



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
Subject:	CITY HALL CAR-PARKING
Date:	19 th June 2014
Reporting Officer:	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management (Ext. 5206/6232)

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Members will be aware that the council currently provides car-parking facilities in the City Hall courtyard for elected members, staff, visitors and users of the building. Currently there are 38 spaces marked out, of which 2 are for registered disabled access, 23 are for specific officers and the remainder are for the use of members and visitors.
1.2	At least an additional 9 members will join the council in the medium term, and in the short term there may be as many as 16 additional members during the period when the 'shadow' arrangements are in force. This being so it will be necessary to increase the parking facilities available for members so far as possible, within the existing physical constraints.
1.3	A number of steps can be taken immediately to improve the situation in the courtyard, most notably:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the number of officers permitted to park in the courtyard from 23 to 13; • the marking-out and bringing into use of up to a further 4 spaces, thus bringing the total available spaces up to a maximum of 42; • the transfer of some officers' spaces from the courtyard to the East; <i>and</i> • minimizing access to the courtyard for BCC and contractors' vans (pick-up & drop-off only).
1.4	These actions could release a significant number of spaces for immediate use and would assist in dealing with any increase in demand following the elections, and the necessary arrangements can be made quite quickly.
1.5	A number of additional factors can sometimes complicate the provision of courtyard parking, including occasional use by ex-members and ex-civic office-bearers or MLAs using the courtyard at various times or party workers and visitors arriving unannounced at the back gate.
1.6	All of this reduces the flexibility to accommodate the required extra members' car-parking in the courtyard and It would obviously be very useful if such arrangements could in future be notified to the Security unit beforehand

1.8	<p><u>Medium-term issues</u></p> <p>It should be noted that car-parking generally is a difficult issue which will require a more considered and consistent approach going forward. In addition to the City Hall courtyard, the council currently provides car-parking in CWB, Adelaide Exchange, Digital Services, Ormeau Avenue and Raphael St/Gasworks. In each case these locations are either completely full or are actually operating beyond their assigned limits, and no new passes/fobs are being issued at this time by Facilities Management to try to contain this problem.</p>
1.9	<p>This situation is only likely to worsen in the coming years, for a variety of reasons including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood that any new leased/built BCC property in the city centre will not have significant underground car-parking and the consequent loss of the 40 spaces in Adelaide Exchange when the lease is surrendered; • additional parking requirements once the Lanyon Place lease is also surrendered; • the increased requirement in the City Hall courtyard; • the potential loss of the East as an overflow area; • the transfer of staff on foot of Local Government Reform and the transfer of functions from central government; • the potential redevelopment of the Raphael St/Gasworks site; <i>and</i> • routine organizational growth.
1.10	<p>Currently there is no corporate, agreed set of criteria governing access to a car-parking space; instead a number of spaces are allocated to each department and departments make their own distributions as they see fit. The Facilities Management Section administers the actual process of issuing and recording fobs and passes etc but is not responsible for the development or implementation of any corporate policy in this regard.</p>
1.11	<p>Given the existing situation and in the light of the further pressures in the pipeline as set out above, it is clear that in the longer term either access to car-parking will have to be restricted on the basis of new criteria or additional capacity (including potentially contracting long-term spaces from NCP or other providers) will have to be considered, or some combination of the two.</p>

2.	Key Issues
2.1	<p>The organisation can make short-term changes to increase parking availability for additional elected members on foot of local government reform and the creation of the new political structures. In this regard, it would also be useful to have an agreed position in respect of the use of the courtyard by former members and office-bearers, MLAs and party workers.</p>
2.2	<p>In the medium term, the key issue is whether or not the Committee believes that a wider review of car-parking across the organization should now be initiated in the light of the issues and concerns set out above. Such a review would need to establish appropriate corporate criteria for access to staff car-parking, create appropriate governance arrangements for the management of car-parking post-LGR and consider the financial implications of any proposed changes.</p>

3.	Resource Implications
	<p>There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.</p>

4.	Recommendations & decision(s)
	<p>The Committee is requested to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) approve the short-term changes set out at 1.3 above in order to facilitate increased member parking in the City Hall courtyard; <i>and</i>b) consider whether it wishes to initiate a wider, corporate review of car-parking at this time or would prefer to return to this topic at a future date.

5.	Decision Tracking
	None.

Key to Abbreviations	
	None.

Documents Attached	
	None.