

Question from Councillor Sarah McGowan to Councillor Jean Parr, Cabinet Member for Planning and Place:

In his report, the leader talks about the consultation on the draft Car-parking Strategy for Lancaster City Centre, the three workshops with The Grand, BID and the Chamber of Commerce and the many issues arising from the consultation. Also, the setting up of the Project Board.

A contributing factor to the perceived lack of parking spaces in the city is due to the closure of the Castle multi-storey in June 2023 because of structural problems.

Can Councillor Parr please update us on the magnitude of the work needed to bring the car park back into use and any timeframe for the work?

Councillor Parr responded:

The Castle Car Park has been closed for some time now due to defects rendering the car park unsafe for continued use. The Council leases the car park from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), who ultimately have responsibility for the structure. The DWP undertook some initial assessment of the condition of the car park and have now engaged technical engineering experts to investigate the works needed to enable the car park being brought back into use. This work will also provide a cost. The Council is in continued dialogue with the DWP regarding the works and we are keen to see the car park back in use as early as possible once it is safe to do so. We are due to hear back from the DWP in the next few weeks with regard to a programme of the works required.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor McGowan asked why a new multi-storey car park was being considered at the north end of the gyratory system when it would seem better for the environment to repair what already exists instead of turning our attention to something new.

Councillor Parr responded that the Car Parking Strategy was still a work in progress. It would attempt to balance the needs of all users. Public transport, particularly to villages and rural areas, was not readily available, especially in the evenings. Castle Car park, despite having a capacity of 287 spaces, was very under-used. Even at the Christmas shopping peak it was only ever 46% full, so was not in the most popular location.

Question from Councillor Roger Cleet to Councillor Joanne Ainscough, Cabinet member for Environmental Services:

At the Lancaster City Council meeting held on 24th April 2024 I asked a question after you gave the Cabinet Annual Report on the Environment Services “where do Lancaster District Councillors report issues with weed management in their wards?” – Your reply was to report these on the Lancashire County Council web site Love Clean Streets.

I emailed you on 12th June 2024 that on the Love Clean Streets there are sections for reporting grass verge cutting, hedge pruning, tree maintenance and tree removal but no section to report weed management.

You replied that you would follow it up with Lancashire County Council and get an official response on how district councillors can report weed management issues in the wards as in my own ward of Heysham North some weeds are several feet high, look unsightly and residents are voicing their concerns.

Councillor Cleet’s supplementary question:

There are large areas overgrowth and weeds in Morecambe especially around car parks in central Morecambe especially the one opposite the railway station, promenade areas and around Alexandra Park / More Music which are the responsibility of Lancaster City Council. Can you let me know how the City Council plan to tackle these issues and when.

Councillor Cleet was not present to ask the question, having given apologies for the meeting. Councillor Ainscough said she would provide a written response via email to all Councillors, following the meeting.