RESIDENTS PARKING PROPOSALS

South Belfast Partnership Board

February 2018
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Response to Belfast City Council Draft Parking Plan
1.1 Background

The South Belfast Partnership Board has been engaging with representatives from a number of concerned residents group from areas in south Belfast including: Donegall Rd, Sandy Row, Lower Lisburn Rd, Lower Malone, Stranmillis, Wider University Area, Lower Ormeau Rd, Donegall Pass, and the Market area to discuss and find solutions to parking issues which are affecting local residents throughout these areas on a daily basis.

South Belfast Partnership Board has since 2008 been committed to delivering its Strategic Regeneration Framework for South Belfast (2008) which supports the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP). It aims to deliver a wide-ranging set of proposals which will respond to the transport issues facing Belfast. Recently, in the preparations for the Local Development Plan for Belfast and the Car Parking Strategy for Belfast, South Belfast Partnership Board has driven the discussions and consultation events in South Belfast. It's mission is to empower our communities to bring about positive change, and to step up and step forward to address community need. As a shared voice, apolitical in its message it represents the needs of all communities in South Belfast.

The core principles of sustainability and integration that underpin the BMTP’s proposals apply equally to all the District Council areas in the Belfast Metropolitan Area. The key principles applied are summarised as:

- Reducing the impact of traffic and assisting the free flow of traffic;
- Improving public transport;
- Managing future travel demand;
- Increasing the priority given to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
- Improving pedestrian and cycle linkages through the urban centre;
- Improving road safety; and,
- Supporting development proposals and urban regeneration and renaissance initiatives.

At a local level, the Botanic Masterplan recognises the transportation issues facing the core of South Belfast and aligns with the proposals set out within the BMTP and by supporting these two key documents, the SRF can underpin the wider sustainable transport agenda by addressing specific local issues.

Specifically, South Belfast Partnership Board advocates the development of a parking strategy that considers demand and supply and takes account of the importance of on street parking in some locations, the impact of the loss of parking on temporary sites, the issues relating to HMO’s and the need to ensure free flow of traffic, particularly buses and access for emergency vehicles.

1.2 Timeline

To progress these plans the South Belfast Partnership Board undertook a programme of work which included:
1.2.1 The current phase of these consultations involved South Belfast Partnership Board and Urban Villages facilitating a workshop to assist groups supported by Urban Villages to respond to the draft Belfast City Council Car Parking Strategy which commenced in July 2016.

1.2.2 The Draft Car Parking Strategy consultation closed in November 2016 with individual groups and South Belfast Partnership having submitted responses.

1.2.3 In February 2017 Urban Villages Car Parking Group met with representatives from Lennoxvale and Holylands to discuss common issues.

1.2.4 Community stakeholders from all inner South Belfast communities met in February 2017 to discuss common issues.

1.2.5 At a meeting of stakeholders in August 2017 stakeholders agreed to present a joint paper to the Urban Villages team who agreed to present to The Executive Office as a cross cutting project.

1.2.6 Stakeholder meeting was facilitated on 13th February 2018 to agree on the content of a submission to be presented to Urban Villages.

1.2.7 In February 2017 the stakeholders met again facilitated by the South Belfast Partnership Board to discuss the issues which were impacting on them and the following comments were recorded:

- **Holylands** pilot project in operation (see case study below)

- **Lower Malone** Residents Group are still negotiating their case for a pilot with the Minister. Concerns include:
  
  Roads NI have no criteria for their assessment.
  Office staff are the main objectors to the proposed scheme
  Despite an overwhelming majority of residents giving support (95%) the proposal will not be implemented
  A pay-and-display scheme has been suggested but never offered as an option.

- **Stranmillis**: The main issue was the lack of consultation with residents due to objections from local business owners

- **Lower Ormeau** area: Concerns included:
  
  Difficulties around multiple cars per address.
  A residents parking scheme is not feasible.
  It has become a safety issue for children.
  A new one-way system is causing problems
  Applied for pilot but was turned down.
Donegall Pass: A consultation took place during Christmas 2016 but there were not enough resources available to provide a comprehensive consultation, concerns included:

- Department for Regional Development failing to understand the practicalities around the proposed scheme
- Pakenham Street was suggested to DRD as a pilot with a different scheme for the Holylands
- Community apathy due to failure of Government to address the situation
- Continued pressure on the area with the impending addition of new homes being built in the area
- The situation causing access problems for emergency vehicles

Donegall Road: Parking by employees at City Hospital and parking at Windsor Park football ground were identified as the main issues.

- PSNI request residents remove their cars due to access issues, yet visitor parking is not dealt with.
- No application has been made for a parking scheme in the area

Sandy Row: The situation in Sandy Row has been ongoing for over ten years with residents experiencing many of the issues experienced in other areas

- PSNI have leafleted the area, and they are willing to come out and ticket cars parked on curbs.
- No confidence amongst residents that the situation will change.
- The problem is further exasperated by residents who sell their parking spaces.

2. Current Operational Pilot Project

Residents in Inner South Belfast have long raised concerns over parking in their local area and the challenges faced in securing parking outside or near their homes have been growing over the last few years.

With many commuters parking in the area and an increase in houses of multiple occupation, the struggle for residents’ parking has become more acute.

Over the last few years, there have been valiant community led attempts to secure residents’ only parking in the Market and Donegall Pass areas of Belfast; all of which met with obstacles thwarting development of these initiatives.

3.1 College Park / Holylands Pilot Scheme

Initial meeting to discuss residents’ only parking began over 15 years ago, but it is felt that this scheme didn’t receive major support until the Minister for the Department for Regional Development visited the area and saw first-hand that it was indeed a residential area, with no available parking for residents near their homes.
Before DRD involvement and the implementation of this current pilot scheme, residents had to present evidence of community need, draw up plans for the proposed scheme and negotiate with a range of stakeholders.

Following extensive public consultation and the consideration of objections to the scheme the Department for Infrastructure commissioned a door to door survey and the distribution of information about the proposed scheme.

A Residents Parking Group was then established in the Holyland area with representatives from the various Residents Associations to ensure that information was fed back to the residents at every stage of the process plans.

In November 2017, a residents’ only parking scheme for part of the Holyland area in South Belfast was given the go ahead by the Infrastructure Minister, Chris Hazzard.

This pilot has a mixture of parking spaces plus metered parking. The proposal for the pilot suggested a mixture of parking spaces plus metered parking with 117 parking spaces for residents and 127 pay and display spaces for non-residents.

In addition, short stay parking spaces on Rugby Road and a loading bay in Carmel Street will facilitate local businesses and requests for disabled parking bays will made available throughout the area.

This form of residents parking may not suit all areas in Belfast due to the following conditions:

- Need to consider the size requirements for parking bays and road widths
- Only one car parking space per household with a number plate assigned to that space
- The cost of the parking for each household is £30 per year
- Need to consider if traffic management may be a better option for some areas

In conclusion the College Park Residents Association (CPARA) who were the people driving the process made the following comments on the implementation of the pilot parking scheme:

- The process can be quite challenging for the residents
- There is no blueprint for success
- All stakeholders need to be consulted
- Review of the objections process needs to be reviewed.
- Full community support is required if the proposal is to be successful

3. Proposed Local Area Plans
3.1 Lower Ormeau

The Lower Ormeau Residents Association met with the DRD Roads Service in March 2017 to discuss local concerns and develop conversations around the introduction of a bespoke pilot scheme for the Lower Ormeau area.

The meeting confirmed that Road Service were prepared to consider residents request for “resident only parking schemes” in the area and proposed the following points for consideration by the stakeholders:

Informal consultation to involve all residents in the area with a response rate of at least 33% of which 66% must be in support of the proposals.

Formal consultation will involve a greater range of stakeholders (residents, business community, schools, wider community) and will require the facilitation of an independent consultancy and media interventions.

Residents parking scheme can be developed for each area following road surveys and identification of parking trends.

Residents parking will not mean that only a resident will get to park at the frontage of their home. A set number of passes would be issued to a street.

Households with two cars will only be offered a second pass if passes remain following the first round of issuing.

As the Lower Ormeau is a neighbourhood renewal area as such the first pass and 20 short stay passes will be issued free per year.

The scheme operating times can be set by residents.

The scheme would involve substantial road painting and on street signage.

Possible outcome for Hatfield, Farnham and Rutland is that as a result of parking bays painted on the road for allocation of parking spaces this could mean that one side of the street only could be designated for parking with the opposite side becoming no parking in order to allow the free flow of traffic.

Reduced parking spaces would be issued on a first come first served basis.

Lavinia, Powerscourt, Essex and Cooke Street households would not be considered for permits as houses have driveways and so do not required on street parking. Car parking spaces within these areas are very limited which raises the question of what measures could be introduced to recoup costs for the implementation of the scheme.

Possible streets for consideration would be Shaftesbury, Cooke Place, Cooke Court and Mews, River Terrace and Lower Balfour

3.2 Residents Parking Scheme – Market area

Each household is to be allocated two (x2) hologram badges displaying a serial number registered to that particular household. One (x1) badge will be specific to a
vehicle registered to that address; One (x1) badge will be a transferrable visitors pass to facilitate family, friends etc.

A single yellow line is to be marked along Stewart Street to Hong Ling Gardens in McAuley Street to eliminate commuter parking along the road.

A Pay & Display system should be put in place in Stewart Street from the entrance at East Bridge Street to the entrance of Friendly Street.

The area will be monitored and controlled by DRD Traffic Wardens regularly in the morning, afternoon and evening for six weeks. Traffic Wardens will keep an electronic record of all cars parked illegally and will be able to detect commuters parking regularly at particular households. This process will eliminate commuter parking at the outset and will highlight any cases of the system being abused for a profit. This can be detected if vehicles are parked for long periods at a time and yet are registered at an address outside the area.

There will be a ban on all vehicles parked which do not display either a badge with a serial number or a Pay & Display ticket in the designated area between the hours of 5am-7pm Monday to Thursday. On Market Days, vehicles can be parked in the area between the hours of 6am-3pm without being ticketed, however after 3pm vehicles must display either a Pay & Display ticket or a badge with a registered serial number.

The Markets Community Centre will be allocated 15 permits for staff and visitors parking in Market Street. These permits will be registered to the Community Centre and can be transferred between vehicles.

Households undergoing construction or maintenance should make DRD aware in advance of any work being carried out at the address and of the registration of any
construction/trade vehicle when possible. These regulations will not affect emergency services or medical vehicles.

A signed agreement between the relevant parties which permits traffic wardens to ticket cars parked on NIHE and NIE land

4.0 Government & Ministerial Response

In November 2016 Christopher Stalford MLA raised the issue of parking in South Belfast with the then Minister for Infrastructure Chris Hazzard. His responses to the issues included:

“The policy for the introduction of residents’ parking schemes was introduced in 2007 by the then Department for Regional Development. Since that time, despite considerable effort, no schemes have been implemented, due largely to a lack of local support from the residents concerned”.

“I can confirm that my Department is actively working towards introducing residents’ parking schemes. As you may be aware, earlier this year I announced the start of a consultation period with residents in the Rossville Street area of Derry for a residents’ parking scheme and my Department has proposals for schemes in the lower Malone and College Park Avenue/Rugby Road areas of Belfast”

The Department is developing residents’ parking schemes in Derry and Antrim as well as the two Belfast schemes in the College Park Avenue/Rugby Road area and lower Malone area and the Minister outlined his Department plans for future development.

“In line with the current budgetary constraints faced by all Departments, those schemes will generally have to be introduced on a full cost-recovery basis that will require a charge to be levied for a parking permit”.

The exception to that is any scheme lying either wholly or partially in a Neighbourhood Renewal area, which will be exempt from the permit charge.

Where there is a charge levied, that has been set at £30 per resident's permit and is intended to cover the cost of the scheme design and the enforcement needed to stop others from outside the area parking there.

5. Recommendations

Following the discussions which took place in February 2018 the representatives agreed that to take this proposal forward the following actions should be considered:

5.1.1 Evaluation on the impact of the pilot schemes such as the College Park and L'Derry Schemes be disseminated amongst the stakeholders to decide on the best way forward for each individual area.
5.1.2 Department for Infrastructure need to look at existing residents parking schemes such as those delivered by Liverpool Council in order to develop appropriate policy for Belfast.

5.1.3 An urgent review of legislation needs to take place to take into account the current issues which impede the introduction of projects which will be of benefit to residents:

- Objections to local solutions
- Lack of public transport strategy for Belfast

5.1.4 Discussion and clarification around enforceability within schemes and who is responsible

5.1.5 Need for increased community and residents support for pilot schemes

4.1.6 Need for political support for a collective response to the parking issue throughout Belfast

5.1.7 Need to discuss the issues raised in the submission to Belfast City Council Draft Parking Plan (see Appendix a)

5.1.8 Objections can be submitted by non-residents who are not affected by the proposals, but which can hold up the process or in some cases defer the scheme altogether, it was felt this process requires urgent review

5.1.9 Need to inform residents at every stage of the process.

Appendix A – South Belfast Partnership Board response to Belfast City Council Draft Parking Plan

Timing / phasing needs to be highlighted under the issues and challenges in the baseline. What is Belfast City Council's role in terms of leadership? How will it assist, and is there any funding attached? When and how are BCC working with DfI and residents to consider the resident parking schemes and on-street parking scheme for businesses? How does BCC influence the enforcement? Why are other public-sector surface car parks, e.g. along Bankmore St and Gasworks unidentified? Also, the Multi-storey carpark in Gasworks is not included. What criteria will be used to identify the right sites for Multi-storey carparks? Will there be consultations on this matter? How is traffic flow, air quality and visual aesthetics taken in consideration? Why not prioritise additional Park n Ride sites so that the schemes can properly prevent cars coming into city centre?
We have serious concerns around a number of issues around sustainability: Public transport is good on arterial routes but there is very little service on cross-town and inter-linking routes, forcing people to use cars rather than public transport. Bicycle scheme could fill the gap between park n ride schemes and city centre, so that residents closer to the city centre would have the opportunity to use the bicycle scheme instead of private cars.

If cycling is going to be taken seriously as a sustainable mode of travel proper cycle lanes on all roads must be put in place to make it safe and practical, hence attractive. Cycling is also currently not attractive because of heavy air pollution. How and when will Belfast City Council work with stakeholders to deliver? What will they be delivering and when?

How and when will BCC work with DfI and communities because phasing is crucial? Is any funding and enforcement in place? What are the criteria for consolidating the carparks? If there is regeneration of sites what are the opportunities for jobs and training? We are very concerned that there appears to be only one action coming from this objective! 4 To what extent do you agree or disagree with objective four and its associated priorities

**Strategy**

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the key features of the strategy?*
Neither agree nor disagree

*If you disagree with the key features of the strategy or have any comments or suggestions for improvement please provide more details here:*

We agree in principal, but a number of crucial questions must be answered:
What is the timescale for on-street parking?
How will BCC enforce green travel plans?
How will BCC enforce parking restraints?
How will BCC influence the price in private carparks?
How will BCC work with relevant agencies and is any funding and resourced to deliver this in place?

Furthermore, we suggest that:
- BCC should promote long-stay parking further outside the city centre at existing and additional park n ride sites.
- A better balance between parking costs and public transport costs.
- The phasing should be the first part of the strategy. The areas that should be considered are the Core Areas and South Fringe.

**Strategy Actions**

1 *Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions for on-street provision?*
Neither agree nor disagree
If you disagree with the actions or have any specific comments or suggestions for improvement, please provide more details here:

We believe phasing is critical. Resident parking must be implemented first for the Core and South Fringe areas. Short-term on-street parking is also appropriate for local businesses. What will the timing be for the parking studies referred to for the Fringe areas, and who will be carrying out and resourcing the studies? In reference to improving revenue raising, could funds be ring-fenced for residents parking?

Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the actions for off-street provision (public parking and parking for development)?
Neither agree nor disagree

If you disagree with the actions or have any specific comments or suggestions for improvement, please provide more details here:

Careful consideration must be given to the location of the multi-storey carparks, and also how is traffic flow, air quality and visual aesthetics taken in consideration? Enforcement of planning for the green travel plans is crucial.

Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the specific actions for off-street provision - Belfast City Council owned sites?
Neither agree nor disagree

If you disagree with the actions or have any specific comments or suggestions for improvement, please provide more details here:

Please refer to previous comments re phasing. What is BCC's role in working with DfI and landowners as stakeholders?

Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the specific actions for parking in residential areas?
Neither agree nor disagree

If you disagree with the actions or have any specific comments or suggestions for improvement, please provide more details here:

We are concerned that there is only one action under such an important part of the strategy, especially considering that all the other actions negatively impact on residential areas. How will BCC support DfI and local residents, and what further work will they be working on to assist and to achieve consensus? And again, phasing is crucial in Core and South Fringe areas. Does BCC have any funding and/or resource to support this work and future enforcement?

Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the specific actions for parking information?
Neither agree nor disagree
If you disagree with the actions or have any specific comments or suggestions for improvement, please provide more details here:
Can BCC ensure that routes through residential areas are not encouraged?

**Overall to what extent do you agree or disagree with the complementary actions?**
Neither agree nor disagree

If you disagree with the actions or have any specific comments or suggestions for improvement, please provide more details here:

We believe that the Belfast bicycle scheme could fill the gap between park n ride schemes and city centre, so that residents closer to the city centre would have the opportunity to use the bicycle scheme instead of private cars.
Has a coach park been identified? If, so under what criteria? Who's responsible?