

A PARKING STRATEGY FOR LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 For some time, the City Council has been aware that a comprehensive approach to parking management could improve the service provided directly to customers while meeting the wider public needs of sustainability and amenity.
- 1.2 The City Council's Transport Task Group carried out the first comprehensive review of parking in 2003/04. The outcome of the review was approved by Cabinet in March 2004, and resulted in a number of new initiatives being implemented e.g. permission for resident permit holders in Lancaster city centre to park in pay and display spaces before 1000 and after 1600 and all day Sunday at no extra charge.
- 1.3 The City Council's Corporate Plan now includes an undertaking to prepare a Parking Strategy for the district, and to review it annually. The Strategy brings together all aspects of parking management in a single document and provides an action plan.
- 1.4 The Strategy considers parking supply and demand, both on-street and off-street, parking controls used in the district and how the controls are enforced.
- 1.5 The County Council terminated the Lancashire Highways Partnership on 30 June 2006. This resulted in all highway service provision being centralised, with the exception of the local management of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement. The transfer of staff and expertise to the County Council has had an adverse effect on this parking strategy and the City Council may not be in a position to deliver some of the proposals contained in the strategy and the action plan.
- 1.6 It is noted tourism is important to the District and of the 4 million visitors to the area each year, 80% of those arrive by car, with the traditional Summer months the busiest time and Spring and Autumn seeing sustained increases in visitor numbers.

2.0 Policy Context

2.1 Lancaster District Local Plan and LDF Core Strategy

- 2.1.1 The Lancaster District Local Plan was formally adopted in April 2004. It sets out the City Council's policies for the development and use of land. It is based on the assumption that the promotion of public transport, walking and cycling, coupled with appropriate demand management measures, will gradually persuade people to use their cars less, particularly for local journeys within the main urban area. It recognises, however, that because the District covers a wide rural area, travel by car will remain important and many residents will continue to need a car for daily journeys. The Plan seeks to manage the availability of car parking spaces to promote a reduction in the reliance on the car, whilst recognising the need for parking to support the district's position as an important shopping and tourist destination. The policies in the Local Plan aim to achieve this by:

- Maintaining the overall supply of car parking spaces.
- Shifting the balance of use from long stay to short stay in central Lancaster and in Morecambe taking due regard to tourism opportunities within the area.
- Progressively introducing residents parking schemes.
- Improving the provision of coach dropping off points and parking facilities.
- Applying maximum parking standards for new developments.
- Examining the case for park and ride facilities at a number of sites.
- Carefully controlling the provision of on-site visitor parking facilities in rural areas.

In September 2007, most Local Plans policies were “saved” until replaced by LDF documents (see below). The Local Plan, therefore, remains a relevant background document for this strategy.

2.1.2 The Council has prepared a number of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes. Some Guidance strengthens policy issues in relation to specific areas – for example:

- SPG6 – Lancaster City Centre Strategy
- SPG11 – Morecambe Town Centre Strategy

Other Guidance relates to the redevelopment of land which contains car parking and seeks to preserve the provision – for example:

- SPG3 – Kingsway Development Brief
- SPG8 – Canal Corridor North Development Brief
- SPG9 – Canal Corridor South Development Brief
- SPG17 – Morecambe Central Promenade Development Brief

This strategy recognises the policies and constraints imposed by the Guidance.

2.1.3 The Local Plan is being progressively replaced by new Local Development Framework (LDF) documents. The first of these, the Lancaster District Core Strategy, was adopted by the Council in July 2008. The Core Strategy sets out guiding principles for spatial planning in the District and will be complemented by more detailed documents dealing with land allocations and development policies.

The Core Strategy carries forward the Local Plan’s approach to car parking and commits the Council to integrating the provision and management of parking and park and ride in Lancaster and Morecambe and managing parking (including disabled parking) in association with development. (Policy E2).

The Parking Strategy is, therefore, an important element in implementing this aspect of the Core Strategy.

2.2 Joint Lancashire Structure Plan

- 2.2.1 The Structure Plan proposes that the provision of car parking in town centres will not be increased and may be reduced by controls on the location, type and duration of car parking. Preference will be given to short stay parking in town centres by measures including the introduction of on-street parking charges and consideration of the needs of residents.
- 2.2.2 The supply of long stay commuter and private non-residential parking will be progressively reduced in Lancaster. In other town centres, the provision of additional long stay commuter parking and private non-residential parking will be resisted.
- 2.2.3 The Joint Lancashire Structure Plan, adopted in March 2005, includes detailed guidance on the parking standards for new developments. These have been included in the Lancaster District Local Plan.

2.3 Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

- 2.3.1 The Local Transport Plan sets out a number of measures to support the policies sets out in the planning documents. These include:
- Introduce further residents parking schemes
 - Gradually reduce uncontrolled parking provision
 - Introduce further on-street parking charges
 - Reduce long stay parking provision in town centres
 - Manage parking availability and cost to encourage efficient travel and maintain commercial prosperity
 - Introduce Park and Ride operations on the busiest corridors

2.4 National and Regional Planning Guidance

- 2.4.1. The Government set out its policy for the future of transport in the White Paper "A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone". Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) provides the national framework for parking issues. It recommends that:
- Local authorities should adopt parking measures to complement land use policies.
 - Car parking charges should be used to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport.
 - Local authorities should set out appropriate levels and charges for parking which do not undermine the vitality of other town centres.
 - Controls over public parking (both on-street and off-street) need to be backed up by adequate enforcement measures.
- 2.4.2 Regional Planning Guidance 13 (RPG13) interprets national policy for the North West Region and sets out how these policies must be implemented through local transport plans and other relevant regional strategies and development plans.

The policies set out at this level can be summarised as:

- Develop a co-ordinated approach to the use of parking charges, enforcement and provision as a demand management tool in support of wider planning and transport objectives.
- Well designed and conceived Park and Ride schemes.
- Introduce maximum parking standards.
- Supply and pricing policies to assist the reduction in commuter parking and encourage the use of public transport.
- Use of on-street parking controls to encourage greater use of alternative modes.

2.5 Parking Hierarchy

2.5.1 In 2003, the City Council's Cabinet resolved to consider parking priorities strategically in order to establish a clear parking hierarchy as follows:

- Residents
- Visitors, shoppers and local business needs
- Commuters

However, since this hierarchy was established, it is now clear that shoppers and local business needs are crucial to the local economy and their status is now viewed as approaching equal first within the hierarchy with commuters being the last priority.

2.6 Lancaster Corporate Plan 2008 - 2009

2.6.1 The Corporate Plan has a number of medium term objectives, including to lead the regeneration of the District with a priority outcome of improving economic prosperity throughout the Lancaster District. Parking is an important supporting element of this regeneration with the provision of improved parking provision for residents, shoppers, visitors and local businesses being of crucial importance.

2.7 This Strategy seeks to reflect the work undertaken by the Transport Task Group and identifies the key issues and sets out some aims and methods by which they may be achieved.

3.0 Parking Stock

3.1 Details of the current stock of off-street parking spaces is given in the table below:

Settlement	Charged		Free	City Council Permit	Total	
	Council					
	S/S	L/S				
Lancaster	777	459	810	1281	53	3380
Morecambe	429	1172	472	818	30	2921
Carnforth	0	0	82	318	0	400
Heysham	0	176	0	24	0	200
Totals	1206	1807	1364	2441	83	6901

- 3.2 All City Council car parks operate on a pay and display control system. Charges are reviewed annually and increased in accordance with the Council's financial policies and demand management objectives.
- 3.3 Annual parking permits are available to residents and businesses and these can be used on a number of specific car parks. A limited number of space specific permits are also available for use by residents and businesses.
- 3.4 There are a number of privately operated car parks in Lancaster and in Morecambe. The City Council has sought to ensure that the charges at some of these car parks are comparable with those at the Council's own car parks.
- 3.5 In order to reduce the adverse effects of on-street commuter parking in residential areas adjacent to the centres of Lancaster and Morecambe, a programme of implementation of residents' parking scheme has been developed. A particular case is around Lancaster Station, as displacement to surrounding streets of commuter parking is occurring. This is due to the charges for parking imposed at the station which has spare capacity daily.
- 3.6 On-street parking charges are set at a level to encourage the use of off-street car parks. The City Council works closely with the County Council to ensure that the differential in the level of on- and off-street charges is maintained.

4.0 Key Issues

4.1 Future levels of Parking Stock

- 4.1.1 It is likely that a number of the existing surface car parks will be identified for development over the next few years. Local Plan policies (T13 and T19) state that such development will only be approved if the level of shopper/visitor parking is not adversely affected.

In the event of substantial redevelopment taking place in Lancaster and Morecambe, it is recognised there may be a case for increased levels of shopper/visitor parking

Aim: 1

To maintain existing levels of short-stay parking to support shoppers, businesses, visitors and residents.

- Retain short stay car parking unless it can be provided in other central locations.
- Where practicable seek replacement short-stay public car parking space as part of the redevelopment of existing car parks.
- To only consider changes in short stay car parking space linked to redevelopment following full impact analysis and due consideration of overall parking and traffic management issues.
- Review the use of existing parking places to ensure the best use of space.

4.2 Parking Provision for Residents

- 4.2.1 The Council recognises that residents expect that they will be able to park in the vicinity of their homes and has determined that the needs of residents have the highest priority within the parking hierarchy.
- 4.2.2 Many residents will require access to long stay parking and an annual permit scheme is available for certain long stay car parks in Lancaster and Morecambe.
- 4.2.3 The Transport Task Group has recognised that commuter parking in residential areas adjacent to the centres of Lancaster and Morecambe has a negative effect on the quality of life of residents living in those areas. The introduction of residents' parking schemes can assist with the resolution of these problems although there is always the risk of the displaced vehicles parking in adjacent residential areas. The needs of residents' visitors and businesses' customers in the area should be considered.
- 4.2.4 The demand for residents parking permits is increasing as more new high occupancy dwellings are constructed in the centres of both Lancaster and Morecambe. In line with Planning Policy Guidance many of these developments have little or no off-street parking provision. The Cabinet has approved amended Traffic Regulation Orders for Residents' Parking Schemes to remove the eligibility for residents of buildings in areas with good accessibility that have been or will be granted planning permission on the basis of reduced off-street parking provision.
- 4.2.5 The transfer of staffing resources to the County Council, following the termination of the Lancashire Highways Partnership, has resulted in the City Council having less influence over the implementation of additional residents' parking schemes. The County Council is also reviewing the priority given to traffic regulation orders for resident's parking schemes and the future approach on the identification, assessment, funding and implementation of additional schemes. Whilst the aims set out below are the Council's preference, it is recognised that these aspirations may not be met without the County Council actively making resources available.

Aim: 2

To make provision for residents to park in the central areas.

- Make provision for annual permits for residents to be available for use on certain short stay car parks.
- Monitor the demand for permits and review the scheme regularly.

Aim: 3

To control the supply/demand for parking in residential areas adjacent to the centres of Lancaster and Morecambe.

- Introduce additional controlled parking where parking by non-residents is impacting on the ability of residents to park.
- Make provision within controlled parking zones for the needs of residents' visitors and local businesses.
- Control by cost and number of permits the balance between the number of allocated permits and the parking space available.
- Implement the revised Traffic Regulation Orders relating to low car/no car developments and maintain a register of excluded properties.
- In areas where demand for residents' parking spaces exceed the supply, make provision for certain resident permit holders to use designated car parks for overnight parking.
- Liaise with the County Council over the existing programme of additional schemes and on the responsibility for consultation and the implementation of further additional schemes.

4.3 **Parking Provision for non-residents**

- 4.3.1 The demand for parking spaces in both Lancaster and Morecambe on an increasingly regular basis exceeds supply and there is a need to carefully regulate the way in which space is used. The Cabinet has confirmed that the needs of visitors, shoppers and local businesses have a higher priority than those of commuters. It is acknowledged that 50% of visitors are over the age of 50 and that there is a growth in the short breaks market in the area.
- 4.3.2 The current short stay car park charging structure reflects the principle that short stay parking is less than three hours. Stays longer than this is either prohibited or deterred by a significant increase in the hourly charge.
- 4.3.3 It is recognised that there are those with specific needs and who need a vehicle to conduct their business and there is a need for some provision to be made in the central area car parks for those who meet set criteria.

Aim: 4

To balance the needs of businesses, visitors and shoppers by providing short stay parking spaces in the central areas and longer stay parking spaces in peripheral car parks.

- Restrict on-street parking in the central shopping areas.
- Restrict length of stay in central car parks either by setting a maximum time or increasing the hourly charge for more than three hours by a significant amount.
- Make provision for longer stay parking in peripheral car parks.
- Make provision for business users by contract parking at a limited number of car parks consistent with the parking hierarchy.
- Make parking provision for visitors to local attractions that are within residents parking areas.

4.4 Parking Charges

- 4.4.1 Parking charges are a useful mechanism for assisting with the control of demand for parking space. However, a careful balance needs to be found. If charges are too high then spaces will be underused but, conversely, if they are too low demand for spaces will increase to a level which makes them more difficult to find and increases congestion. Charges should also reflect the importance of shoppers' and local business needs and their high priority within the parking hierarchy.
- 4.4.2 The income from the parking service will also be adversely affected if the balance is not satisfactory. The revenue from parking is important for the Council as it assists with the continuing improvement of the service provided. It is essential that some revenue from parking charges income be reinvested in the parking stock to ensure an adequate maintenance regime and to fund improvements.
- 4.4.3 Charges should, therefore, be set at a level which influences parking behaviour in support of the other objectives of the strategy and which maximises revenue to support the improvement of the service.

Aim: 5

To set charges to meet the Council's transportation policy objectives and budget commitments.

- Set charges to maintain 85% occupancy at busy times in short stay car parks and on-street controlled parking in order to achieve high utilisation whilst maintaining a reasonable level of availability.
- Use charges to deter long stay in short stay car parks.
- Ensure that the cost differential between on- and off-street charges is maintained in order to encourage the use of the off-street facilities and leave the on-street spaces for those prepared to pay a premium for the location.
- Ensure the views of the local Chambers of Commerce and of Trade are taken into account when considering the Annual Review of Parking Charges.

- 4.4.4 There are a number of privately operated car parks within the District. For some the City Council has negotiated management agreements which ensure that the charges are comparable with those at City Council car parks. This is important for both transportation and financial reasons. There are a number of car parks where such agreements are not in place.

Parksafe has an agreement to always charge higher than the Council, Marketgate has a general agreement to match Council charges, but there is no control over other operators of private parking stock.

- 4.4.5 Monitor the effect of evening charges in order to avoid displacement to surrounding on street areas

Aim: 6

To ensure that privately operated car parks have comparable pricing structures

- Where possible, negotiate appropriate agreements with private car park operators.

4.5 **Park and Ride**

- 4.5.1 Park and Ride operations can be very successful in reducing car journeys into city centres, for example York and Cambridge. They effectively reduce the demand for central area parking spaces.
- 4.5.2 The County Council, having introduced two successful schemes in Preston intends to investigate further sites where Park and Ride can reduce congestion on busy corridors into city centres including within the Lancaster district.

Aim: 7

To investigate, in conjunction with the County Council, the viability of Park and Ride schemes

- Identify potential sites
- Assess the economic viability of a scheme

4.6 Coach Parking

- 4.6.1 Coach Parking is essential to the District as a whole for tourism reasons.
- 4.6.2 Coach Parking will become more important as Lancaster develops its role as a visitor destination utilising its value as an historical area. There is a need for a dedicated coach parking facility.
- 4.6.3 In Morecambe adequate coach parking is available at the Frontierland coach park, which is deemed to be sufficient to meet demand. There is also coach parking provision on the private Winter Gardens car park. However, additional coach drop off points are required to service local hotels.

Aim: 8

To ensure adequate provision for tourist coaches.

- Identify a site for a new coach park in Lancaster.
- Improve destination signs to and from the coach parks.
- Investigate options for additional coach dropping off points in Morecambe.

4.7 Lorry Parking

- 4.7.1 The County Council has identified a need for the provision of adequate and suitable parking facilities for lorries for both short-stay and overnight periods. There is a need to identify suitable sites for lorry parking.
- 4.7.2 A lack of suitable provision for lorry parking often results in vehicles being parked in unsuitable locations, such as residential areas, and is obstructive parking leading to increase traffic congestion.

Aim: 9

To work with the County Council to assess the need for lorry parking facilities within the District.

- Assess the need for facilities.
- If necessary, identify a suitable site.
- Ensure that indiscriminate lorry parking is prevented.
- Investigate the possibility of an overnight on street lorry parking ban except for designated lorry bays.

4.8 Cycle and Motorcycle Parking

- 4.8.1 The City Council has determined that availability and quality of cycle and motorcycle parking at key destinations is a major element in encouraging a modal shift from private car to more sustainable forms of transport

Aim: 10

To improve the availability and quality of parking at key destinations

- Provide convenient and safe bicycle parking at new points convenient to town centres and at places of interest and amenity, in line with Lancaster District's aspiration to achieve record levels of cycling in the district
- Increase cycle parking provision at existing cycle parking areas to meet increasing demand
- Encourage, where possible, provision of sheltered cycle parking
- Ensure that where appropriate new developments have cycle parking integrated at the design stage through the planning process
- Provide convenient and safe areas for motor cycle parking.

4.9 Parking Enforcement

- 4.9.1 The County Council has co-ordinated the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement across Lancashire under the title of ParkWise. The primary objectives are to increase parking turnover to improve access to services; to reduce obstruction to vehicles and congestion; and to reduce road casualties and obstruction to pedestrians.

Aim: 11

In conjunction with the County Council and other partners to maintain the quality of decriminalised parking enforcement in accordance with the DPE Agency Agreement.

- Ensure all regulations are properly signed.
- Enforce the regulations consistently and fairly.
- Explain clearly to those who receive penalties why they have been issued and their rights of appeal.
- Reduce opportunities for non-compliance with the regulations.
- Regularly review and assess the appropriate level of enforcement.

4.10 Carnforth and the Rural Areas

- 4.10.1 The traffic and parking problems in Carnforth are long standing. There is a need to maintain the current parking facilities at the railway station as these serve both rail travellers and visitors to the town centre. The car park is privately owned and has a daily flat rate for parking which is causing displacement on street of short term visitors.

Aim: 12

To protect the existing parking facilities in the town.

- Maintain the car parking facility at the railway station
- Review the level of on-street parking in Market Street
- Discuss local needs with the railway station car park operator and other stakeholders and develop a dual use parking charge to encourage short stay parking

- 4.10.2 At many of the District's popular tourist attractions in the rural areas, car parking demand can exceed supply. This can lead to environmentally damaging and obstructive on-road parking. In some locations additional parking facilities may be appropriate.

Aim: 13

To review parking provision at the more popular rural tourist attractions.

- Assess the environmental and road safety impact of existing parking demand.
- Where appropriate consider the provision of additional facilities.
- Investigate the potential improvements available for parking at Glasson Dock which is in private ownership of British Waterways Board.

4.11 **Parking Standards on New Developments**

- 4.11.1 The Council has adopted the Lancashire County Council Car Parking Standards published in the Structure Plan.

Aim: 14

To ensure compliance with the detailed standards set out in the Lancaster District Local Plan, Appendix 6. Lancaster is classified as one of the Level 1 areas where traffic congestion is most serious and where it is necessary to impose stricter controls on the amount of car parking.

- Impose maximum standards for non-residential development, using the criteria for parking provision and operational parking set out in the Structure Plan.
- Encourage developer contributions to ensure adequate accessibility to new developments by all modes with the emphasis on achieving the greatest degree of access by public transport, walking and cycling.

4.12 **Quality Parking Management**

- 4.12.1 The public expectation of the quality of car parks has increased in recent years and the customer now expects a well managed, clean, attractive and secure car park. For visitors the car park often provides the first impression of the destination and can colour their whole experience of the visit; frequently determining whether or not they return on second and subsequent occasions. The impression, therefore, is important in economic terms to the City.

Aim: 15

To provide a high quality parking service which is efficient, responsive to people's needs, providing assets of the highest design and appearance and as secure and safe as possible, whilst identifying the impact on budgets

- Where possible respond to enquiries within 7 working days
- Provide a freephone number for customer enquiries, linked to the Council's Customer Services Centre
- Consult with representative groups on proposed changes to parking schemes
- Ensure that all car parks are adequately surfaced
- Provide a high standard of lighting in car parks, whilst avoid unnecessary light pollution
- Ensure that routes to car parks are clearly signed
- Introduce an Urban Traffic Management and Control scheme which provides car park space information to drivers and reduces unnecessary journeys on high volume traffic routes
- Ensure that all the car parks, where possible, are adequately covered by CCTV
- Provide regular car park patrols to enhance security and provide a service to customers
- Ensure that all car parks are regularly cleaned; that landscaped areas are well maintained and that any graffiti is promptly removed
- Ensure that pedestrian routes to and from and within car parks are attractive, secure and safe
- Undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys
- Implement a programme of re marking to ensure a minimum space width of 2.4m, whilst recognising this may reduce the allocation of parking spaces
- Provide suitable management information on usage, parking trends and occupancy rates
- Provide suitable and efficient payment options for all parking transactions
- Ensure effective and efficient maintenance arrangements are in place for pay and display machines
- Work towards all car parks achieving the Park Mark award.
- Ensure continuous improvement in parking stock

4.13 Improving Access

- 4.13.1 Whilst the majority of this strategy relates to parking of the private car, consideration should be given to the needs of all users and types of transport.
- 4.13.2 Those with mobility impairments should be catered for by reserving an adequate number of appropriately dimensioned parking spaces for "Blue Badge" holders in the central areas.

- 4.13.3 The needs of those with young families, motorcyclists and pedal cyclists should be taken into consideration.
- 4.13.4 Vehicular access to the pedestrian zone is dealt with under Lancaster Pedestrian Zone Traffic Regulation Order, and whilst recognising that access issues fall outside the remit of this Strategy, the City Council will continue to support the provision of vehicular access to Lancaster Pedestrian Zone through the use of a permit system for severely disabled drivers who meet certain criteria.

Aim: 16

To seek to meet the needs of all users and types of transport.

- Set aside 6% of the total off street car parking space for “Blue Badge” holders in car parks where a demand is proven
- Improve public information on parking provision
- Consider the provision of wider “family” spaces at certain central car parks and the implications for enforcement

4.14 Asset Management

- 4.14.1 The City Council has recently approved a Corporate Property Strategy to provide the framework for the management of its assets to deliver its key service priorities.
- 4.14.2 The overriding objective of the Corporate Property Strategy is to challenge and review the use, provision and performance of property as a positive approach to ensuring assets are fit for purpose and their retention, investment and utilisation is focused on the needs of the customer and the achievement of the Council’s corporate objectives.
- 4.14.3 Off-street car parks are a valuable asset and their management and future use should be in accord with the Corporate Property Strategy.

Aim: 17

To manage parking as a significant City Council asset and in accord with the Corporate Property Strategy.

- Major improvements requiring capital expenditure are managed in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Asset Management Working Group
- Parking assets will be included in the development of the Asset Management Plan for Property Services as required by the Corporate Property Strategy
- Asset management planning proposals impacting on parking issues should be considered in line with the Parking Strategy and the Corporate Property Strategy

4.15 Strategic Risk Register

4.15.1 This parking strategy is in direct accord with the requirements of the 2004/05 Corporate Plan to “Undertake a comprehensive review of car parking arrangements leading to the production of a strategy that incorporates on and off street parking schemes in accordance with the identified parking hierarchy”.

4.15.2 The subsequent Strategic Risk Register approved by the Council included the following strategic issues. Whilst these are not in the current version of the register they are still relevant to this strategy:

Objective: to improve parking provision for residents, local businesses and visitors (cp/3/03)

Risk R/0055 Failure to address customer satisfaction and undertake public consultation

Risk treatment actions stated :

- Commitment in the capital programme to an improvement programme based on condition surveys.
- Stakeholder surveys linked to programme of improvement.

Objective: to improve parking provision for residents, local businesses and visitors (cp/3/03)

Risk R/0056 Failure to reinvest in off street parking provision.

Risk treatment actions stated:

- Develop rolling programme of improvement
- Ensure funding available for the rolling programme

4.15.3 The current Strategic Risk Register includes the following strategic risk that has already been addressed in para 4.2 Parking Provision For Residents:

Risk R/1182 Failure to further progress residents’ parking schemes

Risk treatment actions stated:

- Complete current rounds of consultation and, where agreed, progress schemes
- Determine with the County Council how they will take forward requests for further schemes within the district