

Park & Ride Strategy

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PORTSMOUTH'S PARK & RIDE STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

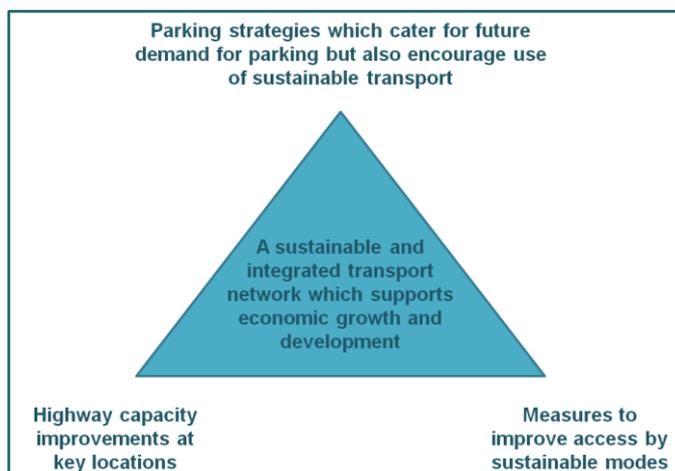
Portsmouth's new Park & Ride service started operation on 5 April 2014. It provides a frequent, quick, high-quality bus link between the newly-built Park & Ride site adjacent to the M275 at Tipner and the city, with stops for Portsmouth International Port; Charles Dickens birthplace; the city centre; and The Hard for the Historic Dockyard and Gunwharf Quays.



This document summarises the context and policy background that led to the introduction of Park & Ride. It then outlines the approach Portsmouth City Council took to implementing the service, and sets out the Council's strategy for future development of Park & Ride to support the growth of the city's economy.

2. WHY PARK & RIDE?

Park & Ride is one element of the Council's approach to providing a high quality transport system for Portsmouth, which enables the delivery of the Council's ambitious plans for economic growth and regeneration across the city.



The case for Park & Ride reflects current pressures on the highway network and the need to improve access to the centre of Portsmouth to support future growth. The key issues and challenges are set out in the Portsmouth Parking Policy Statement¹:

- Portsmouth has a constrained road network, which is already showing signs of stress. With only three roads linking the island to the mainland (M275, A3 and A2030) there is significant potential for congestion and pockets of severe congestion at peak times.
- There is heavy demand for parking at Gunwharf Quays and at certain city centre car-parks, particularly at weekends, leading to congestion on approach roads.
- Portsmouth's core strategy, the Portsmouth Plan², provides for major development in the city centre and harbour areas, with the largest single element 50,000m² of retail development focused on the northern section of the Commercial Road shopping area (City Centre North). Along with future increases in car ownership, the overall level of future development proposed in the city drives a forecast increase in traffic of 27% between 2013 and 2027 in the PM peak³.
- The construction of a new retail development, together with the proposed new city centre road layout, would require the closure of several city centre car parks to make way for the development. This will put much more pressure on the remaining car parks, particularly on Saturdays, and so alternative ways to access the city centre are essential to keep Portsmouth moving effectively.
- With the proposed expansion of the city centre retail offer, demand for parking will increase more than supply. Without interventions to promote use of Park & Ride, along with public transport, walking and cycling, and a complementary city-wide parking strategy, traffic growth would lead to significant congestion in the city centre and on the approaches to / from the M27.
- The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership has identified the need to improve access into Portsmouth as a priority for unlocking economic growth. Surveys⁴ show that 85% of businesses identified the quality and reliability of transport as having a very significant or significant influence on investment decisions, higher than for any other type of infrastructure.

In this context, the Parking Policy Statement sets out the following approach to Park & Ride.

Parking Policy 1: Park & Ride (Portsmouth Parking Policy Statement)

- a. Make Park & Ride the first parking choice for commuters, shoppers and visitors to the city, particularly for medium and long stay parking.
- b. Prioritise city centre parking supply for short stay visits, in terms of supply and price.
- c. Adopt a pricing strategy which makes Park & Ride an attractive option for medium and long term visits, in comparison to parking in the city centre or harbour area, but does not discourage use of public transport modes or result in abstraction from existing public transport services.
- d. Identify and implement bus priority measures which will reduce on-board journey times, and consider introducing camera enforcement of bus priority lanes.
- e. Maintain a high frequency service, quality and convenience.
- f. Work with major employers in the city to encourage use of the Park & Ride by commuters, including pre-selling spaces during weekdays.
- g. Develop and implement a Portsmouth City Council Staff Travel Plan and Staff Car Parking Policy to reduce dependence on the private car and encourage staff who drive to work to use Park & Ride or other sustainable alternative for their journey to work.
- h. Develop promotional offers and discounts to encourage use of Park & Ride for events/attractions in the city; and strongly promote Park & Ride as an alternative to parking at Gunwharf Quays and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.
- i. Consider expanding the Park & Ride capacity at Tipner following the opening of the City Centre North Development.

¹ <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/trv-parking-policy.pdf>

² <https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/documents-external/pln-portsmouth-plan-post-adoption.pdf>

³ Based on the Portsmouth Transport Model.

⁴ CBI/KPMG Infrastructure Survey, 2013

3. IMPLEMENTING PORTSMOUTH PARK & RIDE AT TIPNER

Delivering the infrastructure

The Park & Ride site and associated bus priority was built as part of the £28 million Tipner Interchange Scheme. This also included the creation of a new grade-separated motorway junction on the M275 at Tipner, which provides direct access to the Park & Ride site and adjacent land, to unlock future development in the Tipner and Horsea Island areas. The Department for Transport provided £19.5m funding for the project, along with more than £8.5m of Council money.



M275 junction and Park & Ride site

Identifying demand for Park & Ride

Evidence from successful Park & Ride sites shows that they must provide an attractive combination of price, convenience, quality and travel time to encourage car drivers to switch from city centre parking. The most heavily-used Park & Ride services are also in cities where city centre parking is expensive and/or constrained.

Demand assessments for Portsmouth showed the need to target both commuter and shopping/leisure use of Park & Ride, to give a large enough market for the service to be viable. Commuters give a consistent base demand through the year, but current pressures on city centre parking are highest at weekends (particularly in the harbour area), showing a clear potential to attract shoppers and visitors to Park & Ride.

Designing and delivering the service

The Council developed a service carefully designed to address all the key drivers of demand – cost, time, quality and convenience – and aim to attract commuters, shoppers and visitors to the city. The approach to the various dimensions of the service is set out below.

High-quality infrastructure at the Tipner site

The 663-space car park is built around a central bus terminal. As well as bus stops, the terminal provides a large canopy for shelter, a waiting room, and accessible toilets. The car park is attractively landscaped (including a 'green roof' on the terminal canopy), and includes disabled and parent-and-child bays, electric vehicle charging points, cycle stands and a 'Brompton Dock' for the hire of folding bikes. CCTV is provided for safety and personal security. Overall, the design and facilities provide an attractive gateway to Portsmouth.



Park & Ride terminal building at Tipner

A dedicated Park & Ride bus service

Providing a dedicated bus service enables frequent, reliable, direct connections from the Park & Ride site to the city centre and The Hard, to a clearly specified standard of quality. Following competitive tender, the Council awarded the operating contract to First Hampshire & Dorset, for a 5 year term (with options to extend up to 8 years). Under this contract, First provide:

- A frequent service, with buses running up to every 12 minutes;
- A dedicated fleet of new low-floor double deck vehicles, with attractive interiors, “next stop” audio and visual announcements, and free Wi-Fi. Three buses are needed to operate the service. A spare vehicle is available to cope with breakdowns, or short ‘spikes’ of high demand (on bank holidays, or linked to events);
- Drivers with enhanced customer service training, who are also part of the “Portsmouth Ambassadors” programme, advocates for the city;
- Service control and management, supported from First’s Network Control Centre.



Park & Ride bus

Bus priority measures between the site and central Portsmouth

Priority is needed to ensure journeys by Park & Ride bus are as quick and reliable as possible. As part of the Tipner Interchange Scheme, a southbound lane for buses was built on the M275 from the new junction to the Rudmore Roundabout, together with a bus pre-signal on the approach to the roundabout, and partial signalisation of the roundabout. These measures complemented several previously-existing bus lanes, and other new bus lanes were added through the Marketway and Hope Street roundabouts.

High-quality stops on the route feature bus stop clearways and raised kerbs for easy boarding, together with shelters, static and real-time information, and wayfinding to local destinations.

Attractive pricing and suitable ticketing and enforcement facilities

The Council has used the following principles to guide its approach:

- Park & Ride needs to be priced below the level of city centre parking, to be attractive. Prices have been set based on experience in other cities, along with comparisons with bus fares and parking charges in Portsmouth. An initial discounted offer encouraged people to ‘give it a try’.
- Pricing is per-car, rather than per-person, to allow ease of comparison with city centre charges and to encourage car-sharing (in line with wider Council policies).
- Ticketing has been designed to be quick, simple and easy to use. No ticket sales are provided on-bus, to minimise delays. On-the-day tickets are available from machines at the Park & Ride site, and smartcard-based season tickets can be bought (or topped up) from a machine or on-line.
- The enforcement regime is consistent with other Council-managed off-street car parks.
- As the bus service is for the use of Park & Ride customers, there are no separate fares for ‘walk-on’ passengers. However, it is possible for local residents to buy Park & Ride tickets and choose to use the bus but not the parking facility.
- Concessionary travel is not available – ‘Blue Badge’ parking is available in the city centre, and the use of English National Concessionary Scheme passes (which is granted to eligible individuals to use on local buses) is not consistent with charging based per-car. However, the service is fully accessible for those with mobility impairments, with disabled parking spaces, DDA-compliant ticket machines, low floor buses and raised kerbs at bus stops.



Smartcard ticket machine demonstrated to Baroness Kramer at the official opening in April 2014

Supporting information and signage

There is relevant, easily-accessible information available at all stages of people’s journeys. Pre-travel information is available from leaflets and a dedicated website (<http://parkandride.portsmouth.gov.uk>). During the journey, real-time information is provided at stops (as part of Portsmouth’s wider bus real-time passenger information programme) and on-bus through information screens and audio announcements for the next stop. Wayfinding information to local destinations and attractions is provided at all stops.



Real-time information screen at the terminal building

Marketing and promotion

Portsmouth Park & Ride is promoted through specific campaigns (for example, to coincide with the launch of the service), and through information provided by employers (for their staff) or visitor attractions in the city (for their customers). The Council are actively working with employers in the city to encourage use of the Park & Ride by commuters, and with event holders to make Park & Ride a key choice for those coming to events in the city.

Complementary changes in the availability and price of city centre parking

The pricing of city centre parking is reviewed to ensure it complements the Park & Ride. The approach is consistent with the Parking Policy statement, which says (in Policy 2) that the Council will “consider applying a premium tariff for medium and long stay parking at its’ city centre car parks and on-street locations, to encourage use of park & ride and alternative modes”. The provision of extra parking capacity at Tipner also enables some existing off-street car parks in the city centre and harbour areas to be closed and released for development – described in section 4, below.

Wider integration

The Council’s aim is to integrate Park & Ride within Portsmouth’s wider transport system, to increase the benefits it provides for the city. The Park & Sail service, which first ran in 2013, also operated from the Park & Ride site during summer 2014, with customers able to travel by either boat (from the International Terminal) or bus between Tipner and The Hard. Add-on bus fares are being developed to destinations beyond the Park & Ride bus service. The first to be implemented are a group ticket to Clarence Pier in Southsea using the Hoverbus from the City Centre or the Hard, and discounted onward tickets to Southsea using First’s local buses.

Funding

The Portsmouth Park & Ride infrastructure was funded as part of the overall Tipner Motorway Junction and Park & Ride capital scheme. The exceptions to this were the smartcard ticketing equipment and real-time passenger information, which were funded by Solent Transport from their Local Sustainable Transport Fund settlement.

The on-going Park & Ride operation will be funded from the Traffic and Transport Portfolio’s cash limited budget. A funding contribution from the Park and Ride specific reserve of £350,000 in 2014/15 and £150,000 in 2015/16 has been budgeted.

The future aspiration is for the operation to become self-funding, with income from users of the Park & Ride covering the operating costs of the site and the bus service. If the operation is not self-funding post the use of the £500,000 reserve then alternative funding sources will have to be identified. However, it is forecast that increased usage and competitive pricing will ensure the ongoing sustainability of the Park and Ride operation. This will be kept under review.

Early outcomes

In the first five months of operation of Portsmouth Park & Ride (April-August 2014), around 55,000 cars parked at the site and there were 105,000 return journeys on the Park & Ride bus service. This is an average of 370 cars and 710 return bus trips each day, with each car having on average a little under two occupants.

There was, however, a wide range in patronage on individual days, with the busiest Saturdays in August experiencing over twice the average level of usage. Demand has been strongest at weekends and during the school holidays, showing the strength of the leisure and shopping markets.

Initial feedback has been very positive. Almost 530 customers were surveyed during the first five weeks of operation. People were asked to rate their experience on a scale from 1 (“very poor”) to 7 (“excellent”). 91% rated the overall journey experience 6 or 7, and there were particularly high scores for the customer service from the driver (93%) and the quality of the bus (98%). 96% said they would definitely use the Park & Ride service again. These results show that the focus on service quality has been recognised by Park & Ride customers, and looks set to translate into repeat use of the service.

Of those surveyed, 86% stated they usually travel in to Portsmouth by car. These early findings suggest the Park & Ride is on track to meet its objective of contributing to a more sustainable mode mix for travel into the city.

4. THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PARK & RIDE

The Council's approach to developing Park & Ride in the future will be based on:

- The performance of Park & Ride against its policy objectives and financial plan; and
- The changing nature of the city context it operates within.

Performance monitoring covers levels of usage, service reliability, costs, and customer satisfaction and feedback. Assessing this information enables the Council to make tactical changes to the price and range of ticket products offered, adjustments to the bus service and hours of operation of the site, or the approach taken to supporting events in the city.

Monitoring can also highlight if there are more strategic performance issues, which could lead to a more significant change in approach. Experience from other cities shows that this tends to arise if either:

- occupancy of the Park & Ride car park is regularly very close to capacity - suggesting a need for more spaces (unless demand can be managed without conflicting with the policy objectives); or
- the subsidy is too high – which may lead to a major redesign of the service to reduce costs.

The future strategy is also driven by changes in the wider context in Portsmouth, including:

- **Development in the city centre.** Development is anticipated across various areas of the city centre, but the biggest changes relate to the construction phase and post-opening of the proposed retail (and leisure) development in the northern section of the Commercial Road shopping area. The supply of city centre parking would fall during the construction phase, and there would also be disruption to traffic. During this period, Park & Ride would form an important element of the Council's wider strategy to manage the construction impacts. The Portsmouth Plan envisages that once open, the development would almost double retail floorspace in the city centre. Demand for travel into the city centre would increase, requiring the Council to develop a clear marketing strategy to ensure that Park & Ride plays a key role in keeping levels of congestion down.
- **Regeneration of Tipner and Horsea.** The Portsmouth Plan envisages significant increases in housing and employment in these areas, along with associated retail and leisure uses. This will change demand patterns for public transport to and from areas close to the Park & Ride site. This could create new opportunities to re-cast the Park & Ride bus service to integrate it with the wider bus network, to give the best service to users of both the Park & Ride and local buses. With major development unlikely before 2018, the Council intends to consider this approach in preparation for the end of the current Park & Ride bus service contract in 2019.
- **Future smartcard ticketing approaches.** The Solent Transport smartcard platform enables multi-operator ticketing to be developed across a range of transport services. It has been used to launch Solent Go in August 2014, a card allowing holders to purchase 'smart' multi-operator bus season tickets and multi-ride ferry tickets. The initial Portsmouth Park & Ride season tickets are provided on a service-specific smartcard that shares the same back office systems. As smartcard products (and their use) grow across south Hampshire, Park & Ride ticket products will continue to be integrated with the wider approach.

Given the likely timescales for development and regeneration, together with the contract life-cycle for the Park & Ride bus service, this strategy identifies four broad phases for future development of Park & Ride in Portsmouth over the next 10 years, set out in the following table. The order, and timing, of the two longer term phases will depend on the wider city context, in particular the scale and timing of any future planning applications for redevelopment and regeneration. The strategy will therefore need to be regularly reviewed to make sure it remains current.

Phases - likely timing & focus	City context	Park & Ride planning	Park & Ride implementation
2014 Implementation of Park & Ride	New M275 junction and Park & Ride operation opens in April 2014.	<p>Work with employers to encourage commuter take-up of the Park & Ride.</p> <p>Develop wider public transport smartcard ticketing strategy for Portsmouth, and consider implications for Park & Ride.</p> <p>Develop plans to use of Park & Ride for a full programme of events.</p> <p>Finalise the Council Staff Car Parking Policy.</p>	<p>Open site at Tipner and start operation of Park & Ride bus service.</p> <p>Park & Sail service operates during summer 2014 using Portsmouth Park & Ride site.</p> <p>Start using the Park & Ride site to support events in the city.</p> <p>Monitor and review.</p>
2015-16 Consolidation of initial operation	<p>Development and regeneration plans continue to be progressed for the city centre and harbour areas, Tipner and Horsea Island.</p> <p>Potential for specific planning applications to be brought forward.</p>	<p>Develop Park & Ride business plan for next three years, including review of (a) demand, (b) city centre parking charges and (c) pricing.</p> <p>Prepare Park & Ride marketing strategy for longer term phases, including consideration of any further add-on products (e.g. Gosport Ferry).</p> <p>Consider case for Park & Ride expansion, based on first-year usage and forecast extra demand from new city centre developments (as plans and timescales become firmer).</p>	<p>Broaden the range of events supported.</p> <p>Implement any new ticketing initiatives identified in the smartcard strategy</p> <p>Monitor and review Park & Ride performance, and make any tactical adjustments identified.</p>
Longer term (1) Supporting city centre development	<p>Closure of a number of city centre car parks to enable redevelopment, particular in the north of the city centre.</p> <p>Construction starts.</p> <p>New city centre retail (and other) development comes on stream – extra demand, but also some new city centre car parking capacity.</p>	<p>Ensure priority for Park & Ride buses is designed into construction plans for any proposed city centre redevelopment.</p> <p>Review and update business plan and marketing strategy in light of anticipated demand and development phasing/timescales.</p> <p>If justified, secure funding and submit planning application for additional Park & Ride capacity.</p>	<p>Traffic management arrangements put in place to protect Park & Ride bus service from construction impacts.</p> <p>Implement marketing strategy through construction and post-opening phases of development.</p> <p>Continue monitoring and review of Park & Ride performance.</p>
Longer term (2) Supporting Tipner regeneration	Initial housing development anticipated at Tipner, followed by potential larger-scale regeneration at both Tipner and Horsea Island (with a range of land uses).	<p>Review potential changes in demand for local public transport, including Park & Ride, and phasing.</p> <p>Develop approach for Park & Ride bus re-tender in the context of (a) public transport access to Tipner and Horsea Island regeneration and (b) occupancy and financial performance of current operation.</p>	<p>Start operation of re-tendered Park & Ride bus service (in 2019, or later – up to 2022 – if current contract extended).</p> <p>Continue monitoring and review.</p>

Note: the order and timing of the two longer term phases are dependent on progress with redevelopment and regeneration across the various areas of the city.

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