Estates Car Parking Strategy
Walton Hall

Reviewed: Dec 2017
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Car charging points outside Berrill Building main Reception.

Parking at the rear of Betty Boothroyd Learning and Resource Centre
The Open University Car Parking Strategy

1. Introduction

The current car parking strategy was 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. These reductions coupled with changes to HE funding led to the abandonment of a number of capital projects aimed at increasing supply.

The aim of this strategy remains 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 2014 Staff Travel Survey.

3. **Linked Strategies**

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 is to promote further car sharing, cycling, walking and use of public transport as a means of encouraging non car use. This strategy will continue supporting these alternative means of travel choices.

The Estate Strategic Plan 2006-2016 identified the requirement for a separate Car Parking Strategy to provide “suitable and appropriate alternative facilities for staff, visitors and conferencing”. This plan is due to be updated in 2015 but a fundamental shift away from this aim is not anticipated.

The Accommodation Strategy identifies commercial letting of surplus space as a potential source of external revenue. A test letting is in hand in part of the Michael Young Building. Assuming this proves successful then the implications for car parking for staff and visitors to commercial tenants will need inclusion in any onward planning.

4. **Existing Supply of Car Parking**

The University currently has 2433 marked spaces within permanent off-street car parks and designated on-street parking bays.

Parking on the ring road provides additional capacity. Daily demand varies between 2200 and 2400 car parking spaces.

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 352 spaces at East Campus.
Table 1 Current capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent off street parking</td>
<td>1779</td>
<td>1838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated on street parking</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unauthorised / Non designated parking</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Campus</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total capacity</td>
<td>2781</td>
<td>2583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ring Road parking contributes the non-designated car parking. Approximately 150 cars park daily on the ring road. Part 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.

5. Demand – The 2014 Staff Travel Survey

The private car remains the preferred method of transport for the majority of staff and visitors. Since its relaunch in 2006 the Travel Plan has achieved some success in encouraging alternative forms of transport with a 15% reduction in single car occupancy and a 9% reduction in carbon emissions from staff commuting.

The 2014 Staff Travel Survey achieved a disappointing 10% response but still forms a reasonably useful measure of demand for differing transport choices. The main findings were:

- 64% of respondents were car drivers
- 10% were car sharers
- 10% cycle
- 3% use the bus
- 5% walk

6. Milton Keynes Council Planning Policy and Parking Standards

Milton Keynes Council’s (MKC) current policy towards car parking remains policy T 15 of the MK Local Plan 2001-2011 which refers to maximum standards for car parking provision.
MKC has published supplementary planning guidance ("SPG") containing its parking standards. The SPG divides the City into four zones of accessibility. In the view of the Council, Zone 1 has the highest accessibility and therefore the most restrictions placed on parking through to Zone 4 with the lowest accessibility and therefore greater permitted parking provision. The SPG requires a Travel Plan to accompany all applications for significant new development. This Travel Plan will have to include measurable objectives in achieving “sustainable” transport. Our Travel Plan, if required, could be used as the required Travel Plan.

The SPG places the Walton Hall Campus in Zone 3. This specifies a parking standard of one space per two staff. Table 2 applies this parking standard to University staff numbers as at March 2015.

Table 2 MKC Parking standards applied to Walton Hall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff (as at March 2015)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Spaces under MKC standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent, research students and temporary</td>
<td>4175</td>
<td>2087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non OU Contract staff</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4331</td>
<td>2165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aggregating all sources we have a total capacity 2583 (Table 1) therefore by MKC’s parking standards we are overprovided with parking.

In applying previously for additional spaces there was considerable debate, never fully resolved, 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.

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.

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

For the purposes of this strategy it is assumed that staff numbers will remain broadly static at around 4200 although if staff numbers do reduce it will reduce the pressure on car parking.

9. Car Parking Management

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

At the time of the previous strategy 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 a parking charge notice 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 46 spaces to the front of the Berrill Building. This is marked as “Visitors Only” and is not currently barrier controlled. Two spaces are designated as Electric vehicle spaces. 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 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.

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

This strategy is weighted towards ongoing management of our parking. The recommendations relate 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 with other relevant policies including the University Travel Plan.

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).