

CABINET

Lancaster City Centre Car Parking Portfolio Improvements - Design Development, Planning and Implementation

03 June 2025

Report of Chief Officer Sustainable Growth

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To consider the next steps in agreeing and approving elements which support the Lancaster City Centre Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan Project Programme. Approval is sought for the resources required to take forward initial critical proposals, defined as part of the draft Strategy's Action Plan, through design development and planning phases to ensure proposals in future iterations of the Strategy are achievable and meet the council's wider objectives.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision	Referral from Cabinet Member	
Date of notice of forthcoming key decision		May 2025		
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF Councillor Nick Wilkinson

1. The proposals as outlined in Section 2.0 of the report are supported and the submission of reserve bids requested from officers with reference to:
 - Feasibility & design development and project management costs of potential car parking capital projects to £118K
 - Progress investment proposals into digital technology (ANPR) with allocation of £232K
2. Officers to continue developing proposals for
 - Proposals to be considered for inclusion into the Capital Programme at the mid-year review stage in Autumn 2025, subject to the correct governance and required financing being in place.
 - Finalising implementation phasing and project-level business cases.
 - Submission of planning applications and/or procurement activity as appropriate.

3. **Individual project decisions will return to the relevant authority (Cabinet/Portfolio Holder) where further staged approvals or funding decisions are required.**
4. **A revised final draft Lancaster City Centre Parking Strategy is presented to a future Cabinet meeting.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its October 2024 meeting Cabinet considered a report on the specific issue of strategic car parking numbers arising from an interim analysis of the consultation arising from the draft Lancaster City Centre Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan 2024 (The Draft Parking Strategy). In summary, the consultation response called for:
 - A clearer, phased, and pragmatic approach to provision of car parking if current car parking sites, particularly in the Canal Quarter, are to be released for housing and/or commercial uses.
 - Improved data collection and analysis.
 - Enhanced communication and transparency in the consultation process.
 - Integration of parking strategy with broader city planning and transport initiatives.
 - More certainty on location and feasibility of new parking provision and new green transport / Multi Storey Car Parking (MSCP) hubs if these are to play a role in future strategic parking provision.
- 1.2 Members resolved the following (Minute reference:37)
 - Future car parking policy options for Lancaster city centre are developed within a strategic context of providing between 1,400 and 1,500 council operated car parking spaces, with an ambition to achieve the higher figure.
 - The Lancaster City Centre Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan adopts these criteria and framework in any future Strategy iterations to be considered by Cabinet.
 - Maintaining an optimal and efficiently managed quantity of public car parking provision in and around Lancaster city centre is a key priority for the city council, and its long-term provision, location and typology should form an explicit part of the sustainable travel and transport policy agenda for the city.
 - The increase in strategic numbers provides Cabinet with further comfort, in terms of the ongoing maintenance of city centre economic health, city centre accessibility and car user utility, for the progression of the planned release of Nelson street car park for affordable housing.
- 1.3 Since this meeting officers have undertaken further work and analysis on key elements in the draft strategy Action Plan to bring more certainty to the proposals outlined to retain and enhance car parking and amenity within this strategic provision framework. There has been a particular focus on:

- Development of tender documents and procurement for securing Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) across the city council's city centre parking portfolio.
- Ensuring a reasonable timescale for the reopening of the city council's Castle car park.
- Initial feasibility and costing of both temporary and permanent parking provision options for the short, medium and long term.

1.4 A revised final draft Lancaster City Centre Parking Strategy and Action Plan is to be completed with specific proposals to improve the city council's car parking portfolio. However, approval is now sought for funding to take forward initial critical proposals highlighted in the Draft Parking Strategy's Action Plan, through further design development, planning approval and costing phases to ensure that the proposals are achievable, and the council can deliver on its parking and wider social, environmental and economic objectives.

1.5 Any major capital projects will be included as part of a revised Parking Strategy but will first need to be subject to further business case approvals through the council's capital and project management processes.

1.6 For context:

- The council's current parking portfolio numbers 1,624 but with around 1,589 available for General Use (net of permit only spaces).
- Currently portfolio capacity has been reduced to 1,329 with the temporary closure of Castle Car Park.
- Further design development and feasibility work is required to ensure the improvements proposed in the Draft Parking strategy and post-consultation decisions are achievable.

It should be noted that privately operated parking, on-street parking, and the Junction 34 Park & Ride are not matters considered in this report.

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 Several potential parking initiatives regarded as critical to the maintenance of the strategic provision in the short-to-medium term require resources to move them forward towards detailed feasibility, further approvals and implementation. Capital resources will be highlighted in the capital programme and be subject to further business case approvals prior to securing implementation.

ANPR

2.2 This is regarded as a crucial first step in securing better management and real-time customer information around the parking portfolio. During the 2025/26 budget setting process, an ANPR proposal was discussed with an initial estimated total of £150K to be funded from reserves subject to the correct governance and due diligence being in place. To date no formal reserve bid has been submitted.

2.3 Benefits of the system have been defined as follows:

- More accurate data from the car park portfolio to be used for regeneration work, parking services analysis & city centre development strategies.
- The ability to share with the public car park live occupancy data to reduce city centre congestion and reduce emitted pollution from vehicles.

2.4 Following procurement, tender prices have been returned with the highest scoring bid, against quality/price/social value criteria, being priced at £232K, which is £83K above the initial estimate. Members are asked to confirm their support for this initiative at this level of expenditure. Should support be granted then a reserves bid would be required, again subject to the correct governance and due diligence being in place.

2.5 The council's budgeted net parking portfolio income for the next years 3 years is £7.895M, so the capital expenditure represents 2.94% of this across the 3-year ANPR contract term. It could be expected that the data will enable a wide range of efficiencies and information to assist in parking management as well as customer facing information.

Other Potential Parking Schemes

2.6 The proposals are as follows:

Project	Approximate timescale	Total Cost Estimate
1. Edward St extension.	Sept to Nov 2025	£10K
2. Edward St – Phase 2.	Aug 2025 to April 2026	£150K to £200K
3. Kingsway extension.	Aug 2025 to Aug 2026	£400K to £600K
4. Castle car park refurbishment.	Unknown at present	Potential council liability to be assessed following legal advice.

The above amounts are purely for information currently and the full scope of works of each of the above initiatives is outlined in **Appendix 1**. These initiatives will be further worked upon and be ready for consideration by the Capital Assurance Group prior to be considered as part of the mid-term update of the Capital Programme due in Autumn 2025.

2.7 To move these initiatives towards full business case resourcing and consideration via the Capital Programme process, the following design development and feasibility resources are required:

Project	Estimated consultant fees (May 2025)
1. Edward St Phase 1 extension	£1K – architects fee
2. Edward St Phase 2	£25K feasibility and design
3. Kingsway extension	£32K feasibility and design
Project management costs relating to above	£60K
Total	£118K

2.8 There is currently no budgetary provision for these amounts and Members are asked to confirm their support for this initiative at this level of expenditure. Should support be granted then a revenue reserves bid would be required, subject to the correct governance and due diligence being in place.

2.9 Further approval of major capital car parking interventions as part of the Capital Programme will be secured after reference to the appropriate authority depending on the scale of the project.

3.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

3.1 A summary of the options and analysis is presented below:

	Option 1: Do not approve the parking portfolio design and development resources as outlined in the report.	Option 2: Approve the parking portfolio design and development resources as outlined in the report.
Advantages	<p>Reduces immediate budgetary pressure and revenue risk exposure during a period of wider funding constraints.</p> <p>Avoids the council taking on potential risks associated with the delivery of feasibility and potential capital programme of parking improvements.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Provides a clear route to delivering an improved parking portfolio aligned with the council's broader goals on economic vitality, climate action, and housing.</p> <p>Facilitates the development of business cases for capital interventions, and ANPR system roll out, helping to future-proof the parking network.</p> <p>Responds to consultation feedback and business/community concerns by demonstrating active delivery, not just policy intent.</p> <p>Ensures considered investment in better infrastructure to make parking safer, more inclusive, and user-friendly.</p> <p>Enables phased rationalisation of outdated surface sites without compromising network capacity, improving land use and user experience.</p>

		<p>Helps maintain budget contributions by improving space use efficiency, turnover, and digital payment systems.</p> <p>Enables consideration of release of further Canal Quarter sites for affordable housing objectives as the proposals ensure target strategic car parking numbers can be maintained.</p>
Disadvantages	<p>Fails to capitalise on consultation, policy design, and alignment with regional transport and regeneration goals.</p> <p>Council does not further commit to evidence-based infrastructure planning, which may erode trust in decisions.</p> <p>Creates uncertainty limiting strategic planning and reducing the council's ability to coordinate land use.</p> <p>Without reinvestment or planning, car parking capacity may degrade incrementally, undermining city centre vitality and visitor perception.</p> <p>Difficult to consider release of further Canal Quarter sites for affordable housing as the target strategic parking numbers could not be maintained without the proposed interventions.</p>	<p>Commits around £200,000 in initial revenue/feasibility funding and potentially a future of around £1M capital, with longer-term liabilities subject to further business case consideration.</p> <p>Involves the city council in multiple sites, external contractors, and planning dependencies increase delivery risk and demands strong programme management capacity.</p>
Risks/ Mitigation	<p>Failure to act may conflict with the council's own stated economic and climate priorities. Risk could be partially mitigated by future ad hoc interventions or alternative "road map"</p> <p>Impact on other council objectives and uncertainty.</p>	<p>Rising construction or consultancy costs could exceed estimates. However, the council's stage-gate approval systems and value engineering at feasibility stage will assist in mitigation.</p> <p>Site constraints may cause delays although early engagement with planning and legal teams and phased design should alleviate concerns.</p> <p>Investments will be aligned with LCWIP and BSIP progress and update strategy in future reviews.</p>

4.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 4.1 Following Members' consideration and confirmation that the proposals meet the council's objectives and its wider policy aspirations, **Option 2** is preferred. Approve the parking portfolio design and development resources as outlined in

the report.

- 4.2 The work will inform phased, and pragmatic investment in Lancaster's future parking infrastructure as a significant element of local transport and regeneration infrastructure planning.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 Concerns from the business and cultural sectors community as well as the public about the long-term provision of public parking, and general parking are understood. The city council is addressing the matter at a strategic city-wide level, with appreciation of the statutory strategic policy imperatives the city council is working within.
- 5.2 The council recognises that having an appropriate level of car parking in the city is important to support the economy and provide a range and choice of transport options and to ensure accessibility for the less mobile and populations underserved by public transport. The work supported through this report will provide context and framing for the council's ambitions to provide parking provision that is fit for purpose and fit for the future.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

A Sustainable District – car parking provision and car use is a consideration in meeting the challenges of the council's declared Climate Emergency and a range of other council objectives.

An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy – building a sustainable and just local economy that benefits people and organisations needs to consider car parking provision as a key feature of accessibility for certain groups and communities.

Healthy and Happy Communities – tackling car parking provision and some of the negative consequences inherent in the current portfolio will contribute to healthy and happy community objectives

A Co-Operative, Kind and Responsible Council – further consultation and ongoing discussion with stakeholders will achieve the best outcomes for in tandem with running efficient quality public services, of which car parking provision is a key service provision.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Asset health and safety and community safety should be improved with progression of the car parking strategy Action Plan in the short, medium, and long-term. There are clear equity, sustainability, and rural proofing considerations when discussing elements of car park provision and the council's own car parking assets given the intersection with public transport policy and issues with public transport availability and the sustainable travel and transport / Climate Emergency discussion.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Lancaster City Council will lead and is the client and accountable body for the project programme. The project programme will be undertaken by the city council's Parking Team with support from the Regeneration Service within the Sustainable Growth team, with

additional support for legal / financial services and property and public realm teams. Social Value ask/reporting will be included due to the size of the proposed contract via the Social Value Portal (aligning with the Social Value policy).

Lancaster City Council has robust contract procedure rules and guidance which covers all aspects of pre, current and post contract stages. These rules also include more detailed information on the requirements for procurements subject to the UK's existing and emerging Public Procurement Directives.

The Council's Contract Procedure rules also set out the financial thresholds for low, medium, and high value procurements and support the award of procurements on the principle of best value for money rather than simply lowest price. The rules also set out the highest standards of probity required of all officers and elected members on the procurement, award and management of contracts and the acquisition of works, goods, and services.

Tender documents will be developed and may be issued at the earliest opportunity to secure a price tested tender from suitable suppliers to provide the required information. Capital elements required to create a viable platform for the solar array will also be included.

Following a staged business case approval, the proposal would move through the following stages:

- Stage 1) Design development / planning:
- Stage 2) Approval of Capital funding based on detailed business case and tender detailed technical data and specification.
- Stage 3) Acceptance of tender and construction to Handover.
- Stage 4) Defects and Final Account

Future capital elements will be managed by the Parking Team.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The report highlights several areas which will require upfront investment possibly leading to a larger financial capital ask in the future.

Regarding the initiatives outlined in Section 2, should Members decide to support the proposals then a request to use the Council's unallocated reserves will be required. This amounts to £232K for the ANPR initiative and £118K for the remainder largely relating to feasibility, design costs and project management costs. All reserve requests will be subject to the correct governance and due diligence being in place.

It should be noted that there could be the opportunity to capitalise such costs in the future, but this will largely depend on the nature of the expenditure. This will be considered should any scheme progress to implementation.

Regarding any future capital requirement, these proposals will require further work and approval prior to being included in the capital programme. It is suggested that this body of work takes place over the coming months in readiness to be considered as part of the mid-year review of the capital programme, scheduled for Autumn 2025.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human resources: No HR implications arising from this report.

Information Services: No Information Service implications arising from this report.

Property: No Property implications arising from this report.

Open Space Implications: No open space implications arising from this report.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and would draw Members attention to the comments provided within the Financial Implications.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Appendix 1

Project	Scope of works and requirements
1. ANPR counting system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet approval in June 2025. • Complete legals with the winning bidder. • Lead mobilisation discussions with the contractor. • Act as a liaison with the contractor with other services to facilitate the project installations. • Liaison with the contractor over the programme to install 19 ANPR camera systems across 19 car parks in Lancaster. • Close coordination with the contractor for software onboarding, reporting requirements and liaison with IT over the website output. • Snagging with the contractor. • Coordination with Comms and stakeholders over roll-out. • Project completion sign-off and/or any contractor non-performance issues. • Work with IT to develop and launch customer facing app/web page for parking
2. Edward St (1) former LDHAS site extension.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After planning permission is granted around September 2025: - • Firm up specification considering any planning restrictions. • Appoint contractor to undertake the works as the works are expected to be less than £10k. • Meet contractor on-site prior to commencement of works. • Double check that all the services are disconnected. • Supervise the works on-site and then check that the specification has been delivered. • Order line marking separately. • Order signage separately. • After works are complete sign-off. • Open the car park to the public.
3. Edward St (2) Site comprising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the exact size of the plot envelope, if third-party

<p>Alfred St garages, Gillespie's Motor works and part of Hero Works (currently in third party ownership although anticipated to come partly into city council ownership through the joint working initiative with Maple Grove Developments)</p>	<p>landowners are involved then close liaison is required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain three quotes from architectural firms to generate the outline design, detailed design, planning and works (inc. demolition) specification with costings. • Obtain approval for expenditure to appoint the consultants. • Appoint the consultants to work up the scheme and a costings plan. • Review architects work and cross-check financials for VFM. • Assuming that the costs are within range of expectations then undertake the reserves bid (or other funding route) to pay for the capex works. • Undertake a planning application. • Undertake tender procurement exercise through The Chest to find a suitable contractor. • Once a bidder has been identified then seek cabinet approval for the works (assuming within range of expectations). • Assuming planning permission is approved. • Appoint a bidder with legals. • Firm up the specification considering any planning restrictions. • Meet contractors on-site prior to commencement of works. • Double check all services are disconnected. • Supervise works on-site and check that the specification has been delivered. • Order the revenue equipment separately. • Order the line marking separately. • Order the signage separately. • After the works are complete then sign-off. • Open the car park to the public.
<p>4. Kingsway extension.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the exact size of the plot envelope. • Obtain three quotes from architectural firms to generate the outline design, detailed design, planning and works (inc. site clearance) specification with costings. • Obtain the approval for the expenditure on the consultants. • Appoint the consultants to work up the scheme and costings plan. • Review the architects work and then cross check financials for

	<p>VFM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assuming that the costs are within range of expectations then undertake the reserves bid (or other funding route) to pay for the capex works. • undertake formal pre-application submission leading to a planning application • Undertake a tender procurement exercise through The Chest to find a suitable contractor. • Once a bidder has been identified then seek cabinet approval for the works (assuming within range of expectations). • Assuming planning permission is approved. • Appoint a bidder with legals. • Firm up the specification considering any planning restrictions. • Meet the contractors on-site prior to the commencement of the works. • Double check that all services are disconnected. • Supervise the works on-site and then check that the specification has been delivered. • Order the revenue equipment separately. • Order the line marking separately. • Order the signage separately. • After the works are complete then sign-off. • Open the car park to the public.
5. Castle car park refurbishment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the confirmed DWP package of works to repair the concrete & electrical system are defined and timetabled. • Working back approximately 6 months from the completion of the DWP works. • Obtain three quotes from specialist car park refurb consultants to generate the outline design, detailed design and works specification with costings. • Obtain the approval for the expenditure on the consultants. • Appoint the consultants to work up the scheme and costings plan. • Review the consultants work and cross check the financials for VFM. • Assuming that the costs are within the range of expectations then undertake reserves bid (or other funding route) to pay for the

	<p>capex works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specification and scope of works to Planning to confirm whether any planning application is required (considered unlikely) Undertake a tender procurement exercise through The Chest to find a suitable contractor. • Once a bidder has been identified then seek cabinet approval for the works (assuming within range of expectations). • Assuming planning permission is approved, if required. • Appoint a bidder with legals. • Firm up the specification considering any planning restrictions. • Meet the contractors on-site prior to commencement of works. • Supervise the works on-site and then check that the specification has been delivered. • Order the revenue equipment separately. • Order the line marking separately. • Order the signage separately. • After the works are complete then sign-off. • Open the car park to the public.
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