

Scope of work to develop a city centre car parking framework

Short term

Car parks hand over

- Ensure the smooth hand over of the existing infrastructure and contract commitments.
- Develop options for the future delivery of enforcement to replace/continue the DRD/NSL contract.
- Draft policies, procedures and guidance where necessary.

Quick wins

- Produce a parking guide for the city to promote what is available and dispel persistent myths.
- Identify and implement options for Family Friendly (pushchair) use and in response to the results of an equality screening.
- Consider extending free parking days to align with Council's major events.
- Consider incentives to encourage people to use car parks rather than neighbourhood streets.

Data gathering

- Produce a detailed report of the location, capacity and usage of car parking; the current and potential income from the Council's car parks; and their proximity to alternative car parking or different means of travel. This will consider traffic flows (at different times of the day) and look at car and other forms of transport as well as assets. It will also consider the impact of upcoming major developments such as the Rapid Transit System, Transport Hub and the Royal Exchange redevelopments.

Medium term

Council car parks

- Develop a policy for the council car parks. This will consider issues such as: Parking prices; encouraging alternatives; DRD lease and buy back of car parking; use by third parties; etc.
- Develop options for live information about parking availability available via apps and/or better signage etc to better manage traffic flows around the city.

City wide parking

- Establish a partnership with other city centre parking stakeholders. As a minimum, private car park operators, DRD/Road Services, the business community and people with mobility considerations.
- Review overall parking supply and demand within the city with a view to reducing long stay parking availability while supporting alternative options such as public transport.
- Consider options such as 'tidal parking', e.g. opening up unused private car parks for weekday parking, etc.

- Consult with various government departments on their requirements for leased spaces within the city centre.

Long term

(As per the City Centre Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan)

- Review the existing evidence base in the city to inform the framework and action plan. This will include identification of key stakeholders, existing transport & accessibility strategies and a review of current provision alongside any recent or planned interventions within the city. This will then inform decisions round
 - Whether we should aim to reduce the number of fragmented, open air car parks and relocate appropriate capacity into multi-storey facilities arranged around the Inner Ring Road.
 - Reduce congestion by a number of options eg directing drivers from the main approaches to available spaces by comprehensive real-time parking information, better uptake of park and ride etc

The approach to be used

In developing the detail of these stages, it is expected that the following approaches will be used:

- Engaging with key stakeholders and clearly identifying their concerns/issues and suggestions for solutions. In particular concerns over:
 - accessibility and mobility;
 - traffic flow and congestion (both in terms of typical congestion levels and travel time variability);
 - the availability of parking (short and long term) including issues of pricing;
 - potential implications for the different economic sectors within the city; and
 - exploration of the potential environmental and social/residential impacts.
- Categorising potential action into those:
 - that are within the remit of the Council to pursue.
 - that key partners can implement utilising existing legislative and statutory frameworks.
 - that can only be addressed in the longer term with changes to these statutory frameworks, or with significant investment, or via policy shifts such as opportunities to further integrate land use and transit through a shared plan or strategy.
- Thorough research to identify options and determine the longer term implications for implementing action in terms of:
 - Improving traffic flow, or better demand management (peak travel periods) to deliver predictable travel times, and reduce congestion on main roads.
 - Parking management and parking supply, allocation and pricing. Re-designating areas for parking.
 - Introducing Access Management (restrict vehicle access to certain zones), linked to a set of complementary measures such as those above.
 - Mobility Management and alternative transport arrangements such as Active Travel.
 - Modify the existing infrastructure.
 - Introducing new infrastructure.

- Identification of the key policy levers to aid the introduction of ideas such as those listed above.
- Ensuring that the recommendations made are developed within the strategic context of city-wide regeneration and development plans. This includes the Belfast City centre Regeneration Strategy & Investment Plan, the various travel plans (e.g. Belfast Metropolitan Travel Plan, BCC Transport Policy etc), the Tourism Strategy, the Investment Programme, etc.