

Estates Car Parking Strategy

Walton Hall

The Open University Car Parking Strategy

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1. Introduction

The car parking strategy was first published in October 2004 at a time the University was experiencing a car parking crisis. This arose from growing staff numbers coupled with loss of parking from a number of car parks being allocated as the site for new buildings.

The original strategy sought to balance long term provision with demand by supporting the aspirations of the Travel Plan in driving down demand, supporting the management of car parking supply via enforcement, reserved spaces for sharers and providing some additional supply.

The University's own circumstances have also changed over the intervening period between the 2004 and the current strategy. Following a period of sustained growth in staff numbers, numbers have fluctuated since 2009 initially falling before starting to rise once more. This fall in staff numbers helped alleviate the pressure on car parking. Staff are encouraged to use other modes of transport to get to and from work including cycling, walking and the use of public transport. Staff also have the option to take part in the car share scheme to limit their individual occupancy journeys.

The aim of this strategy remains to provide an appropriate balance between supply and demand and whilst it preserves the strong links with the Travel Plan. Its recommendations are tilted towards day to day management and possible future supply options rather than large scale additional provision.

This review also considers general progress since the last strategy.

2. Strategy Process

This strategy review has included an assessment of current supply together with a review of demand derived via the Staff Travel Survey and Travel Plan.

3. Linked Strategies

Figures might change based on new travel plan results

The Travel Plan 2014 contains a target for reducing further single car occupation by 5% and carbon emissions from staff commuting by 5% both by 2020. The aim has been to promote further car sharing, cycling, walking and use of public transport as a means of encouraging non car use. This strategy will continue to support these alternative means of travel choices.

The Estate Strategic Plan of 2006-2016 identified the requirement for a separate Car Parking Strategy to provide "suitable and appropriate alternative facilities for staff, visitors and conferencing". The Estate's strategy is due to be re-written as part of the University Strategy 2022 – 27. Our strategy will include taking consideration of revised transport initiatives, EV utilisation and charging posts and general car parking regulations and how they will influence the wider University sustainability objectives.

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4. Existing Supply of Car Parking

The University currently has 2238 marked spaces within permanent off-street car parks and designated on-street parking bays.

Table 1 details the total capacity compared with the 2004 Strategy. This illustrates the breakdown between designated on and off-street parking, unauthorised and non-designated spaces. The table includes the 427 spaces at East Campus.

Table 1 Current capacity

Area	2004	2014	2019
Permanent off street parking (all car parks)	1779	1838	2079
Designated on street parking (Marked parking bays on the Ring Road / Side Roads not Car Parks).	264	243	159
Unauthorised / Non designated parking (Non marked bays, cars parking along the curb, no yellow lines or parking marked bay but we allow them to park).	388	150	150
East Campus	350	352	427
Total capacity	2781	2583	2815

Ring Road parking contributes to the non-designated car parking. Approximately 150 cars park daily on the ring road. Part of the ring road is marked with double yellow lines but the majority is not and staff use this absence of designated restrictions to park on the road. Somewhat surprisingly many staff use the ring road ahead of the car parks. The fall in unauthorised/non designated parking between 2004 and 2014 arises from the enforcement of yellow lined areas previously used to park and new yellow lines in places including Walton Drive and car parks. There has been no plan to enforce more yellow lined areas across campus.

5. Demand – The 2019 Staff Travel Survey

The last 2019 Travel Survey achieved a disappointing 330 responses but still forms a useful measure of comparison against the 2014 results.

Mode of transport	2014 (% of respondents)	2019 (% of respondents)	% change
Car on own	62.95	68.65	5.69
Care share	9.55	9.24	-0.30
Cycle	10.45	4.29	-6.16
Motorbike/Moped	0.23	0.33	0.10
Bus	4.09	3.30	-0.79
Walk	4.77	3.96	-0.81
If car - Petrol	47.05	51.16	4.11
If car - Diesel	25.23	21.45	-3.78
If car - Electric	0.00	4.29	4.29

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Percentage changes show increases in solo car use, along with the use of petrol and electric cars. Numbers cycling decreased as did those using diesel cars. There was little change in car share numbers and those using a motorbike. 2019 also showed a slight decrease in numbers walking to work and using the bus. Due to the number of respondents to the survey being low compared to previous years, it is felt that this is not necessarily a true reflection of trends.

6. Milton Keynes Council Planning Policy and Parking Standards

The latest Parking Standards were adopted into the “Parking Standards - Supplementary Planning Document” (SPD) as presented by Milton Keynes Council (MKC) in January 2016. MKC continues to use a zonal approach as used in previous parking standards, to reflect the varying demand for travel, car use and resulting parking requirements. The Council has identified 4 zones, ranging from Zone 1 which has the highest level of access to facilities and consequently the lowest parking levels (more restraint), through to Zone 4 with the higher parking levels (less parking restraint).

The SPD places the OU in Zone 3, allowing 1 parking space per FTE staff member and 1 parking space per 15 students (although the student figure would not count as OU students are remote learners).

Table 2 MKC Parking standards applied to Walton Hall

Staff (as at Feb 2020)	Number	Current parking spaces	Difference
Permanent, research students and temporary	4850 (permanent only – 4270)	2815	2035 short (permanent only 1455 spaces short)

Aggregating all sources we have a total capacity 2815 (Table 1 above) therefore by MKC’s parking standards we are underprovided with parking.

When applying previously for additional spaces there was considerable debate, never fully resolved, as to whether the OU Campus should reflect the parking standard for B1 offices or D1 education. The SPG defines the former as having 1 space per 30 sq. m of gross floor area. The argument is that the OU is predominantly an office occupier and therefore the office standard should be applied to those of our buildings that are physically indistinguishable from commercial offices. There is some correspondence and an officer’s note that support this argument. Applying the MKC parking standard for B1 to the floor space of 82969 sq. m a theoretical maximum provision of 2765 spaces could be calculated.

In practice any future applications would revolve around this ‘hybrid’ argument, i.e. that the OU was part HE, part office in planning terms and therefore its parking provisions should be considered separately.

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7. Future Provision

The University has consent to construct a further 136 car spaces south of the Michael Young Building. These were part of 144 spaces permitted as part of the building construction although only 8 were ever constructed. Having completed the building and discharged fully the conditions attached to the consent, this permission has been secured in perpetuity.

Similarly, a 208 car parking space extension to the library car park was consented in 2009. Some 27 spaces were built and the conditions attached to the consent fully discharged thus securing this consent in perpetuity also.

Therefore, the OU has a total of 317 spaces permitted but unbuilt. In addition MKC rejected an offer from the OU to enter a unilateral undertaking to forego the unimplemented car spaces at Michael Young in return for the 208 car spaces at the library so both remain permitted.

Number of spaces permitted	Number of spaces built	Unbuilt spaces	Location
144	8	136	Michael Young / South West
208	27	181	Library extension
Total unbuilt spaces between these is 317			

In addition the contractors' car parking area off the southern car park comprising some 77 marked spaces on a tarmac area was never reinstated following the completion of the Framework Partnership for the then capital programme (2008-2011). Originally this provided contractor parking but it has been used since for ad hoc overspill and storage. It may be prudent to establish if its non-reinstatement may be formalised in some manner (e.g. Certificate of lawful use) to preserve it in perpetuity as additional car parking.

8. Future Trends

University staff numbers continue to steadily increase. New ways of working are in the "test and learn" phase at the moment, there is the possibility that new patterns of working will have an impact on the overall daily attendances. This is likely to have an affect on demand for parking. Along with the possibility of new patterns of work our future strategy will be to develop a car parking strategy which encourages significant changes to our modes of traveling to and from work. To achieve this strategy, the Estates department (Travel Team) will be promoting a change to our culture of daily driving to and from work. Our goals are to encourage and increase alternate modes of travel through the use of the following initiatives and activities:

- Improved CycleScheme benefits
- Publicising regular Cycle to Work events
- Promoting walking to work initiatives
- Informing staff on the benefits of electric vehicle schemes and modes of transport
- Advising the benefits and increasing the popularity of the use of the car share scheme

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- Keeping staff up to date on new bus, MK Connect services and the changes which have recently been introduced in the region.
- Working with local Councils and Suppliers to find improved transport services saving staff money but also contributing to carbon reduction initiatives being undertaken across the University

Carbon Reduction has become one of the University core objectives as set out by the VCE. Our future car park strategy envisages a significant reduction in the utilisation of car parking spaces through the encouragement of all of the above strategic initiatives. The OU is currently working with The Carbon Trust on a carbon reduction road map towards net zero carbon by 2050, however it is not only up to the University to drive change, we all need to play our part to engage and take up challenges in the way that we live life. All staff are asked to get on board and help change attitudes and daily practices contributing to improved health, mental welling and most importantly a reduction in our carbon footprint.

9. Car Parking Management

Under the existing car park management regime all staff are encouraged to register their vehicle with Security, park only in designated areas and not obstruct or use the allocated visitor parking.

Previously we had considerable problems with unauthorised and at times dangerous parking but the introduction initially of vehicle clamping followed by parking charge notices has largely eliminated this. This strategy proposes no change to this regime of parking charge notices. A multitude of offences attract parking charge notices, these include causing an obstruction, parking on double yellow lines, obstructing fire accesses, parking on fire assembly points, parking on pavements and landscaping, parking in car share or electric vehicle bays (without the relevant permits) and parking in “Keep Clear” areas.

The ring road is a significant source of non-designated parking. For most of its length it is wide enough to permit parking along one side with one lane free to allow one way traffic movement. We have no plans to remove this ring road parking.

The designated visitor parking comprises 41 spaces to the front of the Berrill Building. This is marked as “Visitors Only” and is not currently barrier controlled. Two spaces are designated for Electric Vehicle charging with one waiting bay. We have no plans to increase or reduce visitor parking.

The parking regulations require contractors’ vehicles to display a temporary permit to park. This is to assist in the identification of inappropriately parked vehicles. These are available from Estates Liaison Line Reception. The system works well so we have no plans to amend this.

The parking regulations also reserve the right to remove completely any vehicle for failure to comply with the regulations. Again, we have no plans to amend this.

Regular reviews will take place of car parking numbers and the utilisation of the car share and electric vehicle bays. The utilisation of these latter two uses will assist in deciding if further provision is required and where these will be located. Electric Vehicle charge bay booking system should continue to be used by EV registered members. The booking scheme is managed by the EV Committee, any queries should be addressed directly to them . The EV

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charge scheme rules and regulations are however, available from the Estates Business Services Team. EV scheme rules of net zero costs to the OU will remain as is and there are no plans to change them.

At present the day to day car parking management is dealt with by the Estates Security Team. We have no plans to change this.

10. Charging

At the Estates Committee meeting of the 4th June 2004 the Committee reserved the right to introduce car park charging. This is included in the Car Parking Regulations but has not been implemented and we have no plans to do so.

11. Review criteria

This strategy is weighted towards ongoing management of our parking and any recommendations relating to day to day issues, to this end we recommend the following actions:

- Maintain and update as required the car parking regulations including periodic review of the parking charge notice fee.
- Review numbers and locations of reserved spaces for car sharers.
- Review numbers and location of spaces for electric vehicle charging purposes.
- Co-ordinate Parking Scheme Management practices with other relevant policies including the University Travel Plan Team.
- Consider suitable numbers and locations of parking for commercial tenants (in the event of greater numbers of commercial lettings at Walton Hall).
- Consider establishing our lawful use of the contractors' car park (i.e. certificate of lawful use) as and when required.