

Report on	Off Street Car Parking Strategy
Reporting Officer	Andrew Cassells, Director of Environment & Property
Contact Officer	Andrew Cassells, Director of Environment & Property

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek the approval of Members in relation to the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for Off Street Car Parking. Members will note that this report was deferred for one month at the March 2018 meeting of the Environment Committee.
2.0	Background
2.1	Members are aware that the Off Street Car Parking function transferred from the then DRD to the 11 District Councils on 1 April 2015. Members will be further aware that this transfer of function was cost neutral i.e.; that the anticipated net income from Off Street Car Parking was reduced ('top sliced') from the Councils grant.
2.2	Mid Ulster District Council operates 23 Off Street Car Parks across the towns and villages of the District as follows; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Castledawson – 1 ➤ Clogher - 1 ➤ Coalisland - 2 ➤ Cookstown - 4 ➤ Dungannon - 5 ➤ Fivemiletown - 2 ➤ Maghera - 2 ➤ Magherafelt – 6
2.3	There are a mixture of free and charged car parks throughout the District with free parking in the majority i.e.; 1,293 free parking spaces and 703 charged spaces. Of the above Off Street Car Parks only seven car parks are currently charged; three in Magherafelt and four in Dungannon.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The main objective of the Car Parking Strategy (Option 4) is to facilitate accessibility to the retail core of the three main town centres in Mid Ulster; Dungannon, Magherafelt and Cookstown.
3.2	Reasonable charging is a mechanism to deliver this objective in that it will dis-incentivise long stay and all day parking in the prime locations; i.e. those closest to the retail cores of the three town centres and as a consequence ensure a turnover of spaces for shoppers.

3.3 There is no intention to uplift the current standard tariff of 40p per hour which has been held at his level for the last six years.

3.4 The main areas of contention within Option 4 appear to be the proposed introduction of charges in Cookstown at Burn Road and Union Place; Orritor Street and Loy Street would remain free.

3.5 **Points to note:**

- Car Parking in Cookstown is not at capacity; there are enough spaces
- Burn Road and Union Place are the closest car parks to William Street and the retail core
- Burn Road and Union Place are generally filled with long stay and all day car parkers.
- Parking charges would be introduced, in Cookstown, on the basis of Pay on Foot not Pay and Display; this has the advantage of not requiring Traffic Attendants for enforcement on the basis of failure to display a valid parking ticket.
- Pay on Foot ensures that users only pay for what they use.
- There can be no transfer of tickets with Pay on Foot
- Promotional Offers (such as the first two hours free) can be facilitated with Pay on Foot; this is not the case with Pay and Display.
- Burn Road is ideally suited to Pay on Foot and will require very little 'civils' work.
- Orritor Street and Loy Street can still accommodate long stay and all day parkers at no charge.
- Private charged car parking already exists in Cookstown, and Magherafelt
- Any additional income can be reinvested back into the Off Street Car Parks budget; this could include for example winter maintenance.
- The Net Budgeted Income from Off Street Car parking for 2017/2018 is £188,800.

3.6 **Pay on Foot Installation/Conversion Programme**

- Burn Road, Cookstown 2018/19
- Union Place, Cookstown 2018/19
- Central, Magherafelt 2018/19
- Union Road, Magherafelt 2019/20
- Scotch Street, Dungannon 2019/20
- Rainey Street, Magherafelt 2019/20
- Castle Hill, Dungannon Future development

3.7 **Option 4: Proposed changes;**

- Burn Road, Cookstown: Introduction of Pay on Foot
- Union Place, Cookstown: Introduction of Pay on Foot
- Orritor Street: No change
- Loy Street: No change
- Perry Street, Dungannon; conversion of free spaces to charged spaces but retention of Pay and Display
- Scotch Street, Dungannon; Move to Pay on Foot: retention of free spaces

- Castle Hill, Dungannon: No changes planned
- Anne Street East, Dungannon; No changes
- Anne Street West, Dungannon: included in Anne Street development site
- Central, Magherafelt; fully Pay on Foot at the standard tariff level
- Rainey Street, Magherafelt fully Pay on Foot
- Union Road, Magherafelt; reconfiguration to accommodate Pay on Foot, potential loss of some free spaces and an increase in the number of disabled spaces in the remaining Pay & Display section.

3.8

Consultation

Prior to the opening of the Public Consultation presentations were given to each of the three Town centre Forums.

3.9

Consultation Responses

The Public Consultation was open for a 12 week period from 06 October 2017 to 29 December 2017. Every Household in the District was made aware of the Consultation. A Consultation Response Questionnaire was provided online for responses. The Consultation was also publicly advertised and received substantial exposure in the local press.

Public Information Sessions were held as follows:

Cookstown, Burnavon: 27 November 2017
 Dungannon, Ranfurly House: 5 December 2017
 Magherafelt, Council Offices: 12 December 2017

A separate Information Session was held with the Cookstown Chamber of Trade on 29 November 2107 at the Burnavon following a specific request. Each of the sessions was led by Aecom and attended by Council Officers. Two of the sessions (Dungannon & Magherafelt) were dominated by one or two individuals aligned with the campaign for 'Free Parking' within Mid Ulster.

3.10

Campaign for Free Parking Petition

A petition for Free Parking across all Council Off Street Car Parks was received on 14 December 2017 with a covering letter from a Mr Harry Hutchinson purported to be signed by 3,461 individuals from across the District.

3.11

Questionnaire Responses

A total of five questionnaires (6.6 refers) were received (three electronically and two by post); not all of the questions were responded to by all of respondents.

A summary of the responses is provided below;

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	2			1	2	5
2		1	3		1	5
4		1		1	2	4

5		1	2		2	5
6	1	1	1		1	4
7a	2	1		1		4
7b		1		1	2	4
7c	1			1	2	4
7d	1	1			2	4
8a	2	1			1	4
8b	1			1	2	4
8c	1	1			2	4
8d	1	1			2	4
9a	1	1			2	4
9b				1	3	4
9c		1			3	4
9d		1			3	4
10	2	1			1	4
11	1	2		1		4
Totals	16	16	6	8	33	79

Question 3 sought views on a range of attributes; these have been summarised for all of the respondents in the table below:

Criteria	Importance
Car Park Layout	5
Parking Space Size	1
Maintained and cleaned	1
Safety including adequate lighting	4
Approach Signage adequate	9
Internal Signage adequate	6
Payment System is easy to use	1
Pay on Foot Operation	7
Cashless parking promoted	7

Three attributes or criteria scored equally in terms of high importance; these were:

- Easy to use payment system
- Parking Space Size
- Well maintained and clean car parks

Safety and Layout were not far behind the top three whilst the remainder of Internal Signage, Pay on Foot Operation and Cashless Parking were not deemed to be as important.

The least important criteria was that of Adequate Approach Signage which is probably not that surprising as all of the responders were probably familiar with the car park locations and were not visitors to the district.

With such a small number of responses, which wouldn't be deemed statistically significant it is difficult to draw many conclusions although the respondents in the main do

<p>3.12</p>	<p>appear to be in two fairly evenly distributed ‘camps’; those who agreed and those who disagreed.</p> <p>A representative sample of some of the comments included within the questionnaire responses are given below:</p> <p>“My overview is that parking should be completely free or completely charged through a pay on foot system. Any system should completely do away with the opportunity for abusive and discriminatory behaviour by NSL TAs. They have done untold damage to Magherafelt and Dungannon town Centres for years and Cookstown has benefited commercially from TNI and Mid Ulster Councils decision to continue the discrimination to now. I welcome this consultation but as said before I very much doubt that this council have the guts to impose an equal policy on Cookstown traders. I have no doubt that while the fight to implement some future policy that Magherafelt and Dungannon traders and shoppers will be shouldering the extraction of revenue into council coffers which is what THIS PROPOSAL IS REALLY ALL ABOUT.”</p> <p>“Free car Parking is better for business”</p> <p>“The free car parking model is working well for Cookstown and it is a vibrant shopping town“</p> <p>“I would prefer to have a system were town centre car parks are free for 2-3 hours and then charged after that. This will have the effect of encouraging more people into towns to shop. Further out car parks should be free all day.”</p>
<p>3.13</p>	<p>“Not enough (spaces) for the disabled.”</p> <p>Summary of Main Issues</p> <p>On the basis of both the public information sessions and the responses received the following are the main issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ General acceptance that there is an issue with all day parkers taking up spaces in town centre car parks; however there was no universal view on how this situation could be alleviated ➤ A view, not universally shared, that free car parking will attract shoppers and visitors into town centres and that this was a selling point ➤ A view that the lack of charging in Cookstown was perceived as an inequality for Dungannon and Magherafelt; that charging should be applied equally in all three towns or none
<p>3.14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A misconception that the Council actually “profits” from off street car parking
<p>3.15</p>	<p>The Council had formally approved the Public Consultation on the basis of Option 4 as set out in the Aecom Report and as summarised in the Environment Committee Report of 3 July 2017 (as attached).</p> <p>Following the Public Consultation it is recommended that Option 4 is implemented as detailed at 3.6 above with the following caveats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ That where an off street car park is changed from having no charges to being a charged car park operated under the Pay on Foot model that the first two hours

3.16	<p>are free for an initial period of one year, subject to review. (The £1 for three hours tariff would not operate in Pay on Foot Car Parks during this period)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ That the proportion of free to charged spaces within the Council operated Off Street Car Parks in the three main towns is maintained at broadly similar levels for each town. <p>Parking Usage and Duration Surveys – February 2018</p> <p>The attached (6.7) Technical Note prepared by Aecom includes information on the three sets of Usage Surveys carried out in September 2016, February 2017 and latterly February 2018 across the Council operated Off Street Car Parks in the three main town centres.</p> <p>Summary of Results:</p> <p>Dungannon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Static Levels of demand on the charged sites and increasing demand for the free sites ➤ Overall demand has increased ➤ Occupancy of the free car parks has increased: now considered to be at capacity ➤ Marginally increase in long stay parking in charged sites ➤ Noticeable increase in long stay parking in free sites ➤ c65% of capacity is taken up ➤ Long stay parking represents two thirds of demand; up 15% ➤ 38% of total spaces used for long stay <p>Cookstown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Generally static levels of demand: 75-80% of capacity ➤ Slight drop in overall demand between Feb 2017 and Feb 2018 ➤ Proportion of long stay increased from 60% to nearly 70% ➤ 47% of total spaces used for long stay <p>Magherafelt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Generally static levels of demand taking up 60% of available capacity ➤ Slight drop in overall demand between Feb 2017 and Feb 2018 ➤ Long stay parking constant at 40-50% of overall demand ➤ 24% of total spaces used for long stay
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial & Human Resources Implications</p> <p>Financial: In the first instance it is anticipated that any additional income from the introduction of Pay on Foot as the preferred modus operandii will be used to service the capital cost of the conversion from Pay and Display to Pay on Foot. Members will appreciate that now the Revenue Estimates have been set that this inhibits the ability to reduce the net income from Car Parking without impacting on other services. In fact the Revenue Estimates includes an uplift in the net Car Parking Budget of some £60,000 for 2018/2019. This estimate is based on an additional £20k from aligning the charges at the Central Car Park in Magherafelt, an additional £10k from revamping the £1 for 5 hours tariff to £1 for 3 hours for the Pay & Display and an additional net £30k from the introduction of charges into Cookstown.</p>

	Human: Significant Officer time in the implementation of the Strategy an associated Action Plan
4.2	Equality and Good Relations Implications The introduction of Car Parking charges to Cookstown would provide equity across the three main towns in Mid Ulster. Increasing the number of disabled spaces within the Council controlled Off Street Car Parks will assist in meeting the objectives of Development Control Advice Note (DCAN) 11 "Access for All".
4.3	Risk Management Implications The main risks associated with the implementation of the Off Street Car parking Strategy are associated with realising the potential of our Towns and Villages by improving accessibility for residents and visitors. A secondary risk would be whether the Council's Revenue Budget aspirations will be realised as noted.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Committee recommends to Council that Option 4 as set out in the Mid Ulster Parking Strategy be adopted and that the proposed changes as detailed in 3.7 are progressed in line with the Pay on Foot implementation programme as detailed at 3.8.
5.2	That in line with 5.1 above the Committee recommends to Council that where an Off Street Car Park is changed from having no charges applied to being a charged car park operated under the Pay on Foot model that the first two hours are free for an initial period of one year, subject to review.
5.3	That the Off Street Car Parking Administrative Order is duly amended in line with Recommendation 5.1 and the detail contained within this report and subsequently referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for adoption.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Mid Ulster Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan; Report by AECOM (attached) Background Reports
6.2	Report to Environment Committee 11 October 2016
6.3	Report to Environment Committee 8 November 2016
6.4	Report to Environment Committee 14 February 2017
6.5	Report to Environment Committee 3 July 2017 (attached)
6.6	Consultation Response Questionnaire (attached)
6.7	Parking Usage and Duration Surveys – February 2018 (attached)

