



Subject:	Update on Off Street Car Park
Date:	13 th January 2026
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services
Contact Officer:	David Bone, City Services Manager, and Gavin Bell, Off Street Parking Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

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Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?

Yes

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No

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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Off-Street Parking function which transferred to local councils following Local Government Reform in 2015. Specifically, this report provides updates on.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress of the Belfast Parking Order which will include a consultation to replace the existing legislation. 2. Update on City Centre Off Street Car Parks. 3. Challenges of debt recovery from unpaid Penalty Charge Notices and graduated approach to car parking enforcement.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree the report and note the following;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the progress of the Belfast Parking Order to enactment post consultation and subsequent amendment. 2. Update on City Centre Off Street Car Parks. 3. Note the update on debt recovery from unpaid Penalty Charge Notices and graduated approach to car parking enforcement.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Belfast Parking Order</u></p> <p>The People & Communities Committee approved the draft Belfast Off Street Car Parking Order in October 2023 and this was agreed by Council in November 2023. This was a revised version of the report previously agreed in 2019. Council had endeavoured to create their own Order in 2020 but following a discussion with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and an independent legal opinion, it was confirmed that the two orders could not be in place at the same time and the DfI legislation would always be the preeminent legislation. Other areas were also clarified through this opinion and will enable council to progress with the draft order.</p> <p>The main elements of the Belfast Order will remain unchanged from the current legislation which is place.</p> <p>The key proposed changes are outlined below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include four existing public car parks into the order: Two car parks transferred from the DfI in 2015 but were not in the order (Shaw's Bridge and Parkgate Avenue), one was within the BCC portfolio (Stranmillis), and one was part of an urban regeneration project (Slievegallion). 2. Remove two public car parks from the order. Bankmore Street and Frederick Street car parks transferred from the DfI and are subject to the existing Parking Order legislation. They were not within the ownership of the DfI when transferred in 2015. The landowners did not renew rental licenses with council in 2017 and 2018, respectively. These two car parks now need to be removed from the Order. 3. Review the Blue Badge parking policy. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Council recognises that customers who hold Blue Badges may require additional time due to their mobility issues.

	<p>b) It is proposed that vehicles displaying a valid Blue Badge may park free for an additional hour following payment of the appropriate charge in accordance with the scale of charges.</p> <p>4. Arrange for the suspension of car parking places for works or events to be undertaken.</p> <p>a) The Council on occasion receives requests to allow third parties to use car parks or parts of car park for other purposes.</p> <p>b) The draft order includes provisions for the Council to suspend the use of car parking in specific circumstances to facilitate other temporary uses.</p> <p>c) There would be a process developed to administer all requests, taking into consideration the scheme of delegation, which would involve off street car parking, legal and estates in drafting licence agreements for such purposes.</p> <p>d) This would provide the necessary powers to council under delegation to make these decisions expediently.</p> <p>It is important that the order proceeds not only for the mechanism of enforcement but as noted above the inclusion and exclusion of car parks in the order. This is of particular importance to the progress of the strategic sites as there has been considerable progress made with the development of the north city centre sites – Kent Street and Little Donegall Street.</p> <p>It had been previously agreed that the consultation would occur on the draft order, the findings examined and take the order back to committee to seek enactment when the DfI are ready to revoke the NI Council car parks from the NI 2000 Order. This amendment will only occur when all Councils are in readiness and the revocation has been tabled at Stormont. The DfI Minister has recently written to all Chief Executives in NI seeking an update on the progress of their orders and is encouraging all councils to have them progressed to ensure the advancement of the revocations, Appendix 1.</p>
4.0	Recommendation
4.1	<p>It is proposed to consult on the draft order via Your Say, Appendix 2, in January 2026 and following consultation, move to the published Notice of Intention and bring back to the Committee to enact. This order would cover the four car parks that currently sit outside the existing Off Street Parking Order (NI) 2000. Following the revocation of BCC Council car parks from the Off-Street Parking Order (NI) 2000 by the DfI, an amendment to this order will be advertised and brought back to the Committee for enactment. This will consolidate all car parks within the Belfast Order, Appendix 1.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Update on City Centre Off Street Car Parks</u></p> <p>As part of the Belfast Agenda ambitions to increase the residential population, and to increase city centre living, several existing city centre off-street car parking sites have been approved by the CG&R and SP&R Committees to be brought forward for Housing Led Regeneration purposes. These sites, as identified below, are at various stages of development. Updates will be provided to City Growth and Regeneration Committee and Strategic Policy & Resource Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Donegal Street (BCC Owned) • Kent Street (Leased from the DfC) • Exchange Street (BCC Owned) • Charlotte Street (BCC Owned) and also under consideration for the Belfast Rapid Transport Phase 2 • Smithfield (BCC Owned)

The development of these charged car parks will result in an estimated loss of departmental income but there will be an expected increase of rateable income from these development sites.

The loss of this **net income** has been highlighted and mapped out within mid-term financial planning and is outlined below.

Estimate 26/27	Estimate 27/28	Estimate 28/9	Estimate 29/30
£ 96,682.07	£ 172,628.13	£ 172,628.13	£ 458,102.42

4.2 **Process for Debt recovery**

Within public car parks the main enforcement mechanism is the issue of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs). PCNs are issued for non-payment, over staying a parking period, parking out of bay, misuse of blue badge and electric vehicle bays and vehicles not permitted to park. Once a PCN is issued users are given 14 days in which they can avail of a reduction of the cost by 50% (£45).

Following this period the full cost of the PCN must be paid, if it is not paid a Notice to Owner is sent advising of the debt recovery process, as stipulated in the Traffic Management Order 2005. Should this be ignored a Charge Certificate Notice is sent (£135) and following this the registered owner is advised through a Notice of Intention that the debt will be registered with the Enforcement of Judgements Office (EJO). Article 15 of the TMO 2005 gives council the power to seek recovery of all those monies outstanding and the EJO is the mechanism for the first stage of recovery. The Traffic Management Order 2005 sets out all the mechanisms to ensure recovery of debt. The Off Street Car Park Manager is developing the processes to ensure that debt is managed and recovered within the legislative guidelines.

4.3 **Finance and resource implications**

All costs will be met through the existing budgets. Support will be required from several different Council services including Corporate Communications, Legal, Business Support and Democratic Services.

4.4 **Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment**

A screening of the draft order has occurred and the consultation with be circulated with all voluntary and statutory bodies stakeholders with a good relations/rural needs remit.

5.0 **Appendices - Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – DfI Minister letter
Appendix 2 – Draft Order
Appendix 3 – Consultation questions