

## Appendix 1 – Car Parking Strategy

A summary of the main comments and our suggested response is outlined below:

Comments	Suggested approach
<p>DFI is generally supportive of the strategy and action plan, however it is the Department's view that there is too much commuter parking in Belfast and the Council's strategy missed the opportunity to provide a clear message on this issue.</p>	<p>The strategy acknowledges that there is spare car parking capacity in the city and it is proposed going forward to review the current car parking provision with DfI to ensure appropriate provision is in the right location to promote accessibility and reduce congestion in the city.</p>
<p>BCTC stated that it was incorrect to state that there is surplus supply of car parking in the city as many of the spaces are located in areas where there is low demand, whereas in areas of high demand there is an under-provision of spaces. Views were expressed that the proposals do not include forecasts of future parking demand and that a number of new office, hotel and other developments will generate a considerable demand for new parking.</p>	<p>Surveys have indicated that there is currently spare capacity in excess of 10,000 spaces for car parking in and around Belfast City centre. However the strategy recognises that some individual car parks operate at capacity whilst there is spare capacity in the overall provision. As stated above, the strategy proposes to review the current car parking provision with DfI to ensure appropriate provision is in the right location and this will include measures to improve the quality of parking and information on parking availability. The review will also take account of new development planned for the city.</p>
<p>BCTC expressed the view that if the City is to grow, there will be more car journeys to, from and within the City. These will require an increase in parking provision and the strategy's aspiration of maintaining levels is inadequate and will damage the City's prospects of future success.</p>	<p>The strategy highlights that there is a high volume of commuters travelling by car to Belfast which is leading to problems of increasing congestion and associated emissions resulting in poor air quality in a number of areas in the city. It is recognised that there is a limited capacity in the city's highway network and therefore the promotion of public transport along with the appropriate provision for cars as part of a balanced approach is outlined in the strategy.</p>
<p>The Strategy should not prohibit long term parking. Provision for commuter parking will be essential to promote future office developments.</p>	<p>The strategy proposes that long stay parking should only occur in off-street sites away from central areas of the city centre, on the edge of the Inner Ring. Central areas should be prioritised for short stay parking and for Blue Badges holders.</p> <p>The need to reduce all day commuter parking is in line with the Programme for Government Indicator 25: Increase the use of public transport and active travel. It states that "achieving a shift from the car to bus or rail services for longer journeys and to walking or cycling for shorter journeys will reduce demand on the road network allowing it to work more efficiently; assist in the better movement of freight; reduce emissions and improve health by increasing levels of physical activity. Public transport also contributes to economic growth, competitiveness and supports social inclusion. Cycling and walking have significant health and social benefits for individuals".</p>
<p>Using parking policy to discourage the use of the private car</p>	<p>The strategy is proposing a step change and acknowledges that investment in</p>

<p>before having a modern public alternative is irrational, counterproductive and economically damaging to our city.</p>	<p>public transport infrastructure and sustainable modes is necessary if car dependency is to be reduced. The Council is working jointly with DfI and Translink to support projects such as the Transport Hub, Belfast Rapid Transit and the implementation of the Belfast Bicycle network plan.</p>
<p>The Council's strategy stated that all on-street parking in the city core area should be restricted. DfI stated that this is a considerable undertaking and will involve the introduction of residents parking zones. It is suggested by DfI that they progress proposals to extend current controlled parking zones incorporating residents schemes in partnership with BCC.</p>	<p>It is suggested that the wording in the strategy is changed to state 'extend current controlled parking zones incorporating resident schemes in partnership with BCC' This will be in line with the proposal in the PfG to reduce demand 'Extend the Belfast City Centre Controlled Parking Zone and increase enforcement'.</p>
<p>What is the source of parking figures?</p>	<p>Belfast Parking Survey (BPS) 2013 Report, carried out by Transport NI's partnering consultant Amey was used. This reports the results of the biennial parking survey within the centre of Belfast, with the data collected during October 2013. Additional survey work was carried out by consultants on BCC sites outside the city centre which were not included in the 2013 report.</p>
<p>A number of comments were received stating that car parking tariffs are too expensive in Belfast in particular for all day commuter parking.</p>	<p>The baseline review found that parking is affordable in Belfast in comparison to similar cities. An aim of the strategy is to influence choice of travel mode through demand management measures such as parking supply and pricing policies. It is suggested that future changes to parking tariffs should be discussed jointly by DfI, BCC and private operators.</p>
<p>In addition the following comments were made in relation to pricing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the need for a pricing structure that prioritises shoppers and visitors for day trippers and weekend trippers</li> <li>• Parking costs in the core city centre should reflect the convenience of the location; however, on-street parking time should be extended to perhaps 3 hours;</li> <li>• Increase in effective enforcement by Traffic Attendants would deter meter feeding etc and increase turnaround of on-street car parking</li> </ul>	<p>The strategy proposes that the core city centre area should only be used for short stay parking and suggests that measures to cater for day/weekend trippers is discussed at the Parking Forum.</p> <p>BCC have no remit in relation to pricing, duration and enforcement of on-street parking however it is suggested joint working with DfI to identify measures to tackle the issue.</p>
<p>The strategy proposes that there is a review of on-street and off-street tariffs. DfI suggested that where practical, future changes to on and off street tariffs should be discussed jointly by DfI and BCC and private sector operators.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Council suggest that the Parking Forum could provide a mechanism to discuss parking tariffs and enforcement.</p>
<p>The Strategy must identify new multi-storey car parks that will address the future need generated by a cluster of individual new developments.</p>	<p>The Strategy does identify areas where new multi-storey provision may be appropriate subject to the planning process.</p>

Consideration needs to be given to a pricing structure in MSCPs that encourage day trippers; weekend trippers and day shoppers	Agreed this will be considered in more detail through the proposed Parking Forum
The development of new Multi-Storey car parks should make provision for secure cycle parking on their premises, particularly on lower-storeys to act as an incentive for people to cycle.	Agreed
A number of respondents queried what criteria will be used to identify the sites for Multi Storey Car Parks? Will communities be consulted on this matter? How is traffic flow, air quality and visual aesthetics taken into consideration	The Council will amend the action to ensure any proposal for consolidation of low quality surface car parking sites into multi storey/underground car parks will be carried out in consultation with adjacent local communities on the location and design issues.
One of the proposed multi-storey car parks should be placed in the heart of the Linen Quarter rather than based at the "outer ring".	For clarification the strategy does not propose multi-storey provision based at the outer ring. A key thrust of the Council's Linen Quarter study is the reduction of car movements in this area. The strategy proposes that long stay parking should only occur in off-street sites away from central areas of the city centre, on the edge of the Inner Ring and this is in a short distance from the Linen Quarter area.
Better enforcement against potential fraud and misuse of Blue Badges	BCC have no remit in relation to enforcement but recognise that there is an issue of misuse of blue badges. It is suggested joint working with DfI to identify measures to tackle the issue.
Support for free Blue Badge use at Council car parks however the access to these car parks must be considered	Noted and the access point will be added to the strategy
Measures to prevent parking at bus stops, parking across dropped kerbs and parking on pavements  Any consideration of parking demand must include cars parking on unrestricted streets and pavements rather than just those parking in allocated on-street spaces	It is suggested that the issue of pavement parking should be tackled by better enforcement and improved information systems on parking availability. It is proposed that the issue of pavement parking should be discussed jointly by DfI, PSNI and BCC.
Proper consideration must be given to how car parking at district centres is controlled so free long stay spaces are not taken up by owners / employees of surrounding commercial premises and as a consequence not available for shoppers / visitors.	The Strategy acknowledges that BCC parking sites outside of the city centre are predominantly free. There is high occupancy of these sites with a significant number of all-day parkers. If capacity is to be managed, this level of all day parking needs to be reduced. It is suggested that a modest charge per hour is considered to deter all day commuter parking. This would free up spaces for people making short trips to the area for shopping, leisure, or business/ personal reasons.
Translink would have major concerns around the practicality of an Inner Ring Shuttle Bus given our experience with the old Centre Link service which had to be funded by both the	The Council would agree with this approach and will modify the action.

<p>private and public sector. However modifications of the existing network(s) to provide an inner ring shuttle bus service may well be possible.</p>	
<p>The area defined as the core city centre area extends over too large an area and should be confined within the four points of Shaftesbury Square, Castle Street, Fredrick Street &amp; Oxford Street;</p>	<p>It is not the remit of this strategy to review the city centre boundary. However, the comment is noted and for information the boundary of the core city centre area will be reviewed by the Council under the Local Development Plan process.</p>
<p>Visit Belfast is particularly pleased to see the inclusion of Coach Park provision. It should be close to the City Centre, attractions, hotels. in an area away from high crime rate</p>	<p>The criteria for the location are noted.</p>
<p>Visit Belfast stated that there needs to be flexibility in pricing of car parking such as hotels being able to offer reduced car parking for day, overnight and multiple night stays. Most car travelling overnight visitors for a city break or part of a touring holiday will want parking for 24 hour plus. How to deal with this has not been flagged in the report</p> <p>Parking initiatives to promote the evening economy are needed.</p>	<p>Agreed. The Council suggest that the Parking Forum could provide a mechanism to discuss how these needs can be catered for.</p>
<p>Section 2.3.11 refers to a range of key relevant policy documents which have shaped, and will continue to shape transport, parking and planning policy. Department for Communities would respectively submit that their Regeneration Masterplans should be added to the list and that, as far as possible, their respective strategies should be complimentary</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p>Belfast Harbour Commissioners stated that the Corporation Street/Sailortown area is subject to all day commuter parking congestion and going forward has the potential to be exacerbated by the opening of the new UU campus and therefore consideration should be given to the redistribution of underutilised space.</p> <p>BHC welcomed the reference to the continued engagement of stakeholders and communities to develop and improve sustainable transport alternatives.</p>	<p>This will be considered under the review of provision and location of car parking with Dfl.</p>

## Citizen Space responses

The table below outlines the results from survey questions relating to the main sections of the draft strategy.

<b>Draft Car Parking Strategy</b>	<b>Strongly agree/ agree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree/dis agree</b>	
Vision for the Strategy <i>“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”</i>	42%	38%	The general comments relating to the vision showed that car parking is a highly divisive issue with respondents either requesting that there should be increased car parking provision at lower cost or that car parking provision should be restricted in the city centre to improve the amenity for residents and visitors to the city. It is suggested that the vision remains unchanged as we are advocating a balanced approach to car parking provision in the city. The strategy recognises that car parking in suitable amounts and locations is vital for the city centre to function properly. A balance is therefore necessary between car parking and other transport modes and between the needs of short-stay and long-stay parking users.
Understand the rationale for developing the strategy	74%	6%	The approach of the Council in preparing the car parking strategy was welcomed by respondents.
Key issues, challenges, opportunities identified	50%	14%	There was general agreement on the key issues with comments requesting more effective enforcement of parking infringements mentioned.
Objective 1: Ensuring appropriate provision and location of car parking to support and improve the economic vitality of the city centre and district centres.	66%	8%	Comments related to this objective showed support for the proposal to consolidate low quality surface car parking sites into multi storey/underground car parks with the caveat that adjacent local communities are consulted on the location and design. Other comments requested improvements to the public transport system and support for residential parking schemes.
Objective 2: Ensuring car parking provision encourages sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the City Centre and supports access by public transport, cycling and walking.	61%	19%	Comments relating to this objective requested improvements to the public transport system, the need to provide secure cycle parking and the need to restrict traffic levels in the city centre.
Objective 3: Minimising the potentially negative impacts of parking on residential communities in the city particularly in inner city areas.	67%	10%	There was strong support for the introduction of resident parking schemes with a number of comments highlighting the negative impact of commuter parking on residential areas.
Objective 4: Work with stakeholders to improve the quality of parking and information available, ideally	72%	4%	There was strong support on the need to provide better information on parking availability in the city along with improvements to the overall quality of car park provision.

<p>through technology and in particular develop a new parking signage and information system that supports parking and wider applications.</p>			
<p>Complementary Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote sustainable commuter travel, especially for journeys into the city centre and support access by public transport, cycling and walking</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to provide secure bicycle and coach parking in appropriate city centre locations</li> <li>• Ensuring appropriate provision for taxis within the city centre</li> </ul>	62%	12%	<p>A number of respondents requested the need to improve the cycle infrastructure in the city and expressed the view that public transport needs improvement to offer a suitable alternative to the private car.</p>