

Ryedale District Council Car Parking Strategy 2021 – 2026

Parking provision is an integral part of many aspects of Ryedale District Councils (RDC) activity and workstreams, and as such is a key contributing factor in Ryedale's economic development plans and programmes of business and community support.

This Car Parking Strategy will allow us to manage all aspects of parking provision including pricing, permits, locations, length of stay and wider car park management. We wish to utilise this strategy to help us:

- Support a vibrant local economy and town centre retail;
- Support a modal shift towards more sustainable means of transport;
- Provide the infrastructure and facilities required for the transition to electric vehicles;
- Ensure best value for RDC from its assets; and
- Meet the parking needs of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.

The Council wishes to develop an approach to car parking and the various issues across the district to ensure consistency of approach where possible, but also to address localised issues and opportunities so the best possible facilities are available for residents and visitors. The strategy primarily relates to off-street parking provision in RDC car parks however on-street parking and parking provision operated by external providers has been considered.

A study was undertaken by WSP during 2018/19 to provide a comprehensive picture of car parking across the district and provide a series of recommendations from their findings. A cross-party Car Parking Working Party was created to assess the findings and develop / refine the recommendations. An Action Plan will be developed for implementation over the next five years.

Alignment and complementarity with other RDC strategic plans and action plans including the Council Plan, Economic Recovery Plan and the Climate Change Action Plan, is essential and has been integral in the development of the Car Parking Strategy 2021-2026.

Section 1 - Guiding Principles

Whilst there are issues which require a consistency of approach across the whole district, there is acknowledgement of the unique challenges and opportunities within each of the market towns and the different needs each has.

As a predominantly rural area where approximately 57% of the population live outside of the five market towns, it must be recognised that the provision of effective alternative means of transport is limited and the use of cars will remain the sole mode of transport to many. This is also applicable to visitors to the area – many of the villages, attractions and landscapes can only be accessed via private vehicle.

An action plan will be developed which identifies specific tasks that are required both across the district and in particular locations. It is envisaged that this will form the basis of a work programme will be implemented between 2021 and 2026.

In developing this strategy a number of key principles were used to develop the key themes and actions to be undertaken; these are outlined below:

- Consistency of approach wherever possible;
- Ease of use and clarity of information; and
- The provision of good quality, appropriate facilities that meet the needs and demands of users and local businesses.

Section 2 - Our Market Towns

As the strategy focuses on off-street parking provision in our market towns, the following provides a snapshot of the current situation and issues within each location to provide some context and background information for the specific actions to be set out in the Action Plan.

Malton

As Ryedale's principal market town, there is a need to balance priorities for residents, visitors, businesses and their workers. Visits to Malton are primarily for shopping and this purpose does not seem to vary between car parks. With the large range of parking options including on-street, RDC off-street parking, and private or independent operators, the need for a parking strategy within the town which aligns all these interests is felt to be of great benefit.

Clear directional signage to car parks to relieve pressure on some sites and better utilise other assets, along with improved use of technology to provide real time information and alternative payment options are examples of the specific actions this location would benefit from.

Car Parks:

- Wentworth Street Car Park – Long Stay – 381 spaces
- Water Lane Car Park – Short Stay and Long Stay – 109 spaces

Norton upon Derwent

St Nicholas Street car park is RDC's only car park in Norton and the only free of charge car park in RDC's portfolio. This facility is well used by residents and leisure centre users and it provides a valued off-street parking location in an area where on-street parking and traffic flows can cause congestion.

Car Parks:

- St Nicholas Street Car Park – Free – 100 spaces

Helmsley

Helmsley is a popular market town particular with visitors to the area. Discussions with representative from the local community did not highlight particular concerns regarding capacity within the town, however there was a collective desire to improve the Market Place car park for those wishing to park and for local businesses.

Data suggests that for the Market Place car park, there is a high turnover of vehicles due to prominent location and short stay nature, and that the car park regularly reaches and exceeds 85% capacity indicating it is a very well used car park. The Cleveland Way car park offering longer stays including overnight, often acts as an overflow car park for the town as most visits are estimated to be between 1 and 3 hours.

Car Parks:

- Market Place Car Park – Short Stay – 83 spaces
- Cleveland Way Car Park – Long Stay – 156 spaces

Kirkbymoorside

Evidence has shown that most visitors to Kirkbymoorside want to park on the street and close to the businesses and shops, with stays predominantly up to 30 minutes in length. On-street parking is a mixture of restricted short stay spaces which seem to work well and meet this need, alongside unrestricted sections where there is an element of conflict between availability of parking in on-street locations between residents and workers / those seeking a longer stay. As a result, Town Farm Car Park is often underutilised.

Car Park:

- Town Farm Car Park – Long Stay – 52 Spaces

Pickering

In general Pickering car parks are felt to meet user needs in terms of capacity and the range of parking options available with demand exceeding availability on only a few days per year, most notably during the Wartime Weekend. In addition to the RDC car parks there are a number of locations managed by independent operators or are parcels of RDC land which are unrestricted as they do not have a Traffic Regulation Order.

The most notable areas of concern and congestion in Pickering are the locations with on-street parking in residential areas. These locations are often oversubscribed and congested, and are often felt not to adequately meet resident, visitor or business needs.

Car Parks:

- Ropery Car Park – Short Stay – 84 spaces
- Eastgate Car Park – Long Stay – 124 spaces
- Vivis Lane Car Park – Long Stay - 58 spaces

Section 3 – Key Themes

The following section outlines in detail the agreed RDC approach to be implemented across the district in respect of a range of policy areas.

Theme 1 - Tariffs / Pricing Structure - Tariffs to be set based on location of car park and proximity to each town and its attractions

An increase in the length of stay available in short stay car parks is encouraged but pricing beyond two hours should have a higher value, thus encouraging long stay parking in the car parks further from town centres.

The tariff system should be adapted to create seasonal variation and allow for tariffs to be altered and used as a management tool during busy events, but that this arrangement should not be overly complicated.

Due to the flexibility in tariffs desired, main signage in the car parks should continue to provide general information, with pricing information provided on the physical machine.

Theme 2 – Payment Methods – Increase cashless options

Cash and payment by card for period of two hours or more are currently the two accepted methods of payment in RDC car parks.

Increasingly society is moving towards the greater use of technology and cashless payment options in order to complete financial transactions. To keep pace with the change and offer car park users the range of payment options expected, online, pay-by-phone and pay-on-exit options should be implemented in appropriate locations.

Theme 3 – Accessibility - Access to all car parks all year round

Being able to access all car parks 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is vital if the evening economy is to be developed and supported in our market towns.

The challenges associated with achieving this in some locations is acknowledged, but innovative and appropriate solutions should be sought in order to maximise the potential of the car parks, support the local economy and ensure car parks are safe and secure.

Clear directional signage, availability of spaces and type of car parking available needs to be clearly communicated to users on all approach routes into the towns so car park users identify and use the car park most suited to their needs.

Theme 4 – Charging Hours - Consistency of operating

Tariffs currently apply from 9.00am until 6.30pm daily in all charged for car parks except Malton where parking is free on a Sunday. Moving forwards, it is strongly felt that an approach to charging hours which are consistent across all RDC car parks and which is broadly in line with our neighbouring local authorities should be adopted.

Theme 5 – Parking Permit Schemes - A simplified but effective permit system to benefit residents, businesses and visitors

Permits are currently available for both short and long stay car parks, as well as 7 day visitor permits. Overall, permits are well received and considered to be a valuable and important offer for residents and businesses; in addition they generate significant income for RDC annually.

Permits should be retained, however a review is recommended as the existing arrangement is complicated to administer and requires third parties to sell permits on behalf of RDC. Any review should ensure that pricing, online sales, corporate permit arrangements, virtual permits and linking permits to specific car parks are all considered.

Marketing and advertising of permits is considered to be crucial. Permits should be widely advertised and available to purchase in a simple, easy to access way.

Theme 6 - Free Car Parking - Supporting residents and businesses with free car parking across Ryedale

It is strongly felt that there should be an element of free car parking available in all market towns all year round. This will bring Helmsley, Pickering and Kirkbymoorside in line with Malton and Norton where free car parking is already available on the Market Place and in St Nicholas Street car park, thus encouraging visits, increasing footfall and supporting the local economy.

Any extended period of free car parking, for example in the month of December to support retailers and hospitality businesses during the run up to Christmas, would be in addition to the year round offer but should be limited in frequency and subject to the agreement of the appropriate Council Committee before becoming operational. Whilst extended periods of free car parking are agreed to be valuable to local businesses and residents, there are significant financial and administrative issues as a result of such action, and this needs to be fully planned and accounted for in advance.

Theme 7 - EV Charging Points - Investing in low carbon initiatives to support our transition to greener travel

EV charging points are currently available in Water Lane Car Park, Malton and St Nicholas Street, Norton. Charging for up to 1 hour is permitted with 1 hours free parking in these bays. Vehicles should vacate the bay after an hour has elapsed.

Additional charging points across the district car parks are to be encouraged, to grow the network and support a transition to cleaner, greener travel.

Theme 8 – Alternative Transport Solutions - Encouraging a reduction in carbon emissions in Ryedale

A shift towards alternative modes of transport is encouraged, however it is strongly acknowledged that given the rural nature of the district and the distances and terrain required to be covered in order to travel, this might not always be possible.

The availability of cycle storage in car parks should be increased and given the significant growth in the e-bike market and this should be taken into consideration when offering cycle storage solutions.

Walking routes and linkages with the bus and rail public transport offer would be of benefit to residents and visitors.

Theme 9 – Enforcement - Fair and consistent enforcement of regulations

Enforcement duties are currently undertaken by Scarborough Borough Council through a Service Level Agreement due to expire in May 2021 and ensures that parking occurs in a manner which is safe and legal in both on-street and off-street locations.

Good practice indicates that as with all external contracts, this should be regularly reviewed to ensure services are appropriate to meet needs and demands and so it contributes to the delivery of the Councils strategic objectives.

Theme 10 - Environment and Maintenance - A clean and attractive environment

As the point at which most visitors have their first interaction with a town, our car parks should be pleasant, clean and welcoming environment. Adequate signage and information on how to access facilities and attractions should be available within well maintained environs.

Several car parks are also home to mini recycling centres. Ryedale District Council is committed to promoting and making available extensive facilities so recycling is accessible by both residents and visitors. These sites should well maintained, be in appropriate locations and provide adequate facilities.

Theme 11 – Car Park Layout - Providing high quality parking locations

The layout of each car park should be such that it maximises the space available.

Any additional facilities situated within the space both temporary and permanent should be considered holistically ensuring they are situated in the most appropriate area and not result in detrimental impact to the appearance and functionality of the car park.

Theme 12 - Use of Car Parks for and by Events – Voluntary / Community, Public and Private - Utilising our car parks and land used for parking for other uses

RDC car parks have the ability to be used beyond that of simply parking. Fun fairs, interest group events, outdoor markets, school drop off / collection, longer term leases and agreements with neighbouring businesses and to support vaccination programmes are just a few examples of the uses our car parks can provide to support the economy and wellbeing of our communities.

External groups requesting whole or partial use of an RDC car park must complete an Event Application Form before any event organised by an external organisation, business, group etc is held on RDC land. This is to be assessed by all relevant directorates within the Council to understand economic impact, health and safety and community impact.

To provide consent a robust charging policy with clearly defined decision making needs to be determined and made publically available in order to provide clarity for users.

Where RDC is directly involved with the delivery of an activity and it is of public good, delegated authority sits with Officers in consultation with chair of Policy and Resources committee to determine this use. Notification will be given to, and views sought from, local ward Members.

Implementing the Strategy

Having discussed the potential actions and recommendations identified by the WSP report, the above policy principles were agreed by the Car Parking Working Party. An Action Plan will be developed and will outline in more detail the specific actions that are now required to be undertaken over the next five years. Each action will be assigned a time frame for completion - Short (within 1 year), Medium (within 1 to 3 years) or Long (within 3 to 5 years).

A review of achievements against the Action Plan will take place on a regular basis through the service planning process, with an annual update on progress being provided to Members. Any investment which may be required for the completion of actions outside of day-to-day operational activities and existing budgets will be sought as per the Councils financial requirements.