

Committee: Borough Plan Advisory Committee

Date: 17 October 2012

Agenda item: 5

Wards: Wimbledon and Morden

Subject: Parking surveys – Wimbledon and Morden town centres

Lead officer: Director for Environment and Regeneration, Chris Lee

Lead member: Cabinet Member for Environment and Regeneration, Councillor Andrew Judge

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Contact officer: Future Merton Transport Policy officer, Chris Chowns

Recommendations:

A. That Members note the contents of this report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report seeks to inform Members on the broad outcomes of a recent Parking Study in Wimbledon and Morden Town Centres. The report was deferred from the Borough Plan Advisory Committee meeting of 20 September 2012.
- 1.2. To ascertain reliable and up-to-date base line data to inform its Sites and Development Planning Document, the Council recently commissioned Vincent Knight consultancy to undertake an in depth parking capacity study in Wimbledon and Morden town centres. It is carried out as a complimentary piece of work to the on-going parking review being undertaken by Merton Council's Parking Services, resulting from the council motion proposed in February 2012.
- 1.3. The study focused on town centre car parks (private and publicly owned) in both town centres and on-street parking zones in central Wimbledon. Surveys were undertaken on a weekday, Saturday and Sunday between 09 and 17 June 2012.
- 1.4. The principal output of the study was to determine detailed objective traffic counts on car park occupancy, capacity, number of parking events and duration of stay for each location. The full report can be viewed on the Council's website.
- 1.5. During the study the busiest time in Wimbledon was on Thursday and Saturday, lunchtimes, when the most parking spaces are occupied. At this time around 54% of total parking spaces in Wimbledon town centre were occupied, with 780 spaces still available. There were wide variations in car park usage, with some surface car parks over capacity and others (multi-storey) only just over half full.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. The Council is currently in the process of refining its draft Sites and Policies Development Plan Documents. To provide a clear evidence base and to inform policy decisions it was considered necessary to ascertain baseline parking data for both Wimbledon and Morden town centres, where a number of important sites had been identified for potential redevelopment.
- 2.2. This study only covers objective data collection (counting the number and duration of parking events) and therefore the study itself does not seek to draw any conclusions.
- 2.3. It is carried out as a complimentary piece of work to the on-going parking review being undertaken by Merton Council's Parking Services, resulting from the council motion proposed in February 2012.
- 2.4. All car parks in both town centres were surveyed using a combination of number plate recognition cameras, high definition cameras and manual parking beats. Survey periods were typically between 06:00 and midnight on Thursday 14 June, 08:00 and midnight on Saturday 09 June and Sunday 17 June.
- 2.5. The principal aim of the study was to obtain an objective understanding of parking demand, its location, capacity, occupancy levels and duration of stay.
- 2.6. The overall approach and methodology used to undertake the surveys is briefly set out in Appendix 1

3 OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

- 3.1. There are a total of 1,782 parking spaces available in and around Wimbledon town centre: 1688 in car parks and 94 pay & display on-street parking spaces. There are also an additional 557 on-street parking spaces that can be used either as pay & display or by vehicles with a local resident's permit, bringing the total to 2,339 spaces.

Wimbledon car parks

- 3.2. **Hartfield Road (126 spaces)** is the busiest car park in Wimbledon and frequently went over capacity due to its popularity for people using the car park to pick up and drop off passengers.
- 3.3. During the weekend the peak hours typically cover shopping hours of 10am – 17:00pm when the car park is full. 66% of parking events were for less than 2 hours.
- 3.4. **St Georges Road Car Park (113 spaces)** – The car park was busiest on Thursday (92% of parking spaces occupied) as against 61% on Saturday. This higher occupancy is due to more people parking for longer periods on weekdays.
- 3.5. **Sainsbury's Car Park (61 spaces)**– Saturday was the busiest day, slightly busier than Sunday with peak occupancy of over 80%. Thursday was lower at 64 % occupancy.
- 3.6. **The Broadway car park (70 spaces)** - Like Hartfield Road, it is very busy, regularly going over capacity. 52% of cars parked there for less than one hour

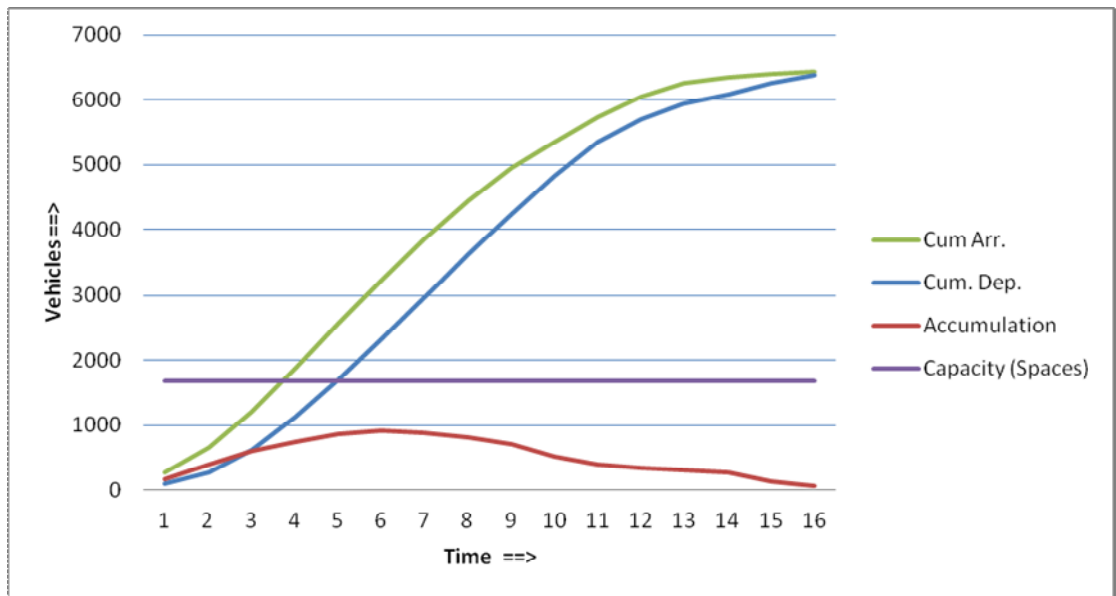
- 3.7. **Centre Court** (750 spaces) – Despite being the largest car park surveyed, occupancy was comparatively low for its size with typically less than 50% of the available parking spaces occupied. Even during the busiest periods around 300 spaces were still available. 50% of vehicles parked for less than 2 hours. On Thursday 5% of vehicles parked for four hours or more. This did not repeat for the weekend.
- 3.8. **Queens Road** (159 spaces) – Queen’s Road was at its busiest on Thursday, but then only 36% of the spaces were full. Sunday was busier. 44% of vehicles parked for longer than 4 hours, 18% longer than 10h hours.
- 3.9. **Wimbledon Bridge** (300 spaces) – This is a relatively quiet car park. At its busiest (on Thursday 14th June) 44% of parking spaces were occupied which still left 168 spaces available. On Sunday, at its busiest time, it was only 16% occupied. On the Thursday there was more worker / commuter parking with 25% of vehicles staying for more than 8 hours.
- 3.10. **Waitrose Car Park** (109 spaces)– This car park is busier during the weekend with peak occupancy of 79%. It was never completely full on the days surveyed.

Wimbledon Overview

There are a total of 1688 off-street parking spaces available in Wimbledon town centre (468 council-owned and 1220 private).

- 3.11. The busiest times during the study period were recorded between 1300-1400 on Saturday 9th and Thursday 14th June where 54% of Wimbledon’s parking spaces were occupied. During this peak period there were still 780 available parking spaces across Wimbledon town centre. More than 65% of all parking events in Wimbledon during the study were for less than two hours.
- 3.12. Although the report wasn’t discussed in detail at the Borough Plan Advisory Committee meeting of 20 September 2012, Members requested that the information in the report could also be presented without including Waitrose car park, as this was outside the town centre.
- 3.13. Officers have also prepared a graph excluding Queens Road car park and Waitrose car park for comparative purposes.
- 3.14. The three graphs below present the findings of the surveys on Saturday 09 June 2012, the busiest day for parking in Wimbledon town centre:
- 3.15. In comparing the busiest time (Saturday 09 June, 13:00-14:00) and excluding the capacity and occupancy of Waitrose from the survey results, 53% of the available off-street parking spaces in Wimbledon were occupied, with 741 parking spaces available.
- 3.16. Excluding Waitrose and Queens Road at the same time period, 57% of the available off-street parking spaces were occupied with 640 parking spaces available.
- Graph 1 - All Wimbledon off-street car parks accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Saturday 9th June
 - Graph 2 - Wimbledon off-street car parks excluding Waitrose: accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Saturday 9th June

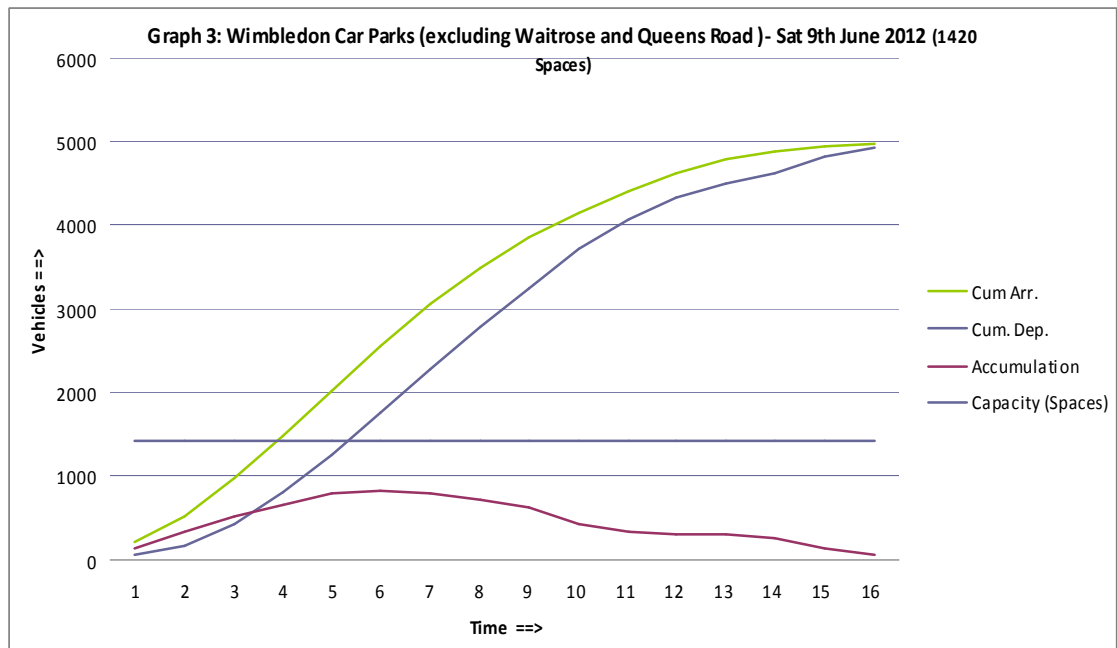
- Graph 3 – Wimbledon off-street car parks excluding Waitrose and Queens Road: accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Saturday 9th June



Graph 1: All Wimbledon car parks (1688 spaces) accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Saturday 9th June (busiest day)



Graph 2: Wimbledon car parks excluding Waitrose accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Saturday 9th June (busiest day)



Graph 3: Wimbledon car parks excluding Waitrose and Queens Road: accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Saturday 9th June (busiest day)

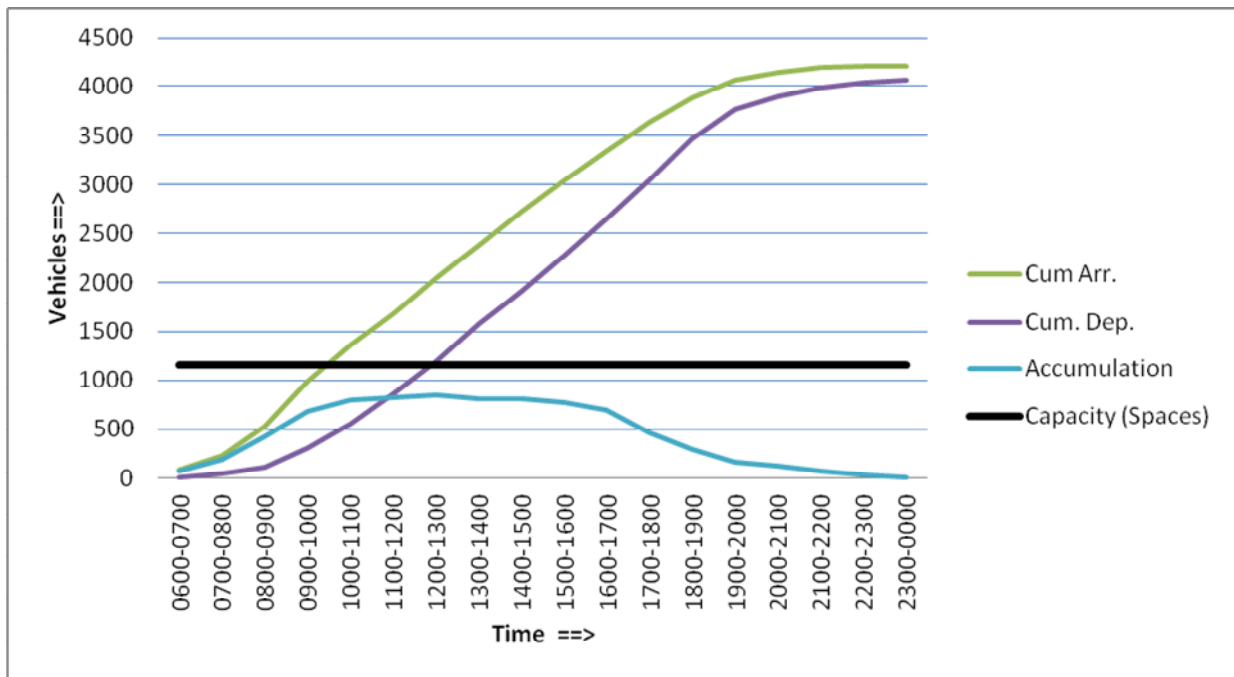
Wimbledon: on- street surveys

- 3.17. On-street surveys were carried out for five areas near Wimbledon town centre. In total, 651 on-street parking spaces were surveyed, 94 of which were pay & display only and 557 were shared usage, which means they can either be used by vehicles with a local residents' permit or by pay & display users.
- 3.18. Throughout the study, the average occupancy of the shared use bays was significantly higher than that of the pay & display bays. The shared use bays in zone W4 were consistently busy, with the average occupancy never falling below 70% and peaking at 81% during the Thursday evening period. The busiest time for use of pay & display bays was daytime (09.00-17.00) on Sunday 17 June.
- 3.19. Officers are still analysing the results of the research but some observations include:
- a) Although Wimbledon town centre always had vacant parking spaces during the study period, it isn't clear that people are aware of this. Consultation evidence over the past few years suggest parking, or lack of parking spaces, is perceived as a problem for Wimbledon town centre.
 - b) More than 6,000 vehicles parked in the car parks on the busiest days of Thursday and Saturday.
 - c) The surface car parks at The Broadway and Hartfield Road are by far the most popular. The larger multi-storey car parks tend to be less well occupied.
 - d) At present, early (before 07:00) and late (after 22:00) parking must take place in on-street pay & display bays or in the surface car parks.

- e) For on-street parking, shared use bays (between vehicles with residents' permits and pay & display) are far more often occupied by vehicles with residents' permits, especially in the evenings. This suggests that, although these bays exist for shared use between visitors to the town centre and residents, there is significantly more demand from and occupation by residents. For the 94 dedicated pay and display bays only, there was never a time when they were all fully occupied during the study period.

Morden car parks

- 3.20. **Kenley Road (127 spaces)** - An extremely quiet car park; at its busiest it was occupied by only 20 vehicles. On Thursday half the vehicles parked for longer than 6 hrs, suggesting some use by commuters or local workers.
- 3.21. **Morden Station (119 spaces)** - Very quiet during the weekend with only 10% occupancy, in comparison to 93% on Thursday. On Thursday over half the vehicles (51%) stayed for more than 6 hours. During the weekend 40% vehicles stayed for less than 1 hour.
- 3.22. **Morden Nursery (165 spaces)** – The busiest day was Sunday; the car park also went over capacity between 1pm and 3pm on Sunday. 70% of the parking events were less than 2 hours on all three days of the study.
- 3.23. **LIDL (143 spaces)** – This was the busiest car park in Morden, with 95% of vehicles parking for less than 2 hours on each day of the study. The busiest day was Saturday with peak occupancy of 91% between 10 and 11am.
- 3.24. **Peel House (349 spaces (upper & lower decks))** – The busiest day was Thursday when peak occupancy reached 74%, with the majority of visitors (70%) being short stay of less than 2 hours. There were also more longer-stay events on this day which contributed to the higher occupancy rate.
- 3.25. **York Close (258 spaces)** – This car park only experience light usage during the weekend (10%). On the Thursday it was close to capacity during the whole daytime period. Almost half the vehicles parked there (48%) had Merton Council essential user permits (33% parked for 4-8 hours), 10% displayed a staff permit and 16% were pay and display users (49% parked for less than 2 hours).



.All Morden car parks, accumulation, arrival and departure profile – Thursday 14th June (busiest day)

- 3.26. The busiest occasion in Morden was recorded between 1200-1300 on Thursday 14th. June when 73% of parking spaces were occupied. During this period there were still 308 available parking spaces. More than 75% of all parking events during the study were for less than two hours, although there were significantly more long stay events on Thursday.
- 3.27. It should be noted that Morden nursery, connected to Morden Hall Park, is a clear exception to this. This car park was full to capacity for most of Sunday and it seems almost certain that this is related to the nursery / park users.

Next steps

- 3.28. Officers are continuing to analyse the results of this research and will use its findings to inform the Sites and Policies DPD.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1. None for the purposes of this report.

5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 5.1. The private car parks were consulted before starting the research and as part of undertaking the work. Merton Chamber of Commerce and the LoveWimbledon Business Improvement District have also been consulted and officers are meeting these organisations (scheduled for October) to discuss these findings.
- 5.2. Merton Council's own parking survey consultation into pricing of Merton Council car parks closed on 10 October 2012.

6 TIMETABLE

- 6.1. None for the purposes of this report.

7 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None for the purposes of this report.

8 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. None for the purposes of this report.

9 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

9.1. None for the purposes of this report.

10 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None for the purposes of this report.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1. The need for accurate data on parking usage in Wimbledon and Morden town centres was highlighted through the risk register for the Sites and Policies DPD.

12 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Appendix 1- Parking Surveys in Wimbledon and Morden – Overall approach and Methodology

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1. Parking Surveys in Wimbledon and Morden Technical Report August 2012, available online:
http://www.merton.gov.uk/environment/planning/planningpolicy/ldf/planningresearch/parking_research_2012.htm

Appendix 1

Parking Surveys in Wimbledon and Morden – overall approach and Methodology

1. Timing and scope

- i. To comply with reporting deadlines for the Sites and Policies documents it was important that the work was commissioned before the school summer break.
- ii. This effectively restricted the council to a two week window of opportunity to undertake the surveys slotted in between the Jubilee half term and the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament/Olympic. The alternative approach would have been to wait until the following autumn term.
- iii. Following a competitive tendering process specialist consultant Vincent Knight were commissioned to undertake the study. All surveys were undertaken between the 9th and 17th June 2012.
- iv. Depending on individual site conditions and required outputs the surveys were undertaken using a combination of high definition video cameras, number plate recognition cameras and manual surveys.
- v. The surveys were conducted on: -
 - 1 weekday (Monday to Thursday) between 06:00 to Midnight;
 - 1 Saturday between 08:00 to Midnight;
 - 1 Sunday between 08:00 to Midnight.
- vi. In the case of Wimbledon only a second comparative survey was also undertaken (limited to The Broadway, Hartfield Road and Centre Court car parks and parking zone W2.)
- vii. Where car parks did not open until later in the day, surveys commenced as soon as the car parks opened. Similarly, surveys were finished when car parks closed before the core periods above.
- viii. In Wimbledon the survey focused on all publically available car parks (Council and Private) together with paid for parking spaces in Wimbledon CPZ zones W1 – W4 plus zone 4F, which includes streets adjacent to The Broadway Car Park. For completeness surveys also included the Waitrose Car Park in Alexandra Road.
- ix. In Morden Town Centre the surveys focused just on the off-street car parks, including the garden centre of Morden Hall Road.

Overview of Methodology

Off-street Car Parks

- x. Of the 14 car parks surveyed, 7 were surveyed using number plate recognition technology, 5 used high-definition cameras, and 2 were manually surveyed.
- xi. Following pre-survey inspections cameras were generally mounted on street furniture and number details of any parked vehicles recorded before starting the survey. This process was repeated at the end of the survey so that vehicle registrations were captured and matched. Where it was not possible to mount the camera a tripod was used.

- xii. At locations where access arrangements were more complex, such as Centre Court/Queens Road, additional cameras were deployed and the Queens Road registrations separated from the Centre Court data to avoid double counting. A similar approach were taken for the vehicles using the Church car park and private parking area in St Georges car park.
- xiii. For The Broadway car park registrations were recorded manual at both the entrance and exit before matching.
- xiv. Due to the data requirements for York Close hourly beats were undertaken to record vehicle and permit details before by matched.
- xv. The car parks surveyed using automatic number plate recognition included:
- St George's Road (exit)
 - Hartfield Road
 - Centre Court
 - Kenley Road
 - Morden Station
 - Peel House
 - LIDL/Iceland
 - Morden Nursery
- xvi. The car parks surveyed using high definition cameras were:
- St George's Road (entry)
 - Sainsbury's
 - Wimbledon Bridge
 - Waitrose
 - Queens Road
- xvii. The car parks surveyed manually were:
- York Close
 - The Broadway

On-street – Controlled Parking Zone Bays

- xviii. Within the five controlled parking zones (W1-W4 and 4f) the majority of spaces are allocated towards residents only bays. Therefore the on-street surveys focused on spaces available to the general public, principally 'Pay and display only' bays and 'shared use' Pay and Display bays
- xix. Before undertaking the surveys each location was given a unique identifier and its restriction type and location logged. Beat survey were then undertaken and the number of vehicles parked recorded as well as whether they were displaying a residents permit, visitors permit, blue badge or pay and display ticket. Those without a ticket were classed as others.
- xx. The length of each beat was dependent on the length of maximum stay allowed for visitors. For bays where the maximum duration of stay is 2hrs, half hourly beats were undertaken. Where the duration of stay permitted was greater than

two hours (normally five or nine hours in this area), hourly beats were undertaken.

Outputs

xxi. The survey sought to identify the following

For car parks

- the occupancy level by hour (number & percentage) by car park; cumulative occupancy (number & percentage) and duration of stay
- median duration of stay by car park
- Total number of parking events.
- Overall car park summary for each town centre.
- For York Close car park permit details were also record

On-street pay and display(Pay & display only and shared use with residents permits

- The occupancy level of each location by hour (number & percentage) plus number/occupancy of resident permits (shared use bays only);
- he occupancy level of each location by hour (number & percentage) Pay & display bays
- cumulative occupancy (number & percentage) across each CPZ zone
- Overall summary for all zones