

Report of the Director of Environment, Transport and Planning

Parking

Introduction

1. EPAT Scrutiny has posted agenda items for the March meeting of:
 - **Parking:** covering public, private and Park & Ride provision, income received, usage, impact on closing Castle Car Park on the wider estate, wider aims e.g. shifting to less polluting vehicles, approach taken for busy shopping areas outside of the city-centre (e.g. Haxby, Acomb Front St), residents' parking, and disabled parking; and
 - **Park and ride retender:** Early input into what the Council can ask for
2. In addition to this, at the 19th September 2024 Council meeting, Cllr Whitcroft presented a motion entitled "Reforming Residents' Priority parking in York" which was then adopted. York's Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan, adopted in November 2024, includes a commitment to a "Parking Strategy" as one of the key revenue initiatives deliverable in the first two year period.
3. This paper is an opportunity to consider all of these things.

Background

4. Obviously, "parking" in its most general sense is a thread joining all of this. More generally, the orthodox view that parking is simply a basic and unquestionable requirement of a functional urbanisation is increasingly challenged¹ in planning theory, with critics of unrestrained parking provision highlighting that the space occupied by parked

¹ See "The High Cost of Free Parking" by Donald Shoup

vehicles comes at a significant opportunity cost when other uses of the space are considered – for example surface car parks in city centres occupy valuable sites and can be redeveloped as commercial property, open green space or housing; removal of on-street parking on radials and other through roads can enable cycle or bus lanes or wider footways; in residential areas more formal approaches to on-street parking provision can release space for pocket parks or cycle hangars – measures which do not just benefit residents who are car owners. Some local authorities have begun to address this through kerbside strategies – for example ²Lambeth who have created a hierarchy of how public highway is best used for public benefit, with parking being just one of the ways in which the space might be used.

5. Accordingly, parking is a topic with tendrils that spread out into many areas of council activity. The council itself operates as a commercial entity in the provision and management of approximately 3 thousand paid for parking spaces across York, which generated £9m revenue in the 2023/24 financial year. York's Park and Ride is a £10m a year business. Provision of parking supports commercial, retail and cultural activity in York, particularly its centre, with parking for York city centre being provided in the centre itself, but with vehicle trips also being intercepted at park and ride sites.
6. There are approximately 7,000 residents parking spaces. Being able to park on-street in residential areas is fundamental to the way many people live their lives. For disabled people access to parking as near to their home as possible is essential; but this is also seen as desirable by many people who park vehicles on street (themselves high value and possibly containing valuable tools and equipment linked with employment).
7. Against that is the degree to which parking availability induces car ownership and use – or at least does not suppress it. Obviously, provision of copious and inexpensive parking at a location encourages people to access that location by car. But again this is complex: parking provision at railway stations and park and ride sites enables longer distance public transport trips – which might otherwise be made by car in their entirety. Perhaps the matter to consider is not whether parking *in itself* is good or bad, but what the appropriate amount of parking is in relation to the council's wider objectives and policies, balancing the tensions between the factors of accessibility, convenience

² <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/streets-roads-transport/lambeth-kerbside-strategy>

and the need to manage the externalities of car use – particularly congestion and vehicle emissions – but also urban design and impact on street scene.

8. There is also a link between parking strategy and the Movement and Place Plan which is currently in development³. If we want to find place-making opportunities whilst developing transport schemes then we need to have a clear strategy as to which kinds of location are and aren't appropriate for parking.
9. Because it is a complex topic, looking at all of "parking" is not realistic for a single Scrutiny session informed by papers prepared in perhaps 15 hours of officer time. A typical consultancy-led parking strategy would only consider paid for on and off-street parking (and not private parking or park and ride or res park), last 3 months and involve substantial data analysis and stakeholder consultation. Depending on size and scope it would cost between £30,000 and £50,000. Given the relationship between parking and revenue generation (and hence CYC's own financial position) and CYC's equality duties and affordabilities commitments and the danger of considering complex topics in a superficial way, it is necessary to assess in this paper, and discussion at Scrutiny, how "Parking" might be considered more generally as part of CYC's strategies, recognising that there are inevitable tensions between different council duties and policies which will have to be balanced in the council's parking strategy.
10. A potential approach to further study could be to consider on-street and residents' parking as a kerbside strategy to support the developing Movement and Place Plan – including the motion topic around consultation for residents' parking schemes. City centre off-street parking (and Castle Car Park) could be considered within one of the city centre workstreams whilst parking at new developments will need to be part of the Transport Supplementary Planning Document to the Local Plan. Park and ride is also a topic in its own right, but is obviously linked to the supply and cost of city centre parking more generally. Potentially some or all of these topics could be addressed through Member task-and-finish groups.
11. Consequently, the approach taken for this meeting is that Scrutiny is presented with a report on retendering the current park and ride contract. This item is timely given the procurement timescales for a

³ <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=733&MIId=14499>

new park and ride contract (with the existing contract having an end date of 31st January 2026).

12. Scrutiny members are then asked to consider how they might undertake a more general parking review, to discharge the Local Transport Strategy commitment and respark motion, bearing in mind the complexity of the subject and CYC's direct financial and reputational exposure to outcomes.

Consultation

13. This paper is offered up for discussion and has not been consulted upon. Assuming a York "Parking Strategy" is formulated along conventional lines, consultation would form part of that process.

Options

14. Members are asked to consider the approaches put forward in this paper. Whilst the ingredients of a potential strategy are set out, it should be noted that revenue and capital funding could only be made available for it by reducing activity in other areas, and that a parking strategy will be needed to accompany the Movement and Place Plan Executive committed to produce in November last year. Consequently, Members are asked for their views on the priority they wish to see placed on devising a Parking Strategy.

Council Plan

15. Commitment to producing a Parking Strategy is part of the Local Transport Strategy Implementation Plan. The Local Transport Strategy is informed by the EACH priorities of the Council Plan.

Implications

16. This paper and its Annex are presented for discussion. Parking and park and ride carry significant implications for the financial performance of the council and formal decisions on either would need to be made at the appropriate governance level before enactment. Given the potential liabilities involved the appropriate governance level would be Executive or could even be Full Council.

Risk Management

17. The information in this paper is presented to Scrutiny to allow Members to discuss the contents and feed their views back to officers, as such it does in itself generate a risk. However, if, following discussion of this paper, a Strategy was devised, that would need to be subjected to a full risk assessment before it can be enacted.

Recommendations

18. There is no direct recommendation of this report – Members are asked to consider the potential measures set out in this report and feed their views back to officers.

Annex to this report:

Annex A: Park and Ride Retendering Report

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Report
Approved

Date 17/03/2025

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All *tick*

For further information please contact the author of the report