

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL PARKING STRATEGY REVIEW

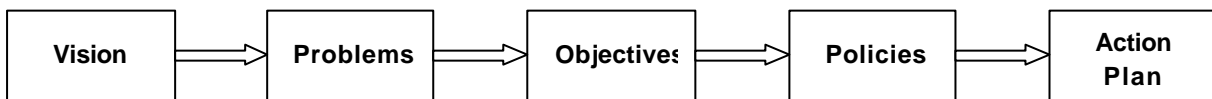
STRATEGY SUMMARY FOR CONSULTATION – DECEMBER 2005

INTRODUCTION

1. Parking is vital in ensuring that people in Edinburgh can access the goods and services they need and plays an important part in the city's economy. It also has a crucial part to play in managing traffic and congestion. The Council has an important role in managing parking in the city. Our new draft Parking Strategy sets out the way in which the Council intends to manage parking in Edinburgh, and will inform future decisions that need to be made about parking.

STRUCTURE OF THE DOCUMENT

2. The structure of our Parking Strategy can be summarised as follows:



3. The *Vision* is the aspiration that the Council hopes to achieve people who need and use parking.
The Problems and Issues are the key areas that the Council has identified as requiring some intervention to move towards the vision.
An Objective sums up what the Council seeks to achieve as a key guiding principle.
A Policy guides the way in which an objective is achieved, and sets out the Council's position on the parking issues raised throughout the strategy.
An Action is a measure that the Council will take to implement its policies.
4. Each of these elements is discussed in more detail in later paragraphs.

VISION

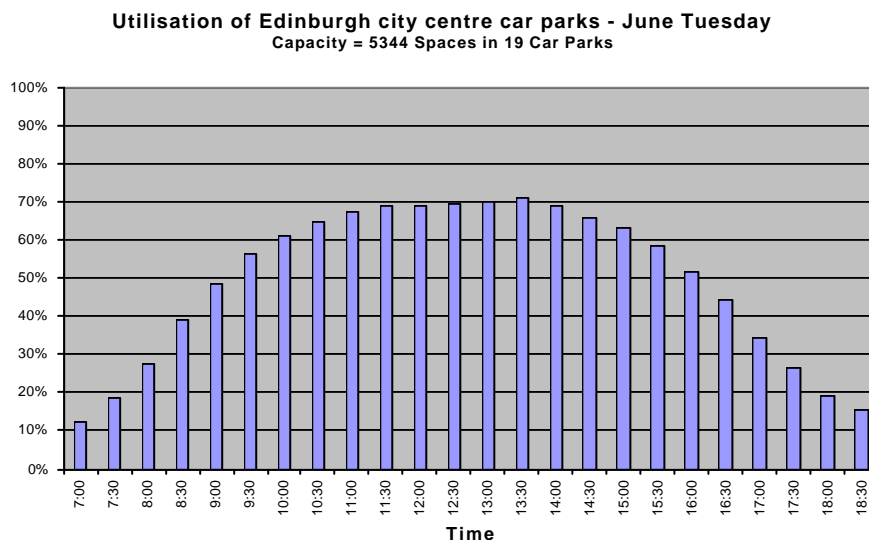
5. The vision of the strategy is one in which Edinburgh becomes an easier place to park for residents, shoppers, visitors, business travellers, disabled people and tradespeople. It is also a vision of an Edinburgh where the negative effects of parking on other travellers, such as pedestrians or cyclists, are reduced.

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS AND ISSUES: SURVEY WORK AND MARKET RESEARCH

6. To identify problems and issues in parking provision, the Council undertook considerable survey work and market research during the summer of 2005. The work included:
- Surveys to measure the occupancy of all the **off street car parks** in the city centre;
 - Surveys to measure the use of **on street parking** within the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ);
 - **Postcard interview surveys** of users of both on and off street parking facilities in the city centre and CPZ;
 - Interview surveys with **visitors and tourists** at major city centre car parks;
 - **Telephone surveys** with residents of Edinburgh, the Lothians and Fife;
 - **'Mystery Shopper'** type assessments of the quality of both on and off street parking; and
 - A series of **workshops** with key interest groups, to consider their specific parking problems and issues, and potential solutions.
7. This provided data on how parking is used, the problems that people face in using it, and how parking – amongst other factors - influences people's decisions on when and where to travel. Some key findings are below.

Off Street Parking

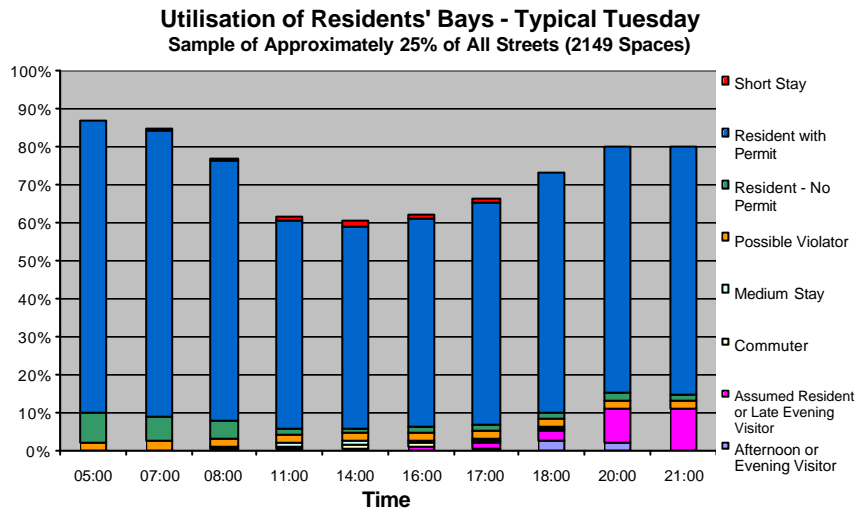
8. The overall maximum utilisation of all 19 city centre car parks combined during a typical weekday is around 70%, meaning that in the wider city centre area there are at least 1,500 empty off-street spaces available. However, within this overall figure, two car parks are very full (more than 90%) whilst others are less than half full.



- Most people who were surveyed when using car parks, both regular and new car park users, reported few problems in finding a space and they were generally very satisfied with the quality of the car park that they found.

On Street Parking

- When surveyed in June 2005, around 51% of pay and display bays were occupied at the busiest time in the middle of the day. This left around 1500 spaces free in the central part of the CPZ. Since the recent increases in permitted lengths of stay in the city centre, utilisation has risen. During the evening, when it is free to park in pay and display bays, the utilisation rises to about 64%. The occupancy of residents' bays peaks overnight at around 87% across the city. These figures vary across the city centre, and in several parts of the CPZ, overnight utilisation is around 100%.



Market Research

- Although the utilisation surveys found plenty of available parking space in and around Edinburgh city centre, at least during the day, the market research – based on phone surveys with a random sample of residents of the Edinburgh region – found that the perception is very different. Many people think that there is a shortage of parking, and for this reason many are deterred from coming into the city centre. For example, 64% of people interviewed by phone think that the city's car parking is inadequate, and 67% think that it is difficult to park in Edinburgh. Consequently, around 16% said that they now visit the city centre less than they used to, and go to edge of town shopping centres instead. However, a postcard survey of people actually parking in the city centre found that 84% of those using an off-street space, and 63% of those in an on-street space, found it either easy or very easy to find a parking space.

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

12. There are a wide variety of problems and issues with parking in the city. Some of the key problems are listed below – the full list and an explanation and discussion of each problem is given in the full draft Parking Strategy.

- The effect of parking on shopping visits to the city centre, and the impact from edge of town shopping malls that have free parking;
- Perceived shortage of parking both on and off street in the city centre – although, as noted above, this perception is not matched by the reality;
- Lack of off street parking in certain parts of the city, especially the area in the northwest, i.e. for drivers coming in from Queensferry Road;
- Signage to car parks – although “mystery shopper” surveys found this adequate and newcomers to the city centre found no problem in finding a parking space;
- Double parking, footway parking and parking on corners and junctions – in consultation with disabled people in particular, this was seen to be a problem in limiting their mobility;
- Commuters parking in residential areas – utilisation surveys have shown that there is considerable use of residential areas by commuters during the day;
- More residents’ permits issued than spaces available in the CPZ;
- Difficulty in parking the CPZ for visitors, businesses and tradespeople, which causes extra costs for business and can make it difficult for people to get tradespeople who will work in the area; and
- Negative image and perception of parking attendants.

OBJECTIVES

13. The objectives are the overall goals of the Council’s parking policy, and link to wider objectives (such as enhancing road safety, and improving the local economy) in its Local Transport Strategy. The objectives seek to resolve and/or mitigate the problems and issues identified in workshops, surveys and market research. The Parking Strategy objectives are to:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">O1. Use parking policy to help to maintain and improve the economic vitality of the city centre and district shopping centres, relative to other centres.O2. Ensure that parking provision does not encourage commuter car travel, especially to the city centre, and relates to the ease of access by public transport, cycling and walking.O3. Minimise the negative impacts of parking on the streetscape, especially in environmentally sensitive areas, and on public and private space in new developments.O4. Improve road safety and reduce congestion and pollution.O5. Facilitate access and movement by mobility impaired people, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and its users, and motorcyclists.O6. Protect and, where possible, enhance residents’ ability to park and load close to their homes.O7. Protect and, where possible, enhance the parking and loading needs of businesses, tradespeople, carers and visitors.O8. Facilitate the operation and expansion of Car Clubs. |
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14. It should be noted that some of these objectives conflict with each other. The Council tries to balance these conflicts and to prioritise in certain ways to maximise the overall benefits. There are however, times – as with any conflict situation – where certain users may lose out when difficult policy decisions are made.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

15. Flowing from the objectives are policies and actions. As noted above, a policy guides the way in which an objective is achieved. An action is an activity, consistent with a policy, which helps to achieve one or more objectives. Some actions may be physical measures that take place in the street while others may be changes to procedures. In the full Parking Strategy, there are some 29 policies and 46 prioritised actions. Not all policies and actions can be listed here, but some of the more significant actions are detailed below:

16. Short term measures

- a Marketing campaigns using Council publicity and in collaboration with the parking operators are being implemented in the run-up to Christmas 2005 and will continue beyond. This will highlight the many places close to and in the city centre where parking *is* already available and easy to find.
- b Longer permitted lengths of stay on-street in the city centre - these are being introduced with immediate effect and their effectiveness will be reviewed in January 2006.

17. On-street parking

- a Parking charges and lengths of stay in on-street bays would from now on be subject to an annual review. This would give the opportunity to regularly update permitted lengths of stay and charges in order to ensure that city centre parking is achieving its principal objective of supporting economic activity.
- b The Council will also, as part of the strategy, review making pay and display parking bays within the CPZ free of charge on Saturdays after 1.30 pm and on weekdays after 5.30 pm – though there are potential problems in relation to how this would affect parking availability for residents, their visitors, and shoppers.
- c The draft strategy also proposes changes to the penalty charge for different types of parking offence. There would be graduated charges, with modest penalties for minor contraventions and much higher penalties for those contraventions that cause congestion and/or road safety problems. (The Council does not have the power to implement these changes in penalties, but proposes to open discussions with the Scottish Executive about new legislation.)

- d It is also proposed to make changes to the way in which the contractor responsible for the enforcement of on-street parking is managed, linking contract payments to compliance and customer satisfaction as well as other qualitative indicators.
- e The strategy proposes to consult on the possible extension of waiting restrictions to major bus routes on Sundays.

18. *Off-street parking*

- a In the longer term, the Council will try seek to increase the stock of short-to medium-stay off-street public parking in areas of the city centre where there is a shortfall (either current or likely) – the first area for investigation being the west end of George St area, with a link to possible pedestrianisation.
- b Park and ride sites on the edge of the city are very important to the parking strategy as a whole and so in it the Council undertakes to open new ones and keep under review demand at existing sites.

19. *Permits*

- a On residents' permits issues, further consultation will be carried out with residents in the CPZ to consider options such as:
 - a limit of 1 or 2 on the number of permits issued per household;
 - higher prices for the second and subsequent permits at each address;
 - reduced charges for more environmentally friendly vehicles;
 - different charges for vehicles of different lengths (so that vehicles taking up less space pay less for a permit).
- b The draft strategy proposed that business permits will be introduced, subject to consultation on details. The permits would allow all day parking in residents' and shared use bays for liveried vans, on the basis of one permit per business. Charges for, and availability of, such permits might be different in different parts of the CPZ and, initially at least, would only be available in the peripheral and extended CPZ because there are so many businesses in the central area, and utilisation of residents' bays in this area is already high. However, and in addition, there is a proposal to allow liveried business vehicles to load and unload from residents' bays.
- c The draft Strategy also proposes a possible tradespersons' permit for the liveried vehicles of *bona fide* companies, allowing them to park off-peak in residents' bays throughout the controlled zones, with conditions.
- d Residents of all parking zones will, it is proposed, be able to purchase visitors' permits per year. (In the central zone, the maximum will be 60 permits; 100 permits in the peripheral zone, and 150 in the extended zone). Each permit will allow a visitor to park for 1½ hours in a residents' or shared use parking bay. An additional allowance of permits, bringing the total to 300, would be made available at no cost to residents with care needs.

20. *Mobility, safety and access issues*

The draft strategy suggests that measures should be put in place to eliminate footway parking citywide, with certain exceptions (such as streets where footways are wide but carriageways narrow and parking does not cause a serious obstruction), in order to promote inclusion, pedestrian mobility and road safety, and ensure access for the emergency services.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

21. This consultation is attempting to obtain the views and opinions of a wide sector of the community including the general public, interest groups such as retailers and tradespeople, Community Councils and our neighbouring local authorities. Following the conclusion to this consultation, all of the responses will be assessed and used to make appropriate revisions to the strategy. It is proposed that the finalised strategy will then be reported to a Council Executive meeting in March 2006, and will be published shortly afterwards.

HOW TO GIVE YOUR INPUT

22. The Council wants your views on the draft Parking Strategy. The document is available to view in full on the *Council's* website at <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/transportedinburgh/index.html> or in local libraries. If you would like more copies, please contact parking.strategy@edinburgh.gov.uk. Once you (and the group(s) that you represent) have considered the draft, please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to:

Parking Strategy Review
City Development
The City of Edinburgh Council
FREEPOST SCO4882
Edinburgh
EH1 0BR

by **27th January 2006** at the latest. Further written comments are welcome.

23. When the finalised strategy goes to the Council Executive for approval, it will be accompanied by a report on consultation detailing the responses that were received and how and why (or why not) these were incorporated into the final strategy. This report will be made available on the Council's website.