of the Act, Part 7 of the Act covers Powers for two unrelated areas, Blue Badge Inspection and Parking Surpluses. The first of these provides new powers allowing the Police, traffic wardens and local authority Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) to ask to inspect blue badges displayed in vehicles. The Parking Surplus powers extend the purposes for which surplus income from on-street parking charges and penalties, after the costs of operating the service have been covered, can be used.

## **The Local Level**

### Local Transport Plan

- 3.9 Luton's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) covers the period 2011-2026, and has been prepared in line with Government Guidance, which sets out five National goals for transport, namely to:
- Support economic growth.
  - Reduce carbon emissions.
  - Promote equality of opportunity.
  - Contribute to better safety and security.
  - Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment.

- 3.10 These national goals, together with the Luton Sustainable Community Strategy (see para. 3.15) has influenced the wider local priorities which are set out in Section 4.1 of the LTP3. This Parking Policy and Plan can contribute to the achievement of each of these wider Council priorities as outlined below:
- *Support Economic Growth* – Managing the cost and availability of parking supports the business growth of the community and the sub-regional role of the town centre.
  - *Protect the Environment and Promote Health* – Managing the cost and availability of parking can contribute to the use of more sustainable modes of transport than the private car, contributing to improvements Luton’s environment.
  - *Help Make Communities Safer* – The Plan includes maintaining and enhancing personal safety and security at all public car parks.
  - *Support Vulnerable People* – Short-stay parking provided at destinations where use of the car is often the most appropriate means of transport, for example to meet the needs of those with mobility difficulties.
- 3.11 Controlled provision and availability of car parking is essential to ensuring the economic vitality of the town by enabling people to gain access to our retail centres, and also to managing urban traffic congestion. It can also have a role to play in encouraging people to use alternative, more sustainable, forms of transport for accessing the town centre. The Parking Policy included in the LTP3 is reproduced below; further explanatory text is included in Section 6.2.4 of the ‘Supporting the Environment and Economic Development’ chapter of the LTP3.

**Policy 4: Parking**  
 Car parking provision in the town centre will be managed in such a way that it favours short stay demand and will be limited to the current number of parking spaces. The Council will seek to reduce on-street parking if parking capacity increases at Park & Ride sites on the periphery of Luton.

Additional parking provision may be appropriate at rail stations and other public transport interchange locations on Luton’s periphery (such as Park & Ride) to encourage the use of rail and bus to access the town centre.

Maximum parking standards at new developments will be established through the Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire Local Development Framework.<sup>†</sup>

Network Management & Congestion Strategy (2008-12)

- 3.12 The implementation of the Council’s Network Management & Congestion Strategy enables the Council to discharge its commitments under the TMA.

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<sup>†</sup> LDF was formally withdrawn in September 2011, and will eventually be replaced by a new Local Plan that will include revised parking standards

The aim of the Strategy is to manage congestion and traffic growth. It does this by adopting the 'nudge' concept set out in the White Paper "Creating Growth: Cutting Carbon" through a mix of implementing committed highway schemes, improving roadspace management and provision of information, encouraging viable alternatives to car travel, and making more effective use of the development planning process before introducing significant disincentives for car travel particularly to the town centre.

- 3.13 Congestion problems have been raised by local residents, businesses and elected Members both during the consultation on the Network Management & Congestion Strategy and the LTP3, as well as at Area Committees and Ward Forums. Indiscriminate and inconsiderate parking, particularly on main roads and bus routes, can create an obstruction to traffic and this, in turn, can very quickly escalate into congestion. Congestion has direct effects on residents going about their daily tasks, on people travelling to work, on passengers on buses stuck in traffic queues and on business logistics.
- 3.14 Unauthorised and/or obstructive parking on or adjacent to the carriageway frequently obstructs local bus services, adding to the reliability and punctuality problems already experienced because of traffic congestion. In some cases such parking negates the efficacy of bus priority measures thus running against the Council's and Government's policy of giving top priority to improving the quality and journey time reliability of local bus services.

#### Sustainable Community Strategy

- 3.15 In May 2008 people representing a cross section of the community came together with all key partner organisations to tell the Council how they want the town to be in 2026, the year when a child born in 2008 would be leaving school. Armed with their views and based on research about the future needs of the town, the partners have agreed priorities to deliver Luton's Sustainable Community Strategy, under the headings of:
- *Stronger and safer communities.*
  - *Health and wellbeing.*
  - *Environment and economic development.*
  - *Children and young people.*
- 3.16 The Parking Policy and Plan has a key role in supporting a range of outcomes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, in particular those relating to increasing economic activity and good local jobs for local people by working with new and existing businesses and social enterprises and inward investors, and reducing crime in particular theft of, or from, a motor vehicle.
- 3.17 Furthermore, in contributing towards increasing travel by sustainable modes of transport and improving access to public transport, this Parking Policy and Plan can also influence the Sustainable Community Strategy outcomes of promoting healthy living and tackling the key risk factors which affect health and adapting to and mitigating for climate change.

## Local Plan

- 3.18 The Luton Local Plan that expired in 2011 included policies that development would only be permitted where parking provision does not exceed maximum standards for residential and other developments, and that any private non-residential parking is limited to that required for operational purposes. The Local Plan policy also specifies that there will be no net additional public car parking spaces in the town centre, and this is consistent with the policy background in the LTP3 mentioned above.
- 3.19 The Luton and southern Central Bedfordshire Local Development Framework (LDF) submitted to Government in April 2011 included updated parking standards for new developments. However the LDF was formally withdrawn in September 2011, and will eventually be replaced by a new Local Plan that will include revised parking standards. Whilst the new Local Plan is at the early stages of development, it should be noted that District and Neighbourhood centres will form an important element of this Plan, and parking policy will have an important role to play in these areas.

## 4.0 EXISTING PARKING PROVISION AND CONTROLS

### Off-Street Car Parks

#### Background

- 4.1 The Council controls a total of 18 car parks throughout Luton, serving the town centre and some District and Neighbourhood shopping centres, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - Luton Borough Council Car Parks

Location	Spaces
<b>Town Centre</b>	
Bute Street	237
Chapel Viaduct	59
Crawley Road	170
Silver Street	52
St Georges Square, Library Road (all disabled)	8
Vicarage Street	178
<b>Town Centre Periphery</b>	
Brunswick Street + overflow	61
Burr Street	12
Hitchin Road	62
Bells Close	12
South Road	51
Taylor Street 1 (permit only)	65
Taylor Street 2	44
Wenlock Street	54
<b>District/Neighbourhood</b>	
Beech Hill	12
Birch Link	12
Mostyn Road	35
Round Green	19

#### Town Centre

- 4.2 The main public car park provision is concentrated in the town centre, where there are a total of approximately 4,900 public car parking spaces, of which the Council controls about 25%. The two largest private car parks, Central and Market, primarily serve The Mall and are controlled by its owner (about 45% of provision). In addition there are around 5,000 private non-residential parking spaces in the town centre. The main private car parks in the town centre are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 - Private Car Parks

Location	Operator	Spaces
Central (multi-storey)	The Mall	1620
Market (multi-storey)		
Midland Road (multi-storey)	NCP	720
Old Courthouse, Dunstable Place	NCP	60
Regent Street (multi-storey)	Britannia Parking	650

- 4.3 All car parks are height-restricted by horizontal barriers which prevent their use by all vehicles other than cars and smaller vans. The barriers thus effectively prevent access and overnight use by inappropriate occupiers. Currently no dedicated parking provision is made in Luton, by either the public or private sectors, for larger goods vehicles.

#### District & Neighbourhood Centres

- 4.4 Notwithstanding the fact that the new Local Plan is at the early stages of development, the principle of the new Plan to include both District centres (e.g. Marsh Road, Purley Centre in Marsh Farm, St Dominics Square in Lewsey, Wigmore, and Stopsley) and Neighbourhood centres (e.g. Round Green, Dallow Road, Bushmead, Sundon Park, and Hockwell Ring) has been established. In addition to these District and Neighbourhood centres, there are a number of out of town retail centres, including retail parks at Gypsy Lane and Chaul End Lane.
- 4.5 Two of these District and Neighbourhood centres, Bury Park and High Town, are immediately adjacent to the town centre and for the purposes of this Plan are considered to be in the sphere of influence of the town centre. Some of the other District and Neighbourhood centres have small car parks that are owned by the Council (e.g. Round Green and Mostyn Road); others have private car parks often associated with nearby small supermarkets.
- 4.6 The parking control at these centres takes a variety of forms; free parking, free time-limited parking and in some instances Pay & Display parking. The time limits are set by the nature of the businesses in the centres. Some of these centres are covered by the Council's Off-Street Parking Traffic Order and some by the On-Street Orders. In considering the appropriate form of parking at district and neighbourhood centres the vitality and viability of those centres will be taken into account.

#### Luton & Dunstable Hospital Area

- 4.7 There is a large provision of off-street parking for staff and patients within and adjacent to the hospital grounds, and permits are issued to certain categories of staff to park on some of the surrounding streets. Nevertheless, there is still a perceived shortfall of dedicated parking for staff and patients and the hospital is looking at ways of addressing this shortfall. In addition, and in direct support of the Council's aims and objectives, the hospital is also developing a series of measures and initiatives as part of their travel plan to

encourage staff and patients to use alternative, more sustainable, modes of accessing the hospital.

### Station Car Parking

- 4.8 Luton station car parks are currently heavily used by rail passengers who park their cars all day. There is extensive car parking provision at Luton Airport Parkway station, a new multi-storey car park on Midland Road (replacing previous provision here and on Station Road), and also three car parks serving Leagrave station.

### **On-Street Parking**

- 4.9 A substantial amount of work has already been carried out in terms of parking control in the Borough. The measures can be summarised as follows:
- Introduction of numerous waiting and loading restrictions.
  - Introduction of 28 residents Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs).
  - Provision of dedicated parking bays for blue badge holders.
  - Provision and enforcement of School Keep Clear markings.
  - Introduction of bus stop clearways.
  - Provision of the following parking bay types:
    - loading, taxi, motorcycle, and electric vehicle charge point.

### Town Centre

- 4.10 Many of the streets within the Inner Ring Road have short-term parking facilities on them, where traffic conditions allow. Examples of streets that have such facilities are Inkerman Street, King Street and Cheapside. However on those heavier trafficked routes within this area, such as Mill Street, Guildford Street and Church Street, it is necessary to retain waiting and loading/unloading restrictions.

### Controlled Parking Zones

- 4.11 The existing CPZ's in the Borough contain the following types of control bays and permits:
- Business bays & permits.
  - Blue Badge holder bays.
  - Residents only bays.
  - Visitors and Residents permits.
  - Doctors permits.
  - Free parking bays, some of which are time-limited.
  - Pay and Display bays.

- Shared use bays.

## **Parking Control & Regulation**

- 4.12 Parking restrictions are introduced for a number of reasons. The Council monitors accident records and the need for restrictions may arise for road safety reasons. The need for restrictions is also identified during consultation on Area Studies, from Ward Forums or individual complaints by members of the public. A close working relationship is maintained with the Police and restrictions are often introduced at their request. Additionally quarterly meetings are held with road users (for example emergency services, bus companies and driving instructors) from which requests for parking restrictions also arise.

### Yellow Lines & Kerb Marks - Waiting Restrictions

- 4.13 The purpose of waiting restrictions is to prohibit parking that would otherwise prevent free flowing traffic or obstruct visibility. Vehicles are usually permitted to load and unload on these restrictions unless loading restrictions are also in operation, though most loading restrictions only apply during peak periods (e.g. morning and evening peaks). Under the TMA the Council has powers to provide yellow lines on the carriageway and yellow marks on kerb faces to enable enforcement of these restrictions - for example, the Council has a programme of introducing No Waiting At Any Time (double yellow lines) at junctions in response to concerns about obstructive parking.

### Pavements & Verges

- 4.14 The Council receives a number of complaints about pavement and verge parking. Generally this is a matter for the Police to use their powers to deal with obstruction. Where waiting restrictions exist, CEOs can deal with this parking because the restriction applies from the centre of the highway to the boundary. In areas near schools the Council has introduced specific pavement / verge parking restrictions to assist in maintaining unobstructed footways and child safety.

### School Keep Clear Zones

- 4.15 The majority of the 78 schools in the Borough have 'School Keep Clear' road markings. Some schools require more than one set of markings due to the layout of streets around them, and there are 109 sets of markings in total. The purpose of 'School Keep Clear' road markings is to keep the road space outside of schools free from parked vehicles so that children can be seen more easily when crossing the road.

### Bus Lanes & Bus Stops

- 4.16 The Council has installed a number of bus lanes which are intended to improve journey time reliability in areas where buses would otherwise be held up by traffic congestion. Taxis and cycles are allowed to use most of the bus

lanes. These bus lanes are subject to Traffic Regulation Orders and in 2011 the Council introduced camera enforcement of these lanes.

- 4.17 The Council has an on-going programme of installing bus stop clearways at bus stops under the “Bus Corridor Improvement Scheme”. Parking at bus stops prevents close to kerb boarding which negates the benefit of the investment by bus companies in low floor buses and the introduction of bus stop clearways prevents this parking.

#### Electric Vehicle (EV) Charge Point Parking Bays

- 4.18 A number of publicly accessible EV charge points are provided in Luton. To gain access users must register with Source East (<http://sourceeast.net/>), pay an annual fee and receive an access card. This allows the registered user to unlock any Source East charging point to charge their vehicle at no additional cost, but parking charges may apply for the bay and normal parking controls will be enforced.

#### **Parking Charges**

- 4.19 Parking charges are designed to strike a balance between the Council’s transportation policies and the economic impact of those charges. The Luton Dunstable Busway (LDB)<sup>‡</sup> will contribute to a number of the Council policies set out in Chapter 3, including those relating to economic viability, but to help achieve this parking charges should be set at a level that does not make car commuting cheaper than using the LDB. This factor will be taken into account in the annual review of parking charges referred to in paragraph 6.8 and in Action 4 in the Action Plan in Chapter 6.

#### Off-Street Car Parks

- 4.20 Charges in the Council’s public car parks are set at a level that is designed to make the best economic use of existing car park assets, taking into account the satisfaction levels of users and existing occupancy levels. Charges are levied as a norm but there is free parking, between 6 p.m. and 8 a.m., in some car parks. A list of the car parks and their season ticket charges, entitled Car Parks & Parking Charges, is given in a separate document in the Parking section of the Council’s web site which can be found at the link below<sup>§</sup>.
- 4.21 It should be noted that, although the charging structure shows a large variation in parking charges between different car parks, these are set to cater for local circumstances, and are regularly reviewed to ensure charges reflect the Council’s aims and priorities for parking control and the needs of users.

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<sup>‡</sup> [http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport\\_and\\_streets/transport\\_planning/luton%20dunstable%20busway](http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport_and_streets/transport_planning/luton%20dunstable%20busway)

<sup>§</sup> [http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport\\_and\\_streets/parking](http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport_and_streets/parking)

### On-Street Parking

- 4.22 On-street parking charges are predominantly imposed only in and around the town centre, and are set at a level to both cater for short-stay parking and to discourage long-stay parking.

### Paying for Parking

- 4.23 Pay and Display ticket machines are installed in most on-street parking places and off-street car parks. These machines all accept cash but, in addition, some off-street car parks also have the 'Ring-go' facility, an automated system that enables customers to pay for parking using a mobile telephone and a credit card.
- 4.24 For some off-street car parks it is also possible to buy a period permit (see Car Parks & Parking Charges list for periods and charges) on application to the Parking Services office at the Town Hall.

## 5.0 ENFORCEMENT AND REGULATION

### Why Carry Out Enforcement?

- 5.1 Enforcement of parking regulations by the Council\*\* provides greater control over unauthorised or inconsiderate parking. This helps law-abiding drivers, and also benefits pedestrians, cyclists, the emergency services and public transport users to travel more freely within the Borough.
- 5.2 The enforcement regime has been set up to encourage a reasonable level of overall compliance with parking controls. However, greater emphasis has been placed on the more heavily trafficked roads and on bus routes, particularly during the peak periods. The enforcement operation is not managed in isolation but seeks to work with other sections of the Council and with outside partners to address a wide range of issues and problems including parking outside schools and problems encountered by emergency services and bus operators. Parking enforcement also seeks to support the wider transport aims and objectives in the Council's Local Plan and LTP3.
- 5.3 Regulation of public parking, both on and off-street, is one of the key controls by which the Council can influence travel habits. Clearly, regulations need to be enforced in order to be effective and there is a need to target enforcement at those aspects of regulation that are particularly relevant to achieving the Council's wider transportation objectives. In addition to the main enforcement priorities set out above, the parking enforcement in Luton will also seek to:
- Ensure that the enforcement of parking controls takes into account the Council's main Plan objectives set out above.
  - Contribute to managing congestion.
  - Ensure that parking restrictions and controls are clearly signed and lined, on- and off-street.
  - Ensure that Penalty Charge Notices are issued on a fair and transparent basis for contraventions that are clearly in breach of road signs and lines.
  - Ensure that road signs and lines are consistent with Traffic Regulation Orders.
  - Ensure that it is clear how representations and appeals can be made.
  - Ensure all forms and other literature relating to parking and enforcement services is expressed in plain English, with copies available in other languages and formats on request.
  - Ensure staff are trained properly.
  - Ensure that staff operate under safe and secure conditions and that a pro-active prosecutions policy is pursued if staff are assaulted.
  - Pursue a pro-active prosecution policy for those making fraudulent

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5.1.1 \*\* Luton became a Special Parking Area (SPA) in January 1999 when the Council took over control of parking enforcement from the Police Traffic Warden Service.

applications for permits, disabled Blue Badges and similar permits issued by the Council.

- Be carried out in line with this Plan.

### **Enforcement Regime**

- 5.4 In accordance with the Congestion Strategy and the TMA objectives, restrictions on all traffic sensitive roads will generally be patrolled once a day either during the morning or evening peak periods but more frequently where problems occur. Further limited enforcement will take place on these roads during the off peak period. This relatively high level of enforcement is primarily to ensure the safe and free flow of traffic.
- 5.5 However, some roads and areas will require even higher levels of enforcement due to their importance and the level of parking demand, for example Dunstable Road (Bury Park), Marsh Road (shops), Lewsey Road (Hospital) and the town centre (area within the Inner Ring Road).
- 5.6 Unauthorised and/or obstructive parking on the carriageway and/or footway frequently obstructs local bus services, so key bus routes will receive the same level of enforcement as the traffic sensitive roads. In some cases it may be necessary to increase the parking controls and levels of enforcement to achieve the desired objectives.
- 5.7 The Council was granted permission in 2011 to monitor and enforce against unauthorised use of bus lanes. This function is carried out using both on-street enforcement and CCTV cameras, to ensure that bus lanes are kept clear for their intended use of giving priority to buses and, in most cases, taxis and cyclists as well. In addition the Council has acquired a camera car to assist in achieving appropriate levels of enforcement and this can be deployed to increase levels of enforcement in the areas referred to above.
- 5.8 The Council will also work in partnership with the bus operators to tackle particular parking problems on other bus routes. It is envisaged that this will involve short periods of increased enforcement in order to improve compliance. For example, unauthorised parking at bus stops prevents close-to-kerb boarding, negating the benefits of bus companies' investment in low-floor buses and the Council's investment in raised bus boarders, by making bus use difficult for mobility-impaired people and people with baby buggies. Where there are specific problems of local bus services experiencing regular delays as a result of obstructions caused by stationary vehicles, the Council will review its on-street parking, loading and waiting restrictions and enforcement regimes in such localities to deal with these problems.

### **Town Centre**

- 5.9 In the town centre the presence and visibility of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) will be high. This enforcement methodology is not aimed at issuing PCNs per se but rather at ensuring a high level of compliance with parking restrictions. Examples of this are Silver Street and Wellington Street where

unauthorised parking by cars can cause problems for buses and taxis.

- 5.10 Town centre car parks will be patrolled at least once a day and other car parks at least every other day.
- 5.11 For health and safety reasons a flexible approach will be taken towards vehicles associated with glazing and scaffolding work and, for security reasons, this approach will also extend to bullion vehicles. Universal Service Provider's vehicles on bona fide work are exempt from the waiting and loading restrictions.

### Residential Areas

- 5.12 Residents and others in CPZs will have paid for permits or at pay and display machines to park. In purchasing these permits and tickets there is an expectation that a reasonable level of parking enforcement will take place. Therefore parking enforcement will take place in all CPZs on average once a day in each road. Where compliance is high, enforcement levels will be reduced and where there is poor compliance enforcement will be increased.
- 5.13 New build developments and conversions of properties to multiple occupation may in some cases result in insufficient, or no, off-street parking for residents. It is important when they are located within a controlled parking zone, where parking is already restricted and the number of permits already issued is close to the number of on-street spaces, that these developments do not result in unacceptable levels of parking.
- 5.14 In order to keep the ratio of spaces to permits at an acceptable level, applications for permits from new developments within an existing zone will be considered against the original circumstances at the time the zone was created. As a consequence, occupants of a new development within a zone may be denied parking permits.
- 5.15 Planning Permissions for such developments within existing residents parking zones contain the information that residents will not be guaranteed the right to purchase permits within existing zones.
- 5.16 School Keep Clear markings play an important part in maintaining safety around schools. It is important that a reasonable level of enforcement is carried out. Low levels of enforcement bring School Keep Clear markings into disrepute and encourage non-compliance on other parking restrictions. School Keep Clear markings are, however, difficult to enforce so camera car enforcement will be deployed to improve compliance.
- 5.17 As well as enforcement of the School Keep Clear markings, proactive road safety education has also been carried out at those schools that need it. Working in partnership with the School Crossing Patrols and Police and Fire services, road safety issues are explained to parents and they are requested not to park on the School Keep Clear markings or in other potentially dangerous locations.

- 5.18 Some enforcement will be carried out by a mobile enforcement team travelling in liveried vehicles. These vehicles will be used by CEOs to enforce the waiting restrictions in areas too great a distance from base to be patrolled on foot.
- 5.19 Only limited enforcement will be carried out at isolated waiting restrictions and disabled bays but again enforcement will be carried out when complaints are received.

#### Dispensations

- 5.20 The Council has established a mechanism whereby individuals can obtain dispensations for certain activities, for example building works etc., where the circumstances and local conditions are such that the granting of a dispensation will not adversely affect the local highway capacity or road safety. In these circumstances dispensations are granted for specific vehicles at specific locations and for specific times.
- 5.21 Cones can also be placed to assist in the parking arrangements for funerals and weddings. These will be limited for the use of the immediate family and for the hearse in the case of funerals. A charge, currently £40, is made for this service in order to recover some of the operational costs.

#### Parking Enforcement

- 5.22 The measure of success of the Council's enforcement of on-street parking regulations will be an increase in compliance rates (which will be monitored and reported on annually) leading to an improvement in the punctuality and efficiency of local bus services, improved conditions for vulnerable road users including pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists, improved road safety and, potentially, an increase in parking revenues derived from authorised parking places. Another important outcome is the continued vitality and viability of the town centre, District and Neighbourhood centres, and the Council will consult with local traders in informing this.
- 5.23 A compliance check will be performed every 4 months to check the number of contraventions, the number of vehicles using the bays and the number of disabled badge holders. These figures will highlight the need for enforcement in certain areas but should also show a general reduction in contraventions based on previous figures.
- 5.24 Effective enforcement is dependent on a number of factors. There needs to be a sufficient number of well trained CEOs to patrol the borough in accordance with the Plan. If too many CEOs are employed, the parking operation will become seen as draconian by the public. Too few CEOs will lead to general abuse of the parking restrictions and controls. This will result in problems such as increased congestion and resident permit holders not being able to park in residents' bays due to unauthorised parking by non-permit holders.

- 5.25 The Road Traffic Act provides for the scale of charges for PCNs, wheel-clamping, vehicle removal, storage and disposal to be set by the National Parking Adjudication Service (NPAS). The NPAS can also determine a discount rate that can be charged in cases where a PCN is paid within 14 days of issue. The Council will rigorously seek to recover all PCN fines, including registration of the debt and subsequent recovery action by bailiffs, although action will be terminated if correspondence or representations indicate that there are justifiable grounds for cancelling the PCN.
- 5.26 The Traffic Management Act 2004 introduced differential penalty charge levels. The higher level of, currently, a £70 penalty charge would apply for parking in a place where it is always prohibited, such as on waiting and loading restrictions or for parking in a disabled bay without displaying a valid badge. The lower level of, currently, a £50 penalty charge was introduced for less serious contraventions such as overstaying in a parking place or for parking outside a marked bay. To encourage prompt payment both higher and lower level penalty charges are reduced by 50% for payments made within 14 days of receipt of the Notice which is sent by first class post.
- 5.27 The charge for a camera enforced Bus Lane contravention is currently £60. This charge is also reduced by 50% if payment is made within 14 days.
- 5.28 Details of the contraventions that incur the above charges are given in a separate document in the Parking section of the Council's website.

#### Other Enforcement

- 5.29 In recent years there have been instances of unauthorised car parks being set up in and around the town centre. Where these are on land owned by the Council they have and will continue to be dealt with under due legal process, and where they are on privately owned land they have and will continue to be dealt with under planning powers.
- 5.30 The Council continues to carry out match day enforcement and provision of cones for Luton Town football club, and is occasionally requested to carry out enforcement at London Luton Airport. The Council will seek to recover the full cost of this additional enforcement operation.

## **6.0 ACTION PLAN**

### **Parking Provision**

#### Town Centre

- 6.1 Waiting restrictions and parking bays will be reviewed as developments take place in the town centre to ensure that they remain appropriate.

#### District & Neighbourhood Centres

- 6.2 Time-limited parking bays require intensive levels of enforcement to ensure turnover of parking spaces. The introduction of Pay & Display parking reduces the requirement for intensive levels of enforcement but is not always popular with shopkeepers or shoppers. Unless Pay & Display is requested by a significant number of shopkeepers and / or shoppers it is recommended that any time-limited parking bays be converted to free parking bays.

#### Residential Areas

- 6.3 The Council will continue to provide residents parking schemes where commuter parking makes it difficult for residents to park near their own homes and where a majority of residents are in favour of a residents parking scheme.
- 6.4 Existing schemes will be reviewed to ensure they remain effective.

#### Parking for Disabled People

- 6.5 The Council will maintain a programme of providing disabled persons parking bays in residential areas when requested and provided the applicant meets the Council's criteria.
- 6.6 Every opportunity will be taken to provide disabled persons parking bays in the town centre as and when development schemes take place.
- 6.7 Where there is a demand for disabled persons parking bays at other public places (e.g. shopping centres, medical centres) consideration will be given to making provision.

### **Parking Charges**

- 6.8 All parking charges will be reviewed as part of the ongoing monitoring of parking activity to ensure that the charging structure continues to fulfil the requirements of this Plan, in terms of balancing the demand between short-stay and long-stay parking provision. Any shift in this balance, due to development or any other effects, will be taken into consideration when reviewing not only the charging structure but the extent and scope of parking restrictions as well.

- 6.9 Consideration should also be given to achieving consistency and parity with other parking providers within Luton, particularly in the town centre.

### **Parking Enforcement**

#### Other Enforcement Issues

- 6.10 Some areas and restrictions prove to be more difficult to enforce than others and the introduction of camera car enforcement, which has been successfully deployed to deal with problem areas in other authorities, was implemented early in 2012.
- 6.11 The Council regularly receives complaints about vehicles being parked too close to junctions, resulting in reduced visibility and safety. These complaints are recorded and, when resources allow, they are investigated and, where considered appropriate, No Waiting At Any Time restrictions (double yellow lines) will be introduced in accordance with Rule 243 of the Highway Code.

### **Action Plan Table**

- 6.12 The table overleaf sets out details of the actions described above, giving the Action together with When, How, and By whom each action will be taken.

### Action Plan

No.	Action	When	How	By
1	Monitor the parking operations and activities to ensure that they are carried out in a consistent manner.	Continuously	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By developing and using a specific procedure by both CEO's and managers;</li> <li>• by benchmarking; and</li> <li>• by using the progress report and review processes.</li> </ul>	Parking Service
2	Monitor utilisation of all Council-enforced parking spaces, both on- and off-street.	4 monthly	Analysis of where and when P&D tickets and Permits are issued.	Parking Service
3	Monitor levels of compliance with on-street parking restrictions.	4 monthly	Physical check of compliance.	Parking Enforcement Unit
4	Review and, if required, revise parking charges to ensure the balance of demand between short- and long-stay parking provision and use is maintained, but give full consideration to impact of changes on local businesses.	Annually, and whenever an external influence necessitates it, e.g. a housing or commercial development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of trends and rates of income.</li> <li>• Consult with local businesses/stakeholders.</li> </ul>	Parking Service
5	Review and, if required, revise extent and scope of restrictions.	25% of borough per annum, and whenever another influence necessitates it, e.g. a housing or commercial development.	Monitoring of requests, complaints and observations.	Highway Services
6	Produce Annual Progress Report.	Annually.	Include comparative data to show how the Service has performed year on year.	Parking Service
7	Ensure that the requirements of this Plan are incorporated into any other new or revised Council strategies/plans, including Planning and leisure.	As required.	Get Parking Service on to consultation lists.	Head of Business & Consumer Services

## **7.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 7.1 The monitoring and review processes will fulfil a number of purposes. These are:
- To ensure that the stated aims and objectives are being met.
  - Where they are not being met, to provide information to show what and where the deficits are.
  - To inform the making of the necessary changes to redress those deficits.
  - To set new indicators (together with targets, if necessary and/or desirable) to ensure that the service remains fit for purpose into the future.
- 7.2 The Parking Service will produce an Annual Progress Report covering all parking activities, including the above purposes, and be presented to the Environment and Regeneration Departmental Management Team. It will also be required to cover the issues raised in the Enforcement section of Chapter 5, and the monitoring regime must therefore be specifically set up to provide the necessary information.

### **Use of Parking Spaces**

- 7.3 The utilisation of parking spaces, both on- and off-street, will be monitored and reported on in the Annual Progress Report.

### **Parking Enforcement**

- 7.4 Level of compliance with restrictions will be monitored and the Annual Progress Report will give a breakdown to show the outcomes of the enforcement regime. This element of the Report will focus on the priority areas as notified by users and stakeholders, e.g. Silver Street/Guildford Street area bus access and unauthorised parking issues.

## **8.0 RESOURCES**

### **Parking Provision**

- 8.1 There is a presumption that there will not be a significant net increase in the amount of public parking provision available, particularly in the town centre, with an emphasis on a small number of additional on-street bays for short term convenience shopping. In and immediately around the town centre new parking provision will only be considered where it either replaces, or improves the quality of, existing provision. Such replacement or improvement is most likely to arise as a result of associated or related development or re-development by the private sector and, as such, will be required to be funded by that development.
- 8.2 In District and Neighbourhood centres the same criteria will generally apply but, given the planned increase in the number of such centres, it is clear that parking provision should be an integral part of the costs of developing those centres.
- 8.3 Similarly, provision for private parking for new housing will also be made as part of the cost of the development.
- 8.4 In all the above scenarios there should therefore be no demand on the Parking Service to find any of the resources needed to make additional parking provision.

### **Enforcement**

- 8.5 It has always been the case that the Parking Service itself will expect, and be expected by senior management, to be self-financing, and in the past there has also been an expectation that parking operations should produce a monetary surplus at each year end. It is anticipated that these expectations will continue into the future, and the associated intentions are that they will be met.
- 8.6 Any such surplus produced is to be used to improve parking services, preferably in the locality or localities that generated the surplus.
- 8.7 Part of the purpose of the monitoring of parking activities is to gather sufficient appropriate information to enable the above intentions to be realised. The monitoring will, in turn, highlight those areas where the intentions are not being met, so the information gathered must be appropriate to indicate what steps will need to be taken to get the Service back on track.