



DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

PARKING POLICY FRAMEWORK

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Argyll & Bute Council Parking Policy Framework

INTRODUCTION

Argyll & Bute is predominantly a rural area with a wide assortment of villages and towns of varying sizes and levels of commercial activity. Generally it is only the towns with commercial centres that have significant parking issues, though some villages have specific attractions which lead to parking problems. The main centres are; Campbeltown, Tarbert, Lochgilphead, Oban, Inveraray, Rothesay, Dunoon and Helensburgh. Smaller towns and Villages such as Bowmore, Tobermory, Ardrishaig, Tighnabruaich, Luss and Cardross also have lower levels of commercial activity which can at times lead to parking issues. Communities with ferry terminals can also often have problems related to parking.

Scotland's National Transport Strategy, calls on local authorities to enhance their parking policies to manage demand. Road space is finite and decisions relating to allocation of available road space are important. However, it must be recognised that while demand does require management, an uninformed and inconsistent approach to this can have serious detrimental effects for local economies and for particular groups such as disabled persons and businesses which require on-street loading space. A balance between demand management and meeting local needs must always be struck.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) also suggests that parking restraint policies should be supported by measures to promote the availability of high quality public transport services and that local authorities may like to consider promoting Park & Ride schemes on commuter routes, including those which use existing public transport networks such as the rail lines into Glasgow. SPP also recognises the importance of parking provision at strategic gateways such as ports / airports as well as accommodating particular groups e.g. disabled persons. SPP continues to set a maximum parking standard and also recognises the issues in rural areas related to lack of public transport and allows for variance.

Park & Ride takes two forms, there are schemes such as at railway stations or bus stations where drivers are encouraged to leave their cars and take public transport and those where commuters and visitors to larger towns, park in peripheral car parks and are bussed into towns on dedicated bus services.

The proposed Local Development Plan has set a key objective "To continue to improve Argyll and Bute's connectivity, transport infrastructure, integration between land use, transportation and associated networks" The proposed Local Development Plan and this policy document align with Scottish Governments aims to increase integration between land use planning and transportation.

The Council's Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) recognises the following related targets;

"Stimulate the regeneration of five of our main towns via the CHORD Programme",

“Prioritise infrastructure investment essential for the area’s growth (such as transport, grid and utilities)”.

Parking is a key element of integrated transport policy because of its importance in relation to accessing town centres. The availability and cost of on and off-street parking can be used to increase the attractiveness of walking, cycling and use of public transport as an alternative to car use. However, it must be recognised that in rural areas encouraging modal shift to non-car related transport is challenging, particularly while maintaining and trying to improve the economic viability of our commercial centres and visitor attractions.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

- Improve road safety for all road users.
- Improve traffic management to reduce pollution, conserve fossil fuels, contribute to sustainable development and reduce the environmental impact that multiple motor vehicles have.
- Ensure that all adopted measures contribute positively towards the economic viability of our towns. Including suspension of charges for specific events aimed at encouraging economic and community growth; such as Winter Festivals.
- Encourage modal shift to non-car enabled journeys with a view to reducing the amount of space in our town centres occupied by parked vehicles.
- Ensure adequate provision is maintained for disabled drivers, whose dependence on cars is often critical to their quality of life.
- Encourage the use of peripheral parking areas away from town centres and the use of park & ride where practical.
- Establish and exercise a consistent approach to parking provision across Argyll & Bute.

POLICIES & MEASURES

Policy P1 On-Street Parking

The Council will allow the road to be used for parking provided it does not conflict with;

- Road safety
- The reduction of traffic congestion
- The amenity and character of the area
- The reallocation of space for other road use

- Requirements of the Local Development Plan. New development requires to accommodate parking on site and not on road. SG LDP TRAN 6 sets out when off street parking is required.

Policy P2 On-Street Parking in Residential Areas

The Council will ensure:-

- Priority is given to residents parking, to safeguard both private and public amenity however, this should always be tempered with the need to maintain road safety and limit congestion.
- Measures are put in place to exclude commuter parking in residential areas where commuter parking is directly affecting residents' ability to park on-street due to a lack of in-curtilage parking. New developments will be subject to the Supplementary Guidance SG LDP TRAN 6 of the Proposed Local Development Plan.

Policy P3 Parking Charges and Time Limits

The Council will use parking charges and time limits, where considered appropriate, to regulate the use made of parking areas.

- Charging for parking achieves two principal ends, firstly they allow more refined control and enables more consistent enforcement, secondly they provide an income to the Council to support parking provision and other transport related Council services. Charges should be applied such that all areas contribute a fair share to the budget income. Area Committees seeking to introduce or change either on or off street charges shall make representations to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee who will be responsible to ensure that charges are consistent across the Council area.
- Charging structures and time limits for both on and off-street parking will be designed to encourage short stay parking only in town centres and to ensure adequate turnover of parking spaces for visitors to the town centre. Charging where it is considered viable should be consistent across Argyll & Bute.
- Long stay parking will be provided in peripheral parking areas or park & ride facilities where these are considered to be viable.
- Parking charges will normally apply between the hours of 9 am and 6 pm, Monday to Sunday.
- Tourist related seasonal parking will have reduced charging hours from 10 am to 4 pm to assist B & B accommodation in the tourist areas.

- Parking areas close to churches may allow for Sunday morning parking being free.
- Parking with a Blue Disabled Parking Badge holders will be free in all off-street parking areas.

Policy P4 Parking for Coaches & HGVs

The Council will seek to make provision for dedicated parking areas which are designed to accommodate larger vehicles where there is a recognised need. Where possible provision will be made for drop off places for coaches in town centre.

- Coach & HGV parking areas will generally be charging areas except where it is a destination where visitors are encouraged to travel by coach rather than car e.g. Fionnphort.
- Provision will be made for motorhome parking and where appropriate and where there is demand. On existing charging car parks charges will be made for motorhomes. Overnight occupation of motorhomes will not be permitted on Council car parks.

Policy P5 Information

The Council will encourage the provision of tourist and transportation information in rural and peripheral car parks to encourage modal shift.

- Providing information about local cycle routes and local bus services that can be used to access tourist attractions and town centres at appropriate locations will encourage modal shift and reduce the numbers of cars accessing the town centres. Ease of access to alternative modes of transport is critical in engendering seamless journeys and encouraging modal shift.

Policy P6 Enforcement

The Council will arrange for effective enforcement of the rules by which parking areas are managed. With the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement, all on-street and off-street parking arrangements are controlled by the same process.

- Parking Penalty Charges will be uniformly applied, where applicable, across all parking provision.

Policy P7 Use of Parking Areas for other Events

The Council will permit parking areas to be used for other events such as markets, festivals and other public/private events provided that the need for parking in the wider general area can accommodate such use. This function is delegated to the Executive Director/Head of Service in consultation with the Area Committee Chair and Depute other than when charges would have to be suspended when Council approval is required.

- Parking areas are provided principally for road safety and secondly for the economic benefit of the surrounding area, use may be made of parking areas for other events provided the use does not compromise road safety by displacing vehicles to undesirable locations.
- The Council is entitled to make a charge for the use of the land for alternative events to recover any loss of income.

Policy P8 Parking Provision

The Council will establish the necessary supply of parking places to accommodate the identified demand in individual locations.

- The Development Plan identifies the maximum and minimum parking standards for a range of new developments.
- Supply and demand will be used to determine the provision of parking places. Assessment will be based on National Guidelines and the Local Development Plan which allow for adjustment to accommodate local factors in rural areas such as the seasonal tourist influx, other transport provision such as ferries and bus and train stations, also facilities such as swimming pools and shopping streets.
- To ensure a successful parking regime operates in every location the viability of making charges for both on and off-street parking, will be carefully assessed particularly where existing supply is low. Achieving the correct balance between charged for and free parking is not only critical to ensure adequate income to fund parking provision but also to ensure that the viability and future commercial growth of our town centres will be safeguarded and wherever possible enhanced.
- Provision of free parking places both on and off-street will be assessed as a viable percentage of the overall supply of parking places, where it has been determined that charges should apply.

This overarching Parking Policy provides a framework for Area Committees, within their delegated budgets, to:

- Amend existing Traffic Regulation Orders.
- Introduce new Traffic Regulation Orders.

- Make representations to the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee regarding:
 - Introduce new charging schemes for on street charging providing these can be self-financing.
 - Increase charging for both on and off street charging providing it can be demonstrated that increases are justified to enable effective and efficient parking provision.
 - Introduce residents permit systems providing these can be introduced on a self-financing basis through charging for permits.