



Subject:	Off Street Car Park Update
Date:	9 June 2026
Reporting Officer:	David Bone, City Protection Manager
Contact Officer:	Gavin Bell, Off Street Parking Manager

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Committee further to the last update report on Off Street Car Parking tabled at People & Communities in January 2026.
1.2	<p>Committee are reminded that the January 2026 report detailed the following key proposed changes within the draft Belfast Off Street Car Parking Order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Blue Badge parking concessions • Inclusion of four car parks which are not subject to the current Off-Street Parking (NI) Order 2000. • Removal of two car parks from the Off-Street Parking (NI) Order 2000, namely Bankmore Street and Frederick Street which are not within Council's estate. • Inclusion of a mechanism to allow for the temporary closure of car parks.
1.3	The draft Belfast Off Street Parking Order was approved by People and Communities Committee in October 2023 and full Council in November 2023.
1.4	This report details the finding from the consultation exercise completed from 20 February to 18 May, and a recommendation to publish a Notice of Intention for the four car parks (Appendix 1).
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>Members are asked to consider the following recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to advertise the four car parks currently outside of the Off-Street Parking Order 2000 via a Notice of Intention. These car parks are Shaw's Bridge, Stranmillis, Slievegullion and Parkgate Avenue. • Note the consultation response update contained within this report. • Note that a further update report will be brought back to Committee after the notification period has concluded.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>Background</p> <p>The draft Belfast Off-Street Parking Order has been developed to provide a revised framework for the management and operation of Council owned off-street car parks.</p>
3.2	The main elements of the draft Belfast Off-Street Parking Order will remain unchanged from the current legislation which is place.

3.3	<p>Committee is recommended to agree publishing a Notice of Intention to include four existing public car parks into the order. The four car parks are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaw's Bridge • Stranmillis • Slievegallion • Parkgate Avenue
3.4	<p>Shaw's Bridge and Parkgate Avenue car parks transferred from the DfI in 2015 but are not included in the current legislation. Stranmillis and Slievegallion were both BCC assets prior to off street car parks transferring from DfI.</p>
3.5	<p>Subject to Committee agreement the Notice of Intention (Appendix 1) will be published in three papers and in the Belfast Gazette. Signage will also be placed in all four car parks. A further update report will be brought back to Committee for consideration after the notification period.</p>
3.6	<p>As advised in the update report to Committee in January 2026 a public consultation exercise has been undertaken from 20 February 10 to 18 May seeking views on several other proposals, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of arrangements to allow for the temporary closure of car parks; • The introduction of mechanisms to allow for temporary alternative uses of car parks; • Proposed provisions relating to Blue Badge holders; and • General comments on the designation and operation of off-street car parks.
3.7	<p>A total of 39 responses were received during the consultation period. Members can avail of a copy of the full consultation results on request.</p>
3.8	<p>Summary of Consultation Findings:</p> <p>Overall, the responses reflect a broad range of views, with no clear consensus across all proposals. While there is recognition of the need for flexibility in how car parks are managed, respondents raised several points, particularly in relation to accessibility, cost and availability.</p>
3.9	<p>Temporary Closure of Car Parks</p> <p>There is support for the introduction of a process to facilitate the temporary closure of car parks.</p> <p>Respondents indicated that such measures could be acceptable where:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate advance notice is provided; • Clear signage and communication are in place; and • Alternative arrangements are considered.
3.10	<p>However, several concerns were raised, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced availability of parking spaces; • Increased pressure on on-street parking provision; and • Potential impacts on residents and city centre access. <p>Several respondents also requested that any closures should be subject to defined time limits or review mechanisms.</p>
3.11	<p>Temporary Alternative Use of Car Parks</p> <p>There is support for enabling temporary alternative uses of car parks, particularly where this allows better utilisation of underused space.</p> <p>Positive feedback highlighted opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events and markets; and • Increased flexibility in the use of Council assets.
3.12	<p>However, respondents stressed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such uses should not take place where there is significant demand for parking; • Careful consideration must be given to location and timing; and • Clear communication is essential to minimise disruption.
3.13	<p>Blue Badge Proposals</p> <p>Feedback in relation to Blue Badge provisions was mixed.</p>
3.14	<p><i>Charging for Off-Street Parking Blue Badge holders</i></p> <p>Views were divided between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those opposed to charging, who highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional financial pressures on disabled users; and ○ Limited alternative travel options; • Those in favour, who noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That Blue Badge entitlement is not means-tested; and ○ The need for consistency with private sector provision.
3.15	<p><i>Additional Free Parking Time</i></p> <p>There was general support for providing an additional period of free parking time for Blue Badge holders.</p>

Respondents noted that:

- Additional time is often required due to mobility and accessibility needs; and
- Such a provision would improve accessibility and reduce pressure on users.

3.16 **Accessibility Considerations**

Accessibility was a key theme across many responses.

Issues raised included:

- Insufficient provision of disabled parking spaces;
- Difficulties accessing certain car parks; and
- Misuse of designated disabled bays.

3.17 **Suggestions included:**

- Increasing the number of accessible parking spaces;
- Improving enforcement; and
- Enhancing the design and layout of facilities.

3.18 **Parking Charges and Affordability**

A significant proportion of respondents raised concerns regarding the cost of parking.

These concerns included:

- Perceptions that parking charges are too high;
- The potential impact on city centre footfall and economic activity; and
- Comparisons with public transport costs and alternative provisions.

3.19 **Wider Strategic Issues**

Although outside the scope of the Order, respondents frequently referenced broader issues, including:

- The relationship between parking policy and public transport;
- The need for a balanced approach to city centre access; and
- The importance of integrating parking policy with wider regeneration and transport objectives.

3.20 **Communication and Implementation**

A consistent theme across responses was the importance of effective communication.

Respondents highlighted the need for:

- Clear and timely information on any proposed changes;
- Adequate signage; and
- Transparency in decision-making processes.

3.21	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Subject to Committee agreement it is recommended to advertise the intention to include the four car parks within the draft Belfast Off Street Parking Order. Following this advertisement a report will be brought back to committee to examine the responses received during the notification period and seek enactment. Enactment would assist in managing the parking behaviours occurring in these car parks.</p>
4.0	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage. Any financial implications associated with the implementation of the Order will be brought back to Committee in due course.</p>
5.0	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>The consultation responses highlight potential considerations to be made to blue badge bay design. These issues will be considered further as part of the development and implementation of the Order.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices</p>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 - Notice of Intention</p>