



Subject:	Car Parking Strategy
Date:	8 th June 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Anne Doherty, Planning & Transport Officer

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Council's draft Car Parking Strategy and to seek endorsement from Members of the high level recommendations summarised in Para 3.9 and set out Appendix 1, Chapter 5 & 6 prior to any agreed public consultation process.
1.2	The City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy identified car parking as a major issue for Belfast City Centre and recommended that the Council works with the Department for Infrastructure to develop and implement a strategy for car parking for Belfast. The Council commissioned consultants in October 2015 to develop a Car Parking Strategy and a project steering group, consisting of Council officers and representatives from DFI, was set up to assist with the development of the Strategy.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Note the findings from the baseline review and consultation process (Appendix 1) and agree the proposed draft vision, objectives and Council priorities as outlined in Para 3.9 and in this report.

2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to progress to a public consultation exercise which will facilitate further opportunities to shape the Car parking strategy before it is finalised.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Key Findings</p> <p>The development of the Car Parking Strategy followed a number of key stages from a baseline review and consultation process with key stakeholders through to the formulation of a draft strategy and action plan.</p>
3.2	<p>The draft Car Parking Strategy and action plan has been finalised and a copy is attached in Appendix 1. There are a number of key findings from the baseline review and consultation process which are outlined below for Members to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The baseline review has indicated that there is sufficient parking stock in Belfast and this should be maintained and closely monitored. There are 28,300 spaces publicly available (45% on street and 55% off Street) and demand indicates a requirement for 18,000 on average per day in Belfast. The Council has responsibility for 17 of the 59 off street car parks containing 1,476 parking spaces. • The number of car parking spaces provided in Belfast is considered to be high compared to other cities of similar size. • Whilst there is currently sufficient parking stock in terms of overall spaces the provision is fragmented and imbalanced across the city centre. The current location of car parking spaces, particularly surface car parking, is not necessarily aligned to either existing nodes of demand or to future redevelopment proposals, particularly in the context of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy. The provision and location of parking should reflect the changing shape of regeneration across the city. • There is a lack of information for visitors as to where available parking is located resulting in circulating traffic looking for available spaces contributing to congestion in the city which could be more efficiently managed. • Site audits have identified that some car parks are of low quality in terms of facilities and provision for users which leads to security and crime issues impacting on parking behaviour in the city. • There is a high level of all day parking in specific areas of the core city centre area that is inappropriate. This reduces the amount of short stay opportunities for shoppers, business meetings and other visitors.

- Parking is not seen as a major decision factor by investors, particularly as other cities do not have significant city centre parking although it was noted that many other cities have a range of alternative sustainable transport options.
- Commuter parking in city centre residential areas is a known issue and individual Residents Parking Schemes have been developed by DFI, however to date none of these schemes have been implemented.
- There is a high level of private non-residential parking spaces (10,422) provided in the core and fringe city area which encourages the use of the private car as the mode of transport. This is generally free car parking provided to employees as part of public and private office developments.
- There are a number of low quality surface car parking sites in the city centre where consideration should be given to maximising their wider regeneration potential particularly in the context of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy and redevelopment proposals. Consolidation of existing parking or alternative provision could potentially be facilitated as part of any new development or consideration given to the provision of new multi storey/underground car parks. This would allow better use of valuable city centre land and bring wider economic and regeneration benefits, as well concentrating traffic movements to fewer parking sites.
- Potential solutions that could be implemented through the introduction of new technology include more efficient enforcement, development of a Belfast parking website and app, improving parking information as you approach the city (city wide Intelligent Transport System, innovative wayfinding and upgrading payment methods).
- The review has found that parking tariffs in Belfast are comparable with cities such as Newcastle and Nottingham, but generally cheaper than cities such as Manchester, Dublin and Cardiff. Council site tariffs were found to be generally lower than those in adjacent private sites.
- Accessible parking in Belfast City Centre is limited in comparison to the number of standard spaces available. Blue badge holders can park for free on street if the blue badge is on clear display. A review of the existing provision of accessible parking has indicated that Blue Badge provision could also be considered within Belfast City Council off street car parks.
- Issues of parking in some district centres outside the city centre has been raised in particular the use of free car parks for all day commuter parking in areas such as East Belfast.

- The progression and promotion of sustainable travel options should also be considered in parallel including further Park and Ride facilities on both radial and high frequency public transport corridors; enhancement of the quality and volume of cycle infrastructure and parking; improved taxi facilities and coach parking and the development of the Belfast Transport Hub and the Belfast Rapid Transit system.

3.3 **Vision, Objectives and Priorities**

The draft vision and the set of objectives are outlined below which the strategy should seek to address along with the suggested Council priorities for consideration:

3.4 **Vision**

“Belfast is a city offering sufficient, high quality and appropriately located parking which supports economic development and regeneration within the city by balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.

3.5 **Objective 1**

Ensuring appropriate provision and location of car parking to support and improve the economic vitality of the City Centre and district centres.

Council priorities

- Review current provision to ensure an appropriate provision in the right location to support economic vitality.
- Consider how optimal use can be made of surface car parks to best support city centre regeneration in terms of alignment of provision with re-development and maximising valuable city centre land to deliver on wider regeneration outcomes.
- Identify opportunities to consolidate existing parking or alternative provision as an integral part of new development and consider provision of new multi storey /underground car parks where appropriate.

3.6 **Objective 2**

Ensuring car parking provision does not encourage less sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and supports access by public transport, cycling and walking.

Council priorities

- Work with stakeholders to consider how parking tariffs in the city centre core can be

reviewed to ensure sufficient short-stay parking facilities to support commercial and leisure activities and deter long stay commuter parking.

- Work with stakeholders to develop and improve the sustainable transport modes for travel to and within the city, in particular for commuters.
- Consider options to control the amount of private non-residential parking (PNR) across the city.

3.7

Objective 3

Minimising the potentially negative impacts of parking on residential communities in the city particularly in inner city areas.

Council priorities

- Work with Dfl and local communities to consider parking management for these areas, either through the implementation of on-street parking regimes or Residents Parking Schemes.
- Identify surface car park sites suitable for consolidation and redevelopment in order to improve the built environment for inner city areas.

3.8

Objective 4

Work with stakeholders to improve the quality of parking and information available, ideally through technology and in particular develop a new parking signage and information system that supports parking and wider applications.

Council priorities

- Bring forward technological solutions to make it easier to navigate into and around the city and effective signposting in the City Centre.
- Work with key stakeholders to ensure that key destinations have appropriate levels of disabled parking and family friendly provision.
- Encourage car park operators to invest in their facilities to the extent that they will achieve the Park Mark standard.
- Reduce supply of poor quality surface level space and replace with higher quality well-managed space.

3.9

Key Recommendations

The strategy has made a number of recommendations and proposals for consideration by elected members. The main strategy proposals are as follows:

- The current parking supply in the city should be maintained and that new car parks should only be provided within the city where they replace existing spaces or where they are an essential part of a new development.
- All on-street parking spaces within the core city centre area should be controlled either by the extension of on-street pay and display or by residents parking schemes. The strategy is also proposing that on-street tariffs are reviewed to reflect demand and deter long stay parking.
- City centre surface parking sites should be considered in the context of the City Centre Regeneration Strategy and redevelopment proposals that maximise the use of valuable city centre assets in order to deliver on regeneration outcomes. This may involve the redevelopment and intensification of use of these sites and alternative provision made either as an integral part of redevelopment or transferred into multi-storey sites along or outside the inner ring road. The provision of multi storey car parks on the inner ring could potentially be supplemented by a shuttle bus connecting the main shopping and employment areas. This approach could be applied to a number of the Council's off-street surface car parks. Consideration would however need to be given to the responsibility for development and funding of any such multi storey car parks although this could also be viewed in the context of the release of valuable city centre sites and the income producing potential of multi storey car parks. Further consideration would be needed internally on whether the operation and control of these car parks in the future should be retained by the Council.
- The issue of the large amount of private non-residential parking provided across the city has been raised and the need for tighter controls. The strategy is advocating that the Council and other government departments should lead by example by reducing the amount of PNR this could be achieved in a number of ways eg consider offering alternatives sustainable travel options, charging for the spaces they provide for employees etc.
- There is a need to review the DFI's residents parking scheme proposals in city centre areas. Previously, the schemes have not received full community support mainly due to charging and access for visitors. The strategy recommends that there is a review of criteria for implementation, scheme design, operational times and community support in order to increase the potential for delivery.
- Long stay parking in some suburban areas should be charged in order to increase turnover and maintain space for local activities
- Actions should be taken to improve the quality of parking and information available such as new technology to improve ticketing and payment systems, more information

	<p>for visitors via electronic media including a dedicated website and app and a potential integrated signage system for the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council should provide disabled parking spaces for free in off-street car parks and review provision and this will have implications for the Council in terms of loss of revenue. <p>3.10 Department of Regional Development input</p> <p>It should be noted that many of the draft strategy recommendations will require further agreement from key stakeholders and in particular DFI. DFI is represented on the project steering group and will be providing formal comment on the draft strategy.</p> <p>3.11 Public consultation</p> <p>Subject to the Draft Strategy and Action Plan being endorsed by Committee and ratified by Council, it is intended that we will undertake a public consultation exercise from mid July to September 2016 which will facilitate further opportunities to shape the strategy before it is finalised. It is on this basis that members are asked to endorse the draft recommendations as set out in this report and provided in more detail in Appendix 1.</p> <p>3.12 Equality and Good Relations Implications</p> <p>Equality and good relations screening will be conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation processes.</p> <p>3.13 Resource Implications</p> <p>Additional resources may be required to assist with the public consultation on the draft strategy subject to agreement. If endorsed the recommendations will have future implications on Council revenue such as loss of parking revenue due to the redevelopment of city centre surface car parks, costs of improving car parks, introduction of charging in some free car parks in district centres and the introduction of free disabled car parking in Council owned off street car parks. These have not been quantified in the research and will be reported to a future Strategic Policy & Resources Committee once the strategy is finalised.</p>
4.0	Appendix 1 – Draft Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan
	Appendix 1