



Subject:	Car Parking Strategy – Public consultation
Date:	14th June 2017
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	A report to update Members on the outcome of the public consultation on the Council's draft Car Parking Strategy, seek endorsement from elected members on the proposed final strategy and outline next steps for implementation was deferred by Committee in April to allow for further elected member briefings and consideration.
1.2	The strategy makes recommendations relating to Council owned car parks and car parking provision outside our ownership. A key component of the strategy is to facilitate and encourage stakeholders to work together to achieve the vision and objectives. The Council wish to provide a strong civic leadership role for the promotion of a modern, safe, accessible and integrated transportation system for the City of Belfast and its wider region.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the issues raised during the party briefings and proposed response as outlined in Appendix 1:• note the main issues received during the public consultation process and if appropriate agree the Council's proposed response on how it will influence the final

	<p>strategy content; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • endorse the final strategy for publication and note the proposed next steps for the implementation of the action plan.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Public Consultation
3.2	<p>The draft car parking strategy was published for public consultation on the Citizen Space platform from the 30th August 2016 to the 21st November 2016 and received 84 consultation responses with 11 additional responses received outside the Citizen Space platform. A public consultation event was held in City Hall on the 4th October 2016 which was open to elected members, key stakeholders and members of the public and was attended by over 30 representatives.</p>
3.3	<p>The overall response from the public consultation has been supportive of the strategy in particular the strategy objectives and the Council priorities. The consultation requested views on the Council's vision outlined in 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% of respondents agreed with the vision whilst 38% disagreed. 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.</p>
3.4	<p>It is clear that the relationship between parking availability, cost, length of stay and its effect on retail trade is a complicated and emotive one. Evidence from Christmas 2015 suggested that the Council's offer of free car parking increased congestion, reduced accessibility and may have had a negative impact on footfall and retail trade. The Council's decision in 2016 to work with Translink to improve and incentivise public transport as an alternative to free</p>

car parking whilst controversial has proved highly successful with BCCM reporting average sales up by 7.8%, footfall up by 4.8% and Translink reporting ½ million extra passengers travelling into Belfast over the Christmas period.

3.5 There is currently 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 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.

3.6 The public consultation responses showed strong consensus on the following issues:

- the need to introduce residents parking schemes in areas affected by all day commuter parking;
- the proposal for consolidation of 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;
- the setting up of a Parking Forum with a number of groups expressing a willingness to participate in the Forum;
- the need to improve quality, safety and security of car parking provision and to encourage car parking operators to achieve Park Mark standard;
- the need to improve the information on parking availability and use of smart technology; and
- measures to deter all day commuter parking in free car parks at district centres to allow turn over and provision for shoppers.

3.7 A number of areas were highlighted that were missing from the strategy or needed more emphasis:

- the need for close consultation with local communities on any proposals to consolidate surface car parks and develop high capacity provision;
- improved enforcement to prevent parking at bus stops, parking across dropped kerbs, parking on pavements and to prevent potential fraud and misuse of Blue Badges; and
- parking initiatives to promote the evening economy and provision to cater for overnight/weekend visitors to hotels travelling by car.

The response from the Department for Infrastructure is generally supportive of the strategy

3.8	<p>and action plan, however, they would advocate for a clearer message on the need to reduce the supply of long stay commuter car parking in the city to support more efficient and cost effective public transport. They call for a more collaborative working approach on a number of issues which would be welcomed by the Council.</p>								
3.9	<p>Appendix 2 provides further details on the main comments emerging from the public consultation process and our suggested response. Appendix 3 contains the proposed final strategy and action plan. It is proposed an executive summary will be devised for the final version containing a narrative on the purpose of the strategy and a summary of the objectives, priorities and actions.</p>								
3.10	<p>Implementation</p> <p>The City Centre Regeneration & Investment Strategy identified car parking as a major issue for Belfast City Centre and recommended that the Council work with the Department for Infrastructure to develop and implement a strategy for car parking for Belfast. Representatives from Dfi have been involved in the project steering group and the process has involved engagement with a wide range of partners and stakeholders. The strategy has outlined a number of objectives and priorities for action which is dependent on external bodies such as Dfi, Translink and private car operators to deliver. It is proposed the delivery of the action plan will be cross departmental with the City Centre Development Team taking the lead and involvement from the City & Neighbourhood Services department, Planning & Place and Property & Projects.</p> <p>The proposed next steps include:</p>								
3.11	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="274 1361 831 1413">Key next steps</th> <th data-bbox="831 1361 1380 1413">Lead Department</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="274 1413 831 1570">Publication of final Car Parking Strategy and action plan including timeframe for implementation</td> <td data-bbox="831 1413 1380 1570">City & Neighbourhood Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="274 1570 831 1821">Review of Council's off street parking provision to consider issues such as pricing, operation and naming through the internal Parking Order Working Group</td> <td data-bbox="831 1570 1380 1821">City & Neighbourhood Services (currently underway)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="274 1821 831 1968">Establish joint working arrangements with Dfi and consider priorities such as the review of the current city centre car</td> <td data-bbox="831 1821 1380 1968">It is proposed that the governance and delivery will be raised at the Transport Workshop meetings chaired by the Chief</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Key next steps	Lead Department	Publication of final Car Parking Strategy and action plan including timeframe for implementation	City & Neighbourhood Services	Review of Council's off street parking provision to consider issues such as pricing, operation and naming through the internal Parking Order Working Group	City & Neighbourhood Services (currently underway)	Establish joint working arrangements with Dfi and consider priorities such as the review of the current city centre car	It is proposed that the governance and delivery will be raised at the Transport Workshop meetings chaired by the Chief
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3.12	parking provision/location and options to progress the implementation of residents parking schemes	Executive with involvement from elected members, Council officers and senior officials from DfI and Translink.
	<p>Establish the Parking Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree terms of reference and membership; and - agree priorities for action such as improved parking information/smart technology. 	City Centre Development
	Provide guidance to inform the development of the Council's Local Development Plan in terms of transport policy and the review of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan.	Planning & Place / DfI
	<p>Review of Council owned surface car parking provision to consider potential options for consolidation and redevelopment</p> <p>Visioning exercise to establish good design principles in relation to integration of high capacity car parking provision within the urban context</p> <p>Carry out a consultation process with local communities on any proposals to consolidate car parking provision and potential locations and design options</p>	City Centre Development, Property & Projects & Place & Place
	Report to Strategic Policy & Resources Committee to outline resources required for the implementation of the car parking strategy action plan.	City Centre Development & City & Neighbourhood Services
<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Additional resources may be required for the implementation of the car parking strategy. If endorsed the recommendations will have future implications on Council revenue such as the resourcing of a Parking Forum, loss of parking revenue due to the redevelopment of city centre surface car parks, costs of improving car parks, introduction of charging in some</p>		

3.13	<p>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> <p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>Equality and good relations screening was conducted in parallel with the proposed consultation processes.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Summary of issues raised at Party Briefings</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Summary of public consultation responses</p> <p>Appendix 3– Proposed Final Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan</p>