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Ards and North Down Borough Council

Parking Strategy and Action Plan

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Executive Summary

AECOM were commissioned by Ards and North Down Borough Council to develop an off street car parking strategy for the Borough focusing on the main towns of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood, Comber and Donaghadee in addition to numerous rural villages located throughout the Council area. The purpose of this Strategy is to consider the overall requirement for parking in terms of availability, accessibility and convenience throughout the Borough.

Currently the Council manages 68 car parks providing a total of 5,000 spaces (comprising both free and charged spaces) in 16 settlements throughout the borough. Tariffs at charged car parks currently vary from £0.30 to £0.60 per hour but there is also a special £1 for five hours tariff available.

The Council has an agency agreement with the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) for the management of the 43 car parks transferred to the Council from DfI at reorganisation in 2015. They in turn employ a private contractor to carry out the majority of parking management, enforcement and monitoring associated with these off street car parks. In the remainder of the car parks management and control is achieved through Council byelaws.

In April 2018 AECOM delivered their draft report following which the Council established a Members Working Group to consider the recommendations, review them and report back. This Group has now completed their review and their recommendations have been included in this revised strategy.

Transport policies in Northern Ireland recommend that a parking strategy is based upon the implementation of:

- demand management interventions,
- better usage of existing parking provision, and
- improved turnover of short stay spaces in the centre of towns and villages.

Extensive discussions with local stakeholders and car park users within this study highlighted issues such as the condition of some Council sites, a lack of awareness of cashless parking, the need for improved parking signage and issues with long stay parking at inappropriate locations i.e. town/village centre.

The Strategy establishes six objectives which take into consideration the parking issues identified throughout the Borough during the development of the parking strategy. The objectives seek to ensure that parking supports town centre economic investment, vitality and tourism and to encourage users to park in the correct locations. Day to day parking should also be possible for all types of users, should utilise technology and should help to support sustainable forms of transport.

The Strategy recommends that the £1 for five hours concessionary tariff which is available in all charged car parks is amended in order to address issues with low space turnover, reduce long stay parking and to better reflect the value of these

sites. It is also recommended that a simpler consistent tariff scheme is introduced across all of the main Towns with a reduced tariff to apply in less central car parks and smaller towns.

The Strategy identifies a number of concerns raised during the consultation that could impact on local communities if tariffs are increased or introduced including displacement, provision of business community parking, park and ride provision. Several initiatives are recommended in the Strategy to mitigate these concerns.

In the five main towns it is recommended that a variety of actions are implemented, subject to the individual requirements and issues identified at each site. The arrangement at some car parks will be maintained whilst parking tariffs will be either introduced or changed at others. It is also proposed that additional parking is provided in Donaghadee, if practicable.

Individual actions to be completed by private parking operators, Translink and DfI are set suggested for the main towns. These include reviewing on-street parking and signage, and the appropriate use of Park & Ride sites in the town centres and the delivery of additional Park & Ride sites. Private car park operators should work collaboratively with the Council to ensure that the parking system supports the whole of town centres.

Parking provision in rural settlements is also considered with individual actions for the Council and DfI set out. The Strategy recommends that a formal charged off street car park is provided in both Greyabbey and in Ballygowan. The development of parking facilities in both villages aims to address issues with informal and footway parking. At other rural settlements, it is considered that both on street and off street parking provision is adequate at present.

The Strategy identifies that the existing car parks need considerable investment to make them fit for purpose. A range of actions to be undertaken including a review of parking features, implementation of a monitoring strategy, provision of appropriate parking for disabled users, providing appropriate parking signage, security and lighting. It is also proposed to develop SMART parking provision.

The concerns for additional provision for motorhome users, motorcycle parking and coach operators are addressed in the Strategy.

Finally, the Strategy recommends that increased electric vehicle (EV) charging provision is made at key car parks throughout the Borough. This will provide significantly enhanced EV charging provision within Council car parks and meet the growing demand of electric vehicle users. Provision will be dependent on securing funding.

1. Introduction

Ards and North Down Borough Council (The Council) appointed AECOM to develop an off street car parking strategy which will apply throughout the Borough, and will focus upon the five main towns of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood, Comber and Donaghadee as well as rural settlements located throughout the Borough.

Ards and North Down Borough Council was formed on 1st April 2015 and assumed responsibility for the former Ards Borough and North Down Borough Council areas. As a result of Local Government Reform in Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure Roads (DfI) transferred all of its off street car parks (excluding Park and Ride/Park and Share sites which are currently owned by DfI but managed by Translink) to local councils. Therefore, the Council is now responsible for the operation of 68 car parks, comprising 43 Legacy DfI and 25 Legacy Council car parks.

The purpose of the Parking Strategy is to address the overall requirement for parking in the Council area in terms of availability, accessibility and convenience.

Furthermore, the Strategy takes account of the needs of the Council's principal settlements i.e. Bangor, Newtownards, Comber, Holywood and Donaghadee as places to work, visit and invest.

1.1 Parking Strategy Stages

The study is split into four stages:

- Stage 1 – Baseline Review;
- Stage 2 – Current Issues, Challenges and Trends;
- Stage 3 – Study of Future Developments; and
- Stage 4 – Parking Strategy and Action Plan.
- Stage 4A – Revised Parking Strategy and Action Plan

This strategy and action plan has been developed following the completion of the following stages:

- Stage 1 - consideration of the baseline in terms of parking provision and policies and also an assessment and review of usage, operation and tariffs etc.;
- Stage 2 - consideration of current issues, challenges and trends in relation to parking within the Council Borough and the identification, through successful scheme examples, best practice in terms of the management and operation of parking facilities; and

- Stage 3 - review of potential future developments and the impact that they may have upon parking provision in off street parking facilities throughout the Borough, with a particular focus upon the Bangor and Newtownards.

AECOM delivered their report in April 2018, but concerns were expressed over some of the proposals. An Elected Members Working Group was subsequently formed in September 2018 to review the recommendations and seek a way forward.

The results of the work undertaken in carrying out the review is contained in Stage 2A.

2. Baseline Review and Consultation

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary and overview of the primary finding of Stages 1 – 3 of the Parking Strategy development for Ards and North Down Borough.

2.2 Existing Parking Provision

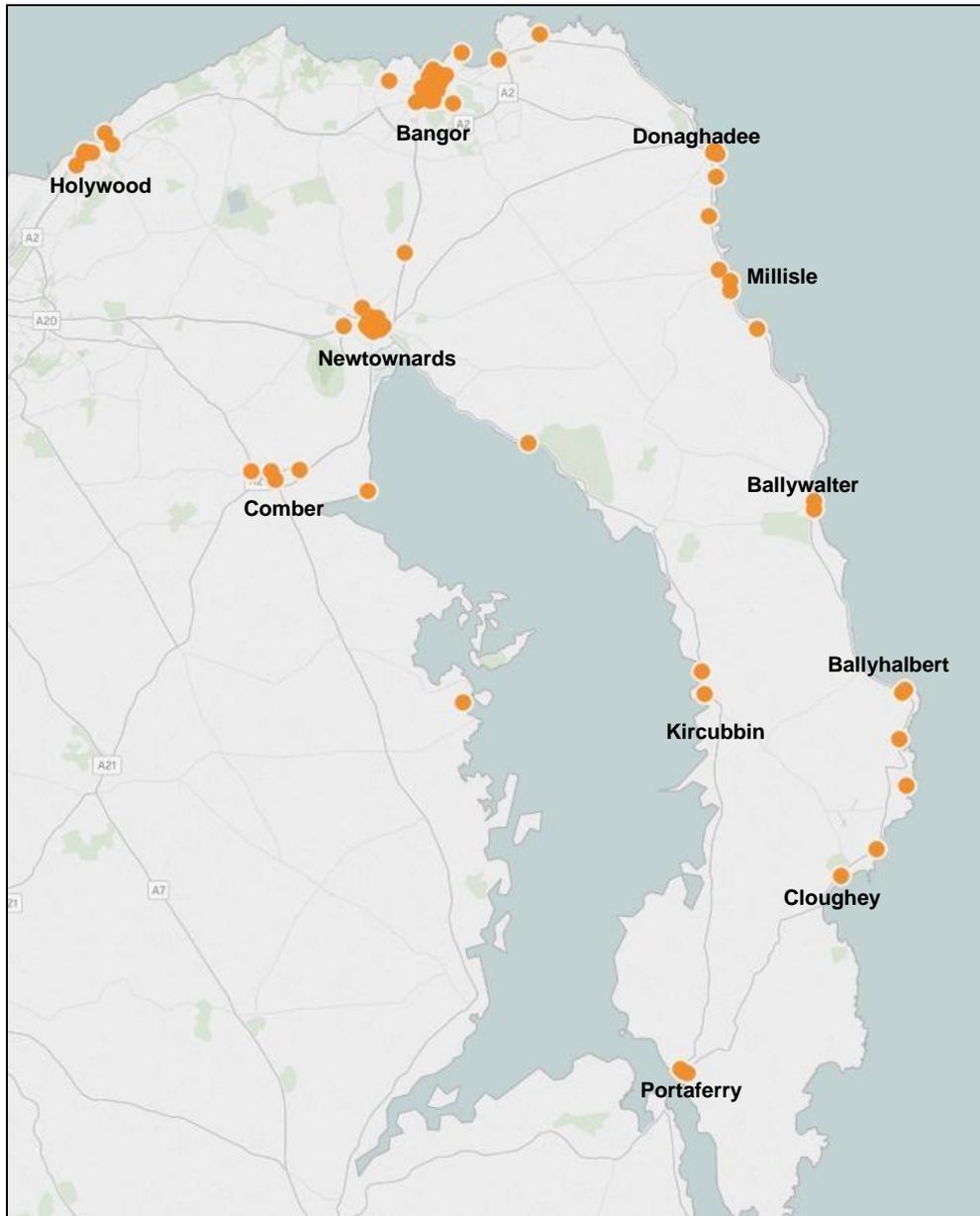
2.2.1 Overall Council Borough Provision

ANDB Council is responsible for the operation and management of 68 off street car parks (i.e. comprising 43 Legacy Dfl and 25 Legacy Council sites). Figure 1 below provides an overview of the entire study area and the location of the various car parks.

The 68 Council owned parking facilities are located within in the following sixteen settlements throughout the borough:

- Bangor – 18 car parks;
- Newtownards – 12 car parks;
- Comber – 5 car parks;
- Hollywood – 6 car parks;
- Donaghadee – 5 car parks;
- Ballyhalbert – 2 car parks;
- Ballywalter – 2 car parks;
- Cloughey – 2 car parks;
- Whiterock – 1 car park;
- Conlig – 1 car park;
- Cunningburn – 1 car park;
- Groomsport – 2 car parks;
- Kircubbin – 2 car parks;
- Millisle – 4 car parks;
- Portaferry – 3 car parks; and
- Portavogie – 2 car parks.

Figure 1. Overview of Study Area



Source: AECOM / Open Street Map

The 68 Council car parks provide a total of approximately 5,000 spaces through a mixture of charged and free parking provision, consisting of 22 charged and 46 free sites. The 22 charged car parks provide a total of 1,428 spaces and the 46 free sites provide a total of 3,654 spaces.

Appendices A – E show the location, size, ownership and total number of spaces provided in all of the off street car parks located within the following five towns:

- Bangor, Newtownards, Hollywood, Comber and Donaghadee.

Charged parking provision is currently provided in the towns of Bangor, Newtownards and Hollywood and the remaining Council sites in the Borough provide

free parking provision. At charged Council sites, parking users can pay using a variety of payment options which include cash, cashless (i.e. Parkmobile) and season tickets.

Parking tariffs in the Council owned car parks vary between towns. In Bangor there are nine charged car parks and tariffs vary between £0.30 and £0.60 per hour. In Newtownards there are ten charged sites and tariffs between £0.40 and £0.60 per hour are provided. In Holywood there are three charged sites and tariffs ranging between £0.40 and £0.60 per hour are in place.

The Council also inherited a tariff of £1.00 for five hours duration of stay at the 22 charged car parks transferred from the DfI following the transfer in 2015.

The level of disabled parking provision in car parks varies throughout the Council Borough, with some car parks providing no disabled parking spaces. In total, designated disabled parking provision accounts for 2% of overall Council off street parking provision.

Electric Vehicle (EV) charging provision is currently provided at just one Council car park: one space at the Rope Walk car park, Portaferry.

A parking audit was completed as part of the study in each of the 68 Council car parks in order to ascertain the features provided at each site. The audits revealed that there is generally a poor standard in terms of parking surface and car park layout and some sites were found to lack lighting, adequate signage, white lining and conventionally sized parking bays. Most of the sites transferred from DfI will require considerable investment to bring them up to a reasonable standard.

In relation to private vehicle ownership, the 2011 Census shows that multiple vehicle ownership levels in Ards and North Down Borough are higher in comparison to Northern Ireland as a whole. This may reflect the more rural nature of the Borough and it means that people are more reliant on private transport.

Within the study there was a need to assess the occupancy and turnover at the off street Council parking facilities, in order to better understand the individual characteristics of each site and settlement. AECOM completed surveys at Council car parks throughout the months of October and November 2017.

The surveys show that there is a lack of parking space overall in the Council car parks in Newtownards during the weekend and in Holywood during the weekday morning.

This was confirmed during further surveys that were carried out in February 2019.

Overall in the towns of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood and Comber the Council car parks are dominated by long stay parking. This means that some parking users are struggling to find an available parking space.

The rural villages within the Council Borough experience seasonal fluctuations in parking demand which results in the car parks being busier during high season e.g. bank holidays, summer holidays, market days etc. whereas during the rest of the year the sites operate with sufficient spare capacity.

2.3 Policy Review

There are several key documents which focus upon transport policy in Northern Ireland and within these documents there are parking policies which are considered relevant when developing a Parking Strategy and Action Plan.

These key transport policies, masterplans, village plans and development plans which are relevant to AND Borough include:

- Regional Development Strategy (RDS);
- Regional Transport Strategy (RTS);
- Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS);
- PPS3 – Access, Movement and Parking;
- PPS13 – Transportation and Land-Use;
- Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP);
- Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP);
- Integrated Strategy for Ards and North Down Draft;
- Local Development Plan Baseline Paper (POP) – Transportation draft;
- Ards and North Down Area Plan;
- Newtownards Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan;
- Bangor Town Centre Masterplan;
- Holywood Town Centre Masterplan;
- Comber Town Centre Masterplan;
- Kircubbin Integrated Village Plan;
- Portaferry Integrated Village Plan;
- Donaghadee Town Centre Masterplan;
- Ballygowan Development Plan;
- Carrowdore Village Development Plan;
- Helens Bay and Crawfordsburn Integrated Village Plan;
- Lisbarnett and Lisbane village Plan;
- Six Road Ends Integrated Rural Plan;
- Cloughey Integrated Village Plan;
- Millisle 2024 – Moving Forward;
- Portavogie Village Development Plan;
- Ballyhalbert Integrated Village Plan;
- Ballywalter Integrated Village Plan;
- Conlig Integrated Village Plan;
- Greyabbey Integrated Village Plan; and the
- Groomsport Integrated Village Plan.

The aforementioned transport policies generally state that the development of a parking strategy should be based upon the application of demand management interventions and the better management of existing parking provision and congestion experienced at peak times in settlements. The policies also seek to encourage the turnover of short stay spaces in the centre of settlements.

Wider regional policies i.e. RDS, RTS and SPSS also discuss demand management and the importance of economic activity. The RDS states the need to increase the economic base of Bangor in terms of retail and employment provision in order to reduce Bangor's role as a commuter town. Newtownards is referred to as a key commuter town in the RDS due to its proximity to Belfast and it is noted that it has a key role in the growth of the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA) by attracting tourists, commuters and businesses.

The Borough's Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development discusses the need to sustainably manage the Borough's natural environment and minimise the negative impacts associated with economic opportunities upon the environment in order to achieve prosperity. Also the Strategy states the need for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, development of accessible transport options and the need to connect people and places through coastal routes and access points. The Strategy also sets out a hub and gateway approach for the Borough, with hubs being points of concentration within a destination and gateways serving as important points in a visitor's journey and experience.

The Local Development Plan Baseline Paper for Transportation states that multiple vehicle ownership in the Borough is higher compared to Northern Ireland as a whole. The Paper also reveals that the Borough experiences accessibility issues, particularly within the southern portion of the Ards Peninsula where road closures as a result of poor weather negatively impacts upon accessibility and increases journey times for local residents and visitors.

The Masterplan for Bangor highlights the need to reconnect Bangor town centre with the Waterfront and to develop Bangor as a high-quality destination within Northern Ireland. It is also stated that effective management of existing parking provision is required in order to maximise short stay spaces and encourage long stay parking in appropriate locations i.e. towards the periphery of the town centre. In addition, the Area Plan states the need to facilitate sustainable development, growth and employment in Bangor in order to promote a viable town centre.

Both the Area Plan and Masterplan state the need to promote, develop and strengthen Newtownards role within the Borough through the development of a range of land uses including retail, residential and commercial, and as part of these proposals it is stated that there may be a need to provide increase parking provision.

The Hollywood Masterplan aims to link communities, support business, harness heritage and strengthen the identity of Hollywood. It is proposed to reposition and enlarge the existing Hollywood Rail Station in order to cater for future population growth in the town.

In Comber, the Masterplan proposes that increased parking provision should be provided as part of major future developments e.g. the proposed community centre and that there is a need to encourage shared parking between public buildings going forward.

The Donaghadee Masterplan focuses upon the need for regeneration and growth in the town. It states the need to provide an accessible and attractive town centre through public realm improvements, improved vehicle, pedestrian and cycle connections to the Commons Car Park and the provision of additional on street parking provision.

Several local plans propose the provision of additional / formal parking provision in order to improve accessibility or address localised issues associated with parking, such as in Cloughey and Portavogie.

2.4 Current Management and Operational Strategies

The Council currently has an agency agreement with Dfl for the management of their car parks in providing enforcement services, PCN administration and ticket machine maintenance. In turn, Dfl employ a private contractor, NSL, to provide parking enforcement and monitoring associated with the off street car parks.

As part of the agency agreement Dfl process the Parking Control Notices (PCNs) which are issued by the parking attendants. It should be noted that the issued PCNs help to cover the administrative costs associated with parking enforcement.

Financial data for the financial year 2016/2017 was supplied by ANDB Council which set out parking expenditure and revenue for all Council parking facilities throughout the Borough. During the Financial Year 2016/2017 the 22 charged Council sites generated total revenue of £981,577, comprising £839,148 from Pay and Display and £142,429 from PCN income. Also' the Council's total parking expenditure during FY 2016/2017 was £104,477.

AECOM individually reviewed and analysed each car park in conjunction with parking usage data surveyed by AECOM during the months of October and November 2017. Analysis shows that revenues generated per space per hour per day range between £0.03 and £0.30. On average, £0.13 per space per hour is generated by the Council sites. This is compared to the stated tariffs which range between £0.30 - £0.60 per hour in the 22 car parks. However, these tariffs can also be overridden by the £1.00 for up to five hours tariff which effectively enables parking users to park for £0.20 per hour, if used. In addition, it should be noted that the busier parking facilities subsidise the less busy and free sites.

In order for a town centre car park to be performing well overall it is considered that the site should ideally have a low proportion of long stay parkers, be less than 80% full and yield a reasonable revenue per space. By applying this information, it is considered that the following three Council sites are performing relatively well overall;

- Clifton Road, Bangor;
- The Vennel, Bangor; and
- Holborn Avenue, Bangor.

Furthermore, at The Vennel and Holborn Avenue a higher tariff is charged (£0.50 / £0.60 per hour), this suggests that parking location and convenience primarily influences where parking users choose to park, rather than parking tariffs. This is also mirrored by research conducted into parking preference and by an online parking user survey conducted by AECOM as part of this study.

By comparison the remaining 19 charged car parks are considered to not be performing well overall, with 13 sites respectively considered to have a high percentage of all-day parkers and high occupancies. Also, 12 sites do not yield a reasonable revenue per space.

2.5 Pricing Strategies

As part of their study AECOM compared parking tariffs in the Borough to other Council areas within Northern Ireland and they were found to be comparable to other Council areas. The special tariff of £1.00 for either three or five hours is also currently in place in seven other Council areas in Northern Ireland.

In comparable sized settlements in the Republic of Ireland and in the United Kingdom, parking tariffs are higher when compared to parking tariffs in the Council Borough i.e. typically more than double.

Therefore, parking tariffs in Northern Ireland are generally lower in comparison to similar settlements in the Republic of Ireland.

2.6 Tourism, Seasonality and the Environment

Tourism is important in AND Borough, contributing £46m to the Borough's economy during 2016. The Council has developed a draft Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy (2018 – 2030) for the Borough in which describes a coherent vision for the future prosperity, economic growth, welcoming of visitors and the improvement of the Borough's urban and rural places.

The Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy sets out a hub and gateway approach for the Borough, with hubs being points of

concentration within a destination and gateways serving as important points in a visitor's journey and experience.

The Strategy identifies Holywood, Comber, Donaghadee, Greyabbey and Portaferry as important town hubs and gateways within the Borough. Also, the strategic importance of other settlements such as Bangor, Groomsport, Comber, Donaghadee, Portavogie, Portaferry, Cuningburn, Whiterock, Kircubbin, Ballywalter, Ballyhalbert and Millisle are noted as they provide routes and points of access to Belfast, Strangford Lough and the Irish Sea.

In order to achievement the strategy's vision, a series of targets and actions have been identified in order to successfully achieve this vision for the Borough:

- Increase job growth by 22% by 2030, resulting in an additional 7,500 jobs;
- To increase productivity (GVA per head) to at least the NI average by the end of 2030;
- Grow the Borough's share of overnight trips from 6% in 2016 to 10% in 2030;
- Safeguard the Borough's natural habitats and assets for future generations;
- Connect people and places through physical, social and digital links; and
- Promote the Borough in order to attract investment and visitors.

Therefore, key to supporting tourism within the Borough are the provision of parking facilities because the quality of parking provided in an area can impact upon the visitor's opinions of an area or settlement. Visitors consider where to park when planning their trip, therefore strategically located parking signage and accurate, concise information can improve the attractiveness of a settlement or area.

Seasonal fluctuations in parking demand are associated with market days, public holidays and caravan and camp site holiday markers. The highest vehicle counts throughout the Borough are experienced during the months of July and August. The majority of settlements in the Borough are considered to already accommodate the current level of visitors, however it is noted that seasonal fluctuations in parking demand may reduce existing spare capacity at some car parks.

Fluctuations in parking demand across the Borough are also associated with event days. The increased number of visitors associated with the following events result in seasonal fluctuations in parking demand which may decrease the amount of spare capacity at some parking facilities, such as:

- Comber Potato Festival;
- Bangor and Newtownards Easter;
- Portavogie Seafood Festival;
- Seapark Fireworks, Holywood;
- Bangor, Newtownards and Donaghadee Christmas switch on events.

Parking impacts on the environment and air quality as a result of congestion, traffic, pollutants and vehicle circulation. Currently air quality within AND Borough meets the health-based air quality objectives, however congestion is an issue in some areas of the Borough such as along the A2 Old Holywood Road.

2.7 Best Practice in Management and Operation

A review of best practice was completed which considered how car parks should be designed in terms of signage, lighting, layout, security and access.

This review highlighted the following key features which could be considered applicable in developing the parking strategy for the area:

- Ease of use in relation to payment options, where applicable;
- Improved parking signage would aid the redistribution of vehicles wishing to park and show choices available to parking users in terms of parking location;
- The perception of safety in car parks is vital for continued use, therefore developing defined areas with perimeter fencing, improved lighting and CCTV at some parking facilities may increase user confidence and in turn increase parking occupancies; and
- The setting of parking tariffs can be used to influence parking activity including space turnover, usage levels, user type and duration of stay. However, each location is unique and there are a range of factors that need to be considered, but in town centres the primary focus should generally be on ensuring space availability for customers. Comparable parking tariffs from surrounding facilities, settlements and Council areas are also important when considering how to improve parking usage.

2.8 Initial Consultation

The development of this Parking Strategy has involved extensive consultations with key stakeholder consultations held in ten local towns and villages throughout the Borough. The consultations were carried out during the months of December 2017 and January 2018. Consultations were conducted using several formats which included one-to-one conversations, local workshop consultations and online car park user surveys.

The key themes which emerged from the consultation process include the following:

- Issues with the under-provision of disabled parking provision;
- Some more rural settlements do not provide formal on-street and off-street parking provision;
- Issues with the overall quality, condition and parking features at some Council car parks;

- Potential to improve and increase coach parking facilities, and to develop a coach parking map;
- Current parking signage and disabled signage is lacking in some settlements;
- Potential to introduce a residents parking scheme in some areas;
- Issues with a lack of advertisement and awareness of cashless parking technology i.e. Parkmobile;
- Issues with vehicles parking along footways and in contravention of yellow line markings throughout the Council Borough;
- Issues with vehicles parking for long durations of stay at inappropriate locations;
- Potential to improve parking experience through the introduction of parking technology such as ANPR; and
- Potential to expand current Electric Vehicle (EV) provision throughout the Council Borough.

The following key information was derived from the online parking user surveys:

- The majority of respondents stated that they typically used parking facilities on a daily basis;
- The majority of respondents answered that they typically park for the purpose of shopping;
- The majority of respondents stated that they typically find it difficult to locate an available parking space, however surveys completed by AECOM show that there is adequate spare capacity overall in most settlements. This reveals that there is a need for improved signage and information to direct users to nearby parking facilities, and for improved space turnover and availability in the most desirable locations;
- The majority of respondents stated that they typically park for between one and two hours;
- Most respondents answered that parking location is the most important consideration for users when considering where to park, followed by space availability, parking accessibility and then parking cost; and
- There is perceived to be a lack of disabled parking provision throughout the Borough.

2.9 Future Developments

As part of the parking strategy development, AECOM considered future changes to parking supply and demand and the potential impact of development proposals in the Borough. This was carried out to enable the Council to make informed decisions regarding potential future developments and alterations to current parking provision in the Council Borough.

A Car Park Decision Support (CPDS) Tool was developed by AECOM to model future alterations to current parking provision in the towns of Bangor and Newtownards. The baseline level for demand was developed using parking supply and demand data surveyed by AECOM as part of Stage 1 of the Parking Strategy development.

Live planning applications were considered in both Bangor and Newtownards in addition to the Bangor Town Centre Masterplan and the Newtownards Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan respectively, in regard to their consideration of and / or their impact upon parking in the town centres of Bangor and Newtownards.

In total, AECOM developed four development scenarios and associated assumptions, to test the impacts of future development scenarios using the CPDS Tool in Bangor, and six development scenarios were developed for Newtownards:

Bangor

- Scenario 1 – Baseline Year at 2017;
- Scenario 2 – Planning Applications at 2023;
- Scenario 3 – Bangor Town Centre Masterplan at 2028; and
- Scenario 4 – Combining scenarios 1 – 3 at 2028.

Newtownards

- Scenario 1 – Baseline Year at 2017;
- Scenario 2 – Planning Applications at 2023;
- Scenario 3 – Partial Newtownards Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan at 2028;
- Scenario 4 – Full Masterplan at 2028;
- Scenario 5 – Combining scenarios 1 – 4 at 2028; and
- Scenario 6 – Scenario 5 and Additional Parking provision at 2028.

A brief summary of the primary findings from the assessments conducted in Bangor and Newtownards are discussed in Sections 3.4 and 3.5.

In Bangor, increased parking provision would need to be provided in the Queen's Parade and Central Avenue areas if the mixed use Queen's Parade development was to be delivered.

Increased parking provision would be required in Newtownards in the central area bounded by John Street, Regent Street, Frederick Street and Kennel Lane if numerous civic, residential, library, retail and commercial developments were to be developed in the future.

Nominal demand growth estimates were carried out by AECOM per annum in the five main towns of Bangor, Newtownards, Holywood, Comber and Donaghadee for the year 2022 and 2027. Three scenarios were developed for the year 2022 and 2027 respectively i.e. 1%, 3% and 5% growth per annum.

Under the low 1% scenario, overall capacity is full in Holywood in 2022 and full in Holywood, Comber and Newtownards in 2027. Under the medium 3% scenario, overall capacity is full in Holywood, Comber and Newtownards in 2022 and 2027. Under the high 5% scenario, overall capacity is full in Holywood, Comber and Newtownards in 2022 and full in all towns in 2027 with the exception of Donaghadee.

3. Strategy Actions

3.1 Introduction

The objectives for the Parking Strategy are outlined within this chapter alongside the rationale for each individual action for the Parking Strategy. Actions for the Council are considered initially, and then actions which could be completed by other stakeholders are set out for Translink, DfI and private parking operators.

Chapter 4 provides additional actions for the Council and at the end of Chapter 4 the Action Plan is provided which sets out the individual actions, timescales, priority levels and the stakeholders involved.

3.2 Objectives

As part of this Parking Strategy a number of objectives have been developed which take into consideration the issues identified in the Borough during Stage 1, 2 and 3 of the Parking Strategy development.

The objectives for Ards and North Down Borough Parking Strategy are as follows:

1. Provide an appropriate level of parking to support economic investment and vitality in urban and rural locations;
2. Ensure that parking takes place at appropriate locations;
3. Ensure that parking is provided for all types of users;

4. Provide high quality parking and information, through the use of technology where possible;
5. Ensure that parking provision supports tourism; and
6. Ensure that parking provision encourages sustainable forms of transport.

3.3 Review of Car Park Tariffs

There are currently nine charged Council car parks in Bangor, ten in Newtownards and three in Holywood with tariffs ranging from £0.30 to £0.60 per hour. However, in all charged car parks there is an overarching tariff of £1.00 for up to five hours parking. This tariff was introduced in 2014 by DfI and adopted by the Council when they took control of the car parks. It overrides the standard tariffs and effectively allows users to park for £0.20 per hour.

This is impacting upon occupancies and duration of stay within the car parks by encouraging long stay parking. As discussed throughout forthcoming sections of this chapter, most Council car parks in the main towns of Bangor, Newtownards and Holywood experience high occupancies and high proportions of all-day parking. This means that in key locations the current tariffs are not conducive to changing parking behaviour.

It is not appropriate for high proportions of the most desirable car parks to be taken up by all day parkers, as this limits the turnover of spaces and means that shoppers and tourists struggle to find anywhere to park in the centre of the towns. The tariffs in the town centres need to be reflective of the premium nature of the car parks and that they discourage all day parking.

It is therefore recommended that the £1.00 for up to five hours tariff is removed in all charged Council car parks and introduce a new concessionary tariff across all car parks. This will address some of the issues with low space turnover and people parking for long stay durations in key Council parking facilities. The removal of the £1.00 for five hours tariff will help to;

- improve space turnover;
- reduce long stay parking associated with commuters and local workers at key town centre car parks; and
- better reflect the value of these town centre car parks.

It is proposed that the following new tariffs will apply across all charged car parks:

Tariff A

- 50p for the first two hours then £1.00 per hour thereafter.

- This tariff will apply in all main town centre car parks.

Tariff B

- 50p for the first 2 hours then 50p per hour thereafter.
- This tariff will apply in peripheral town centre car parks and smaller centres such as Comber and Donaghadee.

It is also proposed to introduce alpha numeric key pads on all ticket machines so that the vehicle owner will need to enter their vehicle registration number when they pay for a ticket. The registration will then be printed on their ticket. This will ensure that a person can only obtain the concessionary 2-hour tariff once per day.

It is recommended that the tariffs are reviewed on a regular basis using updated usage and behavioural data to ensure that they appropriate and are achieving the set aims.

3.4 Mitigation Initiatives

During the consultation with the Town Steering Groups and the Members Working Group several issues and concerns were highlighted that may arise if the new tariffs are introduced.

3.4.1 Displacement

Concern was expressed that if tariffs are increased or introduced in certain car parks the long stay parkers will be displaced into the adjoining streets and hence add to the problems for residents.

It is important to acknowledge that this strategy confirms the need to reduce long stay parking in their car parks to ensure shoppers and those who do business in our towns can access parking when they need it. To try to ensure that problems do not arise in the adjoining streets it is proposed that the Council will work with DFI staff to identify specific problems and encourage DFI to introduce on street parking restrictions. Council will all undertake surveys in identified streets to understand the problems as they arise.

3.4.2 Business Parking

Council cannot continue to provide sufficient parking to provide for shoppers and staff parking for businesses. To do so would defeat our aim to reduce long stay parking within the main town centres. During the consultations it was evident that

Council needs to take account of parking provision for business owners and their staff.

To support businesses and address this demand it is proposed to:

- Carry out surveys to identify car parking in private ownership e.g. churches, community halls etc. which is not normally being used during the working week. Council would then act as intermediaries between the property owner and businesses so they can reach agreement to rent parking to the benefit of both parties; and
- Encourage they use outlying car parks where the lower tariff applies e.g. Newtownards Road, Bangor and Ann Street, Newtownards; and
- Work with Translink to promote and incentivise their local bus services.

Park and Ride

Whilst Park and Ride provision is the responsibility of Translink and DFI during the consultation process concerns were raised that this demand needed to be fully addressed in the Strategy and that Council needs to be involved in decisions and planning around Park and Ride.

To address the concerns, it is proposed that:

- Establish a working group with DFI and Translink to seek answers to the growing Park and Ride problem;
- Work with Translink to promote their local bus services which link to the trains/buses. The Park and Ride car parks are currently full every working day. The aim would be to encourage travellers to use the bus and reduce the number of cars needed to be parked especially in Bangor and Holywood.

Support for Local Businesses

The car parks need to help to support and aid the rejuvenation of our towns and any increased tariffs should not be seen as a negative to this. Council needs to consider ways of encouraging the business community to see the car parks as an asset.

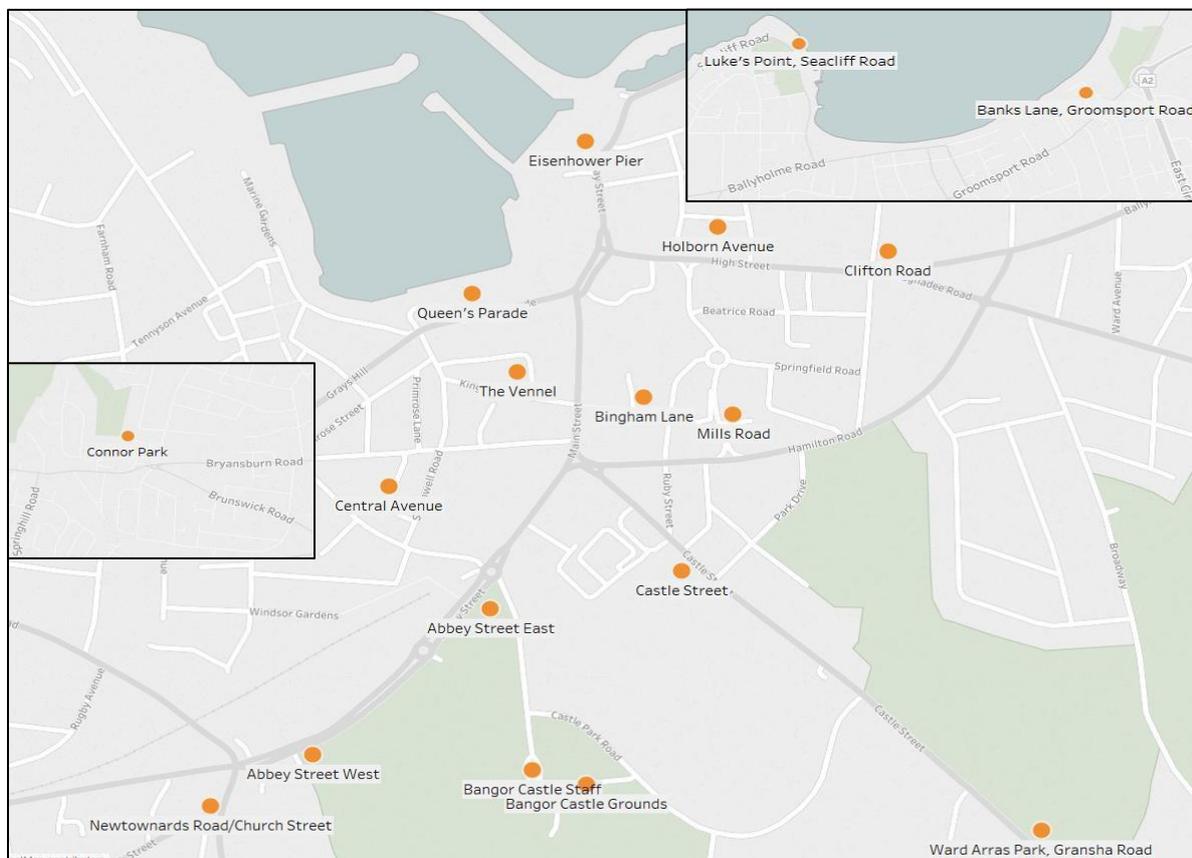
- Work with local businesses to encourage the introduction of a parking charge refund scheme whereby if a person purchased more than a specified amount the shop would refund part or all their parking charge. Council would promote administer such a scheme, but the business would be responsible for the tariff refund; and

- Introduce and promote free car parking after 5 on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights to promote the evening economy.

3.5 Bangor

There are 25 publicly available off-street car parks in Bangor, 21 of which are located in the town centre. The Council owns 18 of these sites, nine of which are currently charged. The other seven sites are privately owned, four of which are charged. The locations of the 18 Council sites are presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Council Car Parks, Bangor



Source: AECOM / Open Street Map

Overall, around 40% - 60% of off-street spaces in Bangor are full at any given time. This shows that there is sufficient parking capacity overall in the town centre at present.

However, when usage at individual car park level is examined, there are some car parks that are operating at capacity and this is leading to user frustration through

difficulty in finding spaces to park in. This is also a key theme coming through from the consultations that have been carried out.

Seven of the Council's car parks are typically full (i.e. operate above 85% capacity), only two of which are charged i.e. Abbey Street East and Bingham Lane. In addition, on street parking is regularly full within the main retail core of Bangor Town Centre.

Around 40% of parkers (two out of five) at Council sites are long stay, i.e. parked for more than four hours. At two of the Council's sites, more than half of all vehicles that were parked were long stay i.e. Abbey Street West and Newtownards Road / Church Road. Such behaviour is having a significant impact on space availability at council sites within the town centre.

Based upon occupancy levels throughout, the busiest car parks in Bangor during the weekday and weekend are:

- Abbey Street East;
- Bingham Lane;
- Newtownards Road / Church Street;
- Eisenhower Pier; and
- Queen's Parade.

Each of the above car parks are a key asset for the town centre and there is a need to influence usage so that more spaces become available. There is also a need for parking price to be more reflective of the value of where each of the car parks are located.

As previously mentioned in Section 2.6, seasonal and one-off events held in Bangor such as Bangor Lights and Bangor Easter generates fluctuations in parking demand. Increased visitor numbers associated with these events decreases the amount of spare capacity at some key car parks in the town centre which may result in users struggling to find an available parking space.

The strategy proposes that the most desirable sites located closest to key attractions and amenities are charged at a higher rate in order to promote short stay parking.

It is considered that Queen's Parade car park currently constrains the use of Pickie Fun Park, in particular for parents with children. Also, there is a proposal to develop a Coastal Masterplan for Bangor which will link Pickie Fun Park to Luke's Point.

Private car park operators provide off street parking provision in Bangor, and this is generally associated with retail developments e.g. ASDA and Bloomfield Shopping Centre. It is recommended that such operators regularly monitor their parking provision in terms of usage and behaviour, to ensure provision is appropriately utilised. It is also recommended that private parking operators actively seek to

collaborate with the Council and DfI to ensure that parking in Bangor is appropriate in terms of availability, location and price.

Furthermore, the Flagship Centre was a key feature in the heart of Bangor town centre providing 600 spaces including 22 disabled bays. However, this site has now closed.

The Marina car park, Quay Street, Bangor is currently leased by the Council to Quay Marine to provide access for boat owners to the marina's quay. It is considered that the Council could make more efficient and better use of this space.

In addition, Park and Ride facilities in Bangor are well used in the vicinity of Bangor bus and rail station with evidence that supply exceeds the demand which continues to grow. It is therefore recommended that monitoring and enforcement by Translink occurs at Bangor P&R and Dufferin Avenue P&R, to ensure that parkers are genuinely using public transport services and not misusing the sites for other purposes. Also monitoring of Park and Ride usage is required to prevent overspill of Park and Ride users onto adjacent Council car parks (i.e. Abbey Street East and West, Newtownards Road/Church Street and Castle Street) because these Council sites are not intended for the use of Park and Ride users.

On street car parking is under the control of DfI in addition to other highway responsibilities. Currently DfI do not have plans to alter provision in Bangor, however it is recommended that this is kept under regular review. DfI did state that if Residents Parking (zoned residential parking whereby certain on street parking spaces are designated for the use of nearby residents only) was considered to be necessary in the future then it could potentially be implemented.

In addition, it is recommended that regular parking studies are carried out in order to inform these reviews, which will enable trends to be identified and evidence-based decision making. These studies should record on street occupancies, durations of stay and any parking infringements. It is also recommended that DfI collaborate with the Council in order to share parking data.

AECOM conducted future assessments as part of the parking strategy development, to consider how future changes to parking demand and supply and the potential impact of development proposals will affect parking provision in Bangor. The assessments show that as a result of these proposals there will likely be increased pressure in the Abbey Street and Queen's Parade areas of Bangor in the future. This shows there is a clear need for management and a need to provide increased parking provision as part of any new / future developments. The current proposal for the redevelopment of Queens Parade proposes to remove the car parks at the Vennel, Project 21 and Queens Parade.

AECOM has produced a further Car Parking Study in August 2019 to take account of the current proposed Queens Parade development plans. In their conclusion they have stated if the Flagship centre is not reopened (and their 600 parking spaces

were not available) there may be a need to provide up to 385 additional car parking spaces in the Town.

If the Flagship is reopened and Queens Parade is redeveloped there may still be a need for up to 50 additional parking spaces in the Town. There is likely to be ongoing parking pressure in the Town centre even if the Flagship is reopened.

It is acknowledged that the above proposals may result in changes to the way that some individuals travel. However there are a range of alternative options for longer stay parking on the edge of Bangor town centre and these include Council car parks such as Newtownards Road/ Church Street, Abbey Street West and Luke's Point car parks which are within reasonable walking distance (<20mins) of the centre of the town. The town centre itself is highly accessible on foot and has good pedestrian permeability throughout. It is further proposed that charging at Tariff B is introduced at Abbey Street West and Newtownards Road to provide reduced rate long stay spaces. Newtownards Road is currently a free car park.

Council should implement the initiatives set out in Section 3.4 to deal with possible displacement of cars away from the car parks, business parking availability and long stay parking options.

Opportunities for rail and bus use are available in Bangor at the main station at Abbey Street. There is also the option to cycle in the town centre, and Route 93 of the National Cycle Network connects Bangor, Crawfordsburn and Newtownards. Car sharing opportunities are also viable and this is a cost-effective method of using the private car, if viable.

It should also be noted that the Council will be providing covered cycle parking in the centre of Bangor at one of the Council car parks.

This strategy recommends that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided at Bingham Lane car park. Section 4.8 provides further information.

It is recommended that coach layover points are provided in Bangor at Luke's Point car park and also for pick up and drop offs on street in the centre of the town, further details regarding this recommendation are provided in Section 4.9.

This strategy recommends that motorhome parking provision is provided at Luke's Point car park on the periphery of Bangor town centre including the provision of aire de service facilities. Further details regarding this recommendation are provided in Section 4.10.

It is further recommended that motorcycle provision is provided at Holborn Avenue and Mills Road car parks in Bangor and information regarding this recommendation is set out in Section 4.11.

Table 1 outlines the proposed changes which are advocated as part of the Parking Strategy in the 18 existing Council car parks in Bangor. Table 1 also details the

current and proposed parking arrangements alongside the associated rationale for any proposed alterations.

The proposed car parking arrangements in Council parking facilities in Bangor should be implemented in the short term (1-2 years), and then reviewed in light of updated usage and behavioural data. By comparison proposed changes to motorcycle and motorhome provision should be implemented in the medium term (1-5 years).

This strategy makes the following recommendations:

Table 1. Bangor Car Park Recommendations

| Car Park | Current Arrangement | Proposed Arrangement | Rationale |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| Abbey Street East | £0.50 per hour tariff | Tariff A | The car park is located in a desirable location close to the centre of town and Bangor bus / rail station, and desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. |
| Bingham Lane | £0.60 per hour tariff | Tariff A Provide EV charging points (x2) | This key car park is located in a desirable central location. The site is located in a central location and this will increase the features provided onsite. |
| Castle Street | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | The site has adequate spare capacity. |
| Clifton Road | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff B | The site's reasonably peripheral location makes it an appropriate location for long stay parkers; therefore the tariff is reflective of that. |
| Holborn Avenue | £0.50 per hour tariff | Tariff A Provide motorcycle provision | The site's central location makes it a desirable location to park. The car park is in a busy central location; providing a safe environment for motorcycles close to local amenities. |
| Mills Road | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | The site's central location makes it a desirable location to park. |
| The Vennel | £0.60 per hour tariff | Tariff A | The site is located in a desirable central location. |

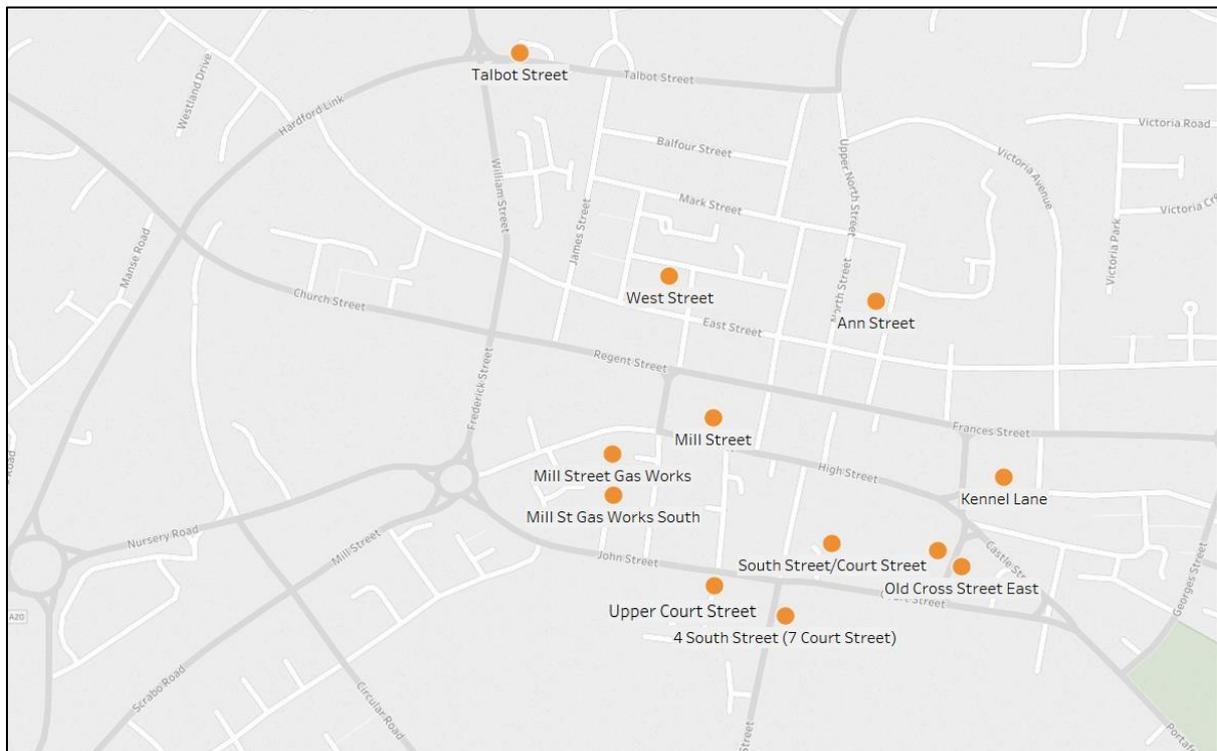
| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|
| Abbey Street West | £0.30 per hour tariff | Tariff B | The site has spare capacity and its peripheral location makes it appropriate for long stay parkers. |
| Central Avenue | £0.30 per hour tariff | Closure of site | The site is considered to be surplus to requirements. It provides a small number of spaces, has low usage and does not appear to be well known. It could be repurposed for other uses. |
| Newtownards Road / Church Street | Free parking | Tariff B | The site may come forward as a development site. Parking should be retained going forward in order to accommodate existing demand and to provide some free parking for long stay users. |
| Eisenhower Pier | Free parking | Tariff B | The site experiences high occupancies and is located in a desirable location. Introducing tariffs will allow the Council to better manage this car park. |
| Luke's Point | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The car park has ample spare capacity and is located in a peripheral location. It is less than 20 mins walk to the town centre, so is suitable for long stay parking for those would wish to avail of it. |
| | | Provide motorhome parking provision and aire de service facilities. | See 4.10 for further information. |
| | | Provide coach parking. | The car park's peripheral location makes it an ideal location for coach parking. |
| | | Provide EV x2 fast charging points. | See 4.8 for further information. |
| Queen's Parade | Free parking | Tariff A Maintain motorcycle parking | The site's central location makes it a desirable location to park and contains a high proportion of all-day parkers. The site is scheduled to be unavailable as part of the Queens Parade Redevelopment Scheme, but depending upon timing/ progress of this scheme, if there was an opportunity this recommendation would apply. |
| Bangor Castle Grounds | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The car park provides parking for users of Bangor Castle and the North Down Museum; the current arrangement should be maintained. |
| Bangor Castle Staff | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The site is used by staff and visitors to Ards and North Down Borough Council; the current arrangement should be maintained. |

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| Ward Arras Park | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The site is for users of Ward Park; the current arrangement is reflective of this. |
| Banks Lane | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The site is for users of Ballymacormick Point; the current arrangement is reflective of this. |
| Connor Park | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The car park is for users of the park; the current arrangement is reflective of this. |

3.6 Newtownards

There are 13 publicly available off-street car parks in Newtownards town centre. The Council owns 12 of these sites, ten of which are currently charged. The other site at Ards Shopping Centre is privately owned and provides free parking provision. The locations of the 12 Council car parks are displayed in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Council car parks, Newtownards



Source: AECOM / Open Street Map

Overall in Newtownards, around 55% - 80% of spaces are full at any given time. This shows that there is currently reasonable spare parking capacity overall in the town centre.

However, when usage is considered at individual car park level, there are ten car parks which are operating at capacity and this leads to driver frustration through difficulty in finding a spare to park. This is a key theme coming through from the consultations which have been conducted.

Of the Council's car parks, ten are typically full (i.e. operate above 85% capacity) with the exception of Talbot Street and Upper Court Street. Furthermore, on street parking provision is typically full within the core retail area of Newtownards town centre i.e. along the extent of Regent Street, High Street and John Street.

Around 40% of parkers (two out of five) at Council sites are long stay i.e. parked for more than four hours. At two of the Council's car parks, more than half of all vehicles that are parked are long stay i.e. Mill Street Gas Works and Mill Street Gas Works South. This behaviour is having a significant impact upon space availability within the town centre.

Based upon occupancy levels, all Council car parks in Newtownards are busy during the weekday and weekend with the exception of Talbot Street and Upper Court Street.

Each of the above Council sites are key assets for the town centre and there is a need to influence usage so that more spaces become available for users. There is also a need for parking price to be reflect the value of where each site is located.

This strategy proposes that the car parks located closest to key amenities are charged at a higher rate in order to promote short stay parking. Car parks located further from the heart of the town centre will be charged less in order to provide options for long stay parking.

The Council has developed a new leisure centre facility in Newtownards town centre on the site of the Dairy Hall playing fields. The new facility provides standard, disabled, staff, coach and motorcycle parking provision onsite. This parking is for the users of the leisure facilities.

In Newtownards, one private car park operator provides off street parking provision, and this is associated with Ards Shopping Centre. It is recommended that the operators of the site regularly monitor their parking provision in terms of usage and behaviour, to ensure provision is appropriately utilised. It is also recommended that private parking car park operators actively seek to collaborate with the Council and DfI to ensure that parking is appropriate in terms of availability, location and price. At present there are no Park and Ride facilities in Newtownards however, there are plans to develop the old leisure centre as a Park and Ride facility.

It is recommended that Translink regularly review the need for Park and Ride provision in Newtownards in light of future planning proposals and observed changes to parking demand. Translink are aware of growing demand for park and ride provision in Newtownards and are currently working with DfI to actively progress proposals for a new park and ride facility on the edge of the town centre.

It is recommended that the Council establishes links with DfI and Translink to ensure a unified approach to parking and Park and Ride facilities in the Town.

DfI have control of on street parking in addition to other highway responsibilities. DfI do not have plans to alter provision in Newtownards at present, however it is recommended that this is regularly reviewed. Furthermore, it is recommended that regular parking studies are conducted to inform these reviews, which will allow trends to be identified and enable evidence-based decision making. These parking studies should record on street occupancies, stay durations and any parking infringements. In addition, it is recommended that DfI collaborate with the Council to share parking data.

AECOM completed future assessments as part of the parking strategy development to consider how future changes to parking demand and supply and the potential impact of development proposals will affect parking provision in Newtownards. The assessments show that there will likely be increased pressure in the centre of Newtownards within the area of Regent Street, Frederick Street, John Street and Kennel Lane in the future. This shows that there is a clear need for management and a need to provide increased parking provision as part of new / future developments.

It is acknowledged that the above proposals may result in changes to the way that some individuals travel. However, there are alternative options to parking in the centre of the town including Council car parks on the edge of the town centre i.e. Talbot Street car park, Ann Street and John Street. It is proposed that a reduced Tariff B is introduced at these car parks to encourage long stay parkers to use them.

Council should implement the initiatives set out in Section 3.4 to deal with possible displacement of cars away from the car parks, business parking availability and long stay parkers.

Opportunities also exist to cycle in Newtownards with the National Cycle Network Route 93 and 99 converging in Newtownards town centre. Route 93 connects Newtownards to Crawfordsburn and Bangor and Route 99 connects the town to Comber and the Ards Peninsula. Car sharing opportunities are also viable and this is a cost-effective method of using the private car, if viable. Therefore, it is important that parking provision supports the use of alternative sustainable modes of travel throughout the Borough.

Additionally, covered cycle parking will be provided at one of the Council's car parks in Newtownards town centre.

It is recommended that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided in Newtownards at South Street / Court Street and Mill Street Gas Works car parks. More information regarding this proposal is set out in Section 4.8.

Furthermore, this strategy recommends that formal coach drop off/pick up points are developed in Newtownards, on street. Section 4.9 provides more detail regarding these recommendations.

It is recommended that motorcycle parking provision is provided at Kennel Lane and Old Cross Street West in Newtownards. Further information regarding this recommendation is set out in Section 4.11.

Table 2 details the proposed changes which are advocated as part of the Parking Strategy in the 12 existing Council car parks in Newtownards. Table 2 also set outs the current and proposed parking arrangements alongside the associated rationale for any proposed alterations.

The above proposed car parking arrangements in Council car parks in Newtownards should be implemented in the short term (1-2 years) and reviewed in light of updated usage data. Also proposed changes to motorcycle provision should be implemented in the medium term (1-5 years).

Table 2. Newtownards Car Park Actions

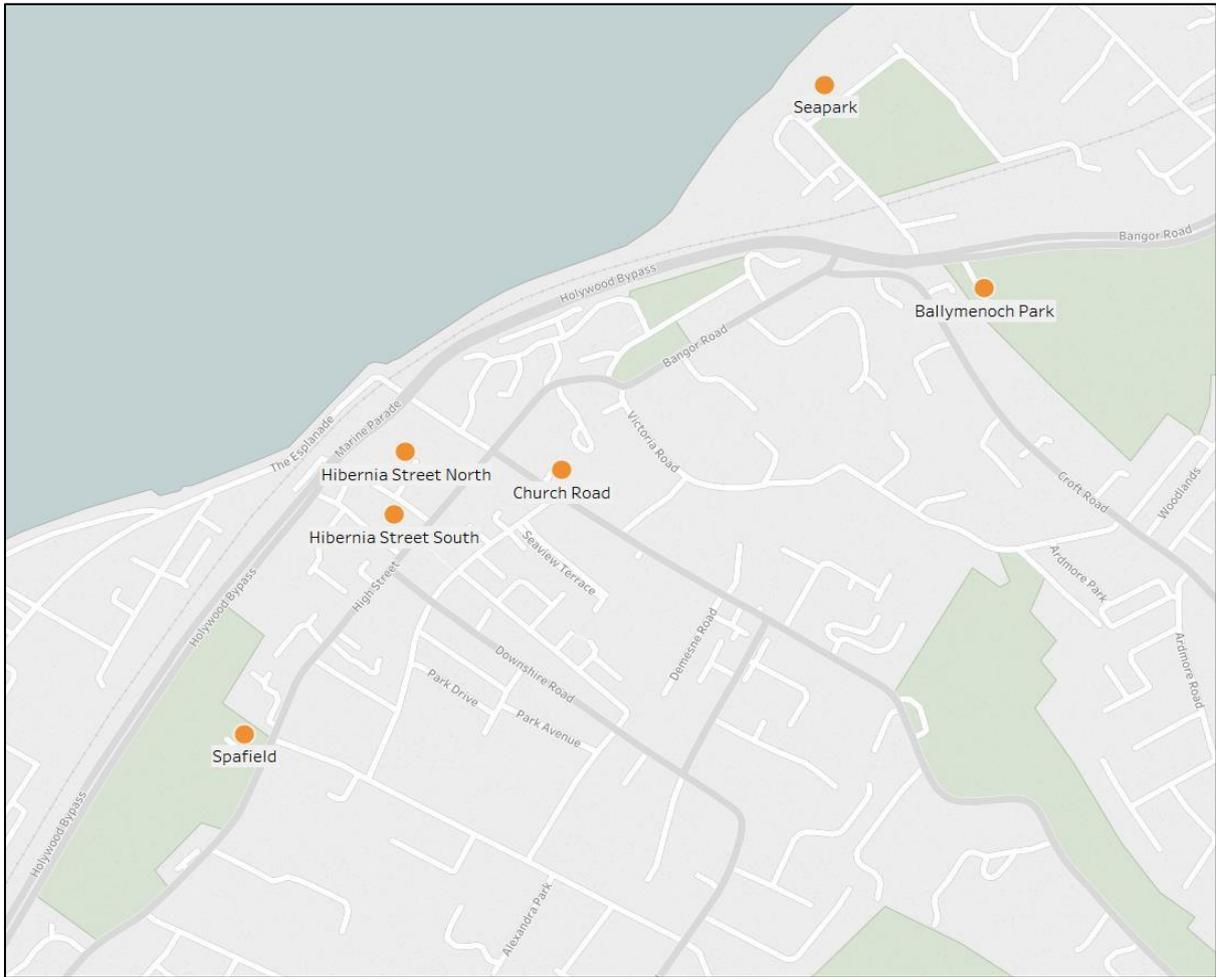
| Car Park | Current Arrangement | Proposed Arrangement | Rationale |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Ann Street | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff B | The site's peripheral location makes it an appropriate location for long stay parkers; therefore the proposed tariff is reflective of that. |
| Kennel Lane | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location and desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. |
| Mill Street | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location and desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. |
| Mill Street Gas Works | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location and tariff should reflect desirability. |
| Mill Street Gas Works | Free parking | Tariff A | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location. Tariffs should be introduced once alternative Park and Ride facilities are provided. |
| Old Cross Street East | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location and desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. |
| Old Cross Street West | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A Provide motorcycle provision | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location and desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. The site's busy central location makes it a desirable and secure location for motorcycles. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|---|
| South Street/Court Street | £0.60 per hour tariff | Tariff A | This is a key car park located in a desirable central location and desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. |
| 4 South Street (7 Court Street) | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | The site's central location makes it a desirable place to park; this should be reflected by higher tariffs. |
| West Street | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff A | The car park experiences high occupancies, a high proportion of all-day parkers and is located in a desirable central location The introduction of higher parking charges should address these issues. |
| Upper Court Street | £0.40 per hour tariff | Tariff B | The site has adequate spare capacity and can accommodate longer stay parking. |
| Talbot Street | Free parking | Tariff B | This site is used for school drop off / pickups and the site's peripheral location makes it an appropriate location for long stay parkers. Tariff to be introduced following the provision of formal Park and Ride facilities in the town. Agree arrangement with Londonderry Primary School to accommodate school drop offs etc. |

3.7 Hollywood

There are six public off-street parking facilities in Hollywood, three of which are situated in the heart of the town centre and Spafield which is located on the edge of the town centre boundary. The Council owns all six sites, three of which are currently charged (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Council Car Parks in Hollywood



Source: AECOM / Open Street Map

Overall in Hollywood, around 60% - 90% of off-street spaces are full at any given time. This shows that there is currently reasonable spare parking capacity overall in the town centre, but that this needs to be more actively managed.

Parking usage was studied at individual car park level and this revealed that some car parks are operating at capacity. This leads to user frustration through difficulty in finding a space to park in. Furthermore, consultees in Hollywood stated that they typically find it difficult to find an available parking space.

Four of the Council car parks are typically full (i.e. operate above 85% capacity), three of which are charged. In addition, on street parking is typically full within the central retail area of Hollywood.

Furthermore, around 55% - 60% of parkers (three out of five) at Council sites are long stay, i.e. parked for more than four hours. More than half of all vehicles were long stay at two Council sites i.e. Hibernia Street North. Such behaviour is having a significant impact on space availability within the town. Long stay parking was found to make up 94% of all parked vehicles each day. There is also evidence that a considerable number of vehicles are parked out of bay.

Each of the above sites are considered to be key assets for the town centre, and therefore there is a need to influence usage so that more spaces become available. Hibernia Street North and South car parks are key sites which perform a vital function for the town centre. It is therefore important to safeguard these car parks in terms of capacity from the active development which is currently ongoing in the vicinity of Hibernia Street North. It should also be noted that a development agreement is in place between the Council and the developer.

There is also a need for parking price to be more reflective of the value of where each of the car parks are located within the town.

This strategy proposes that the most desirable car parks located closest to key amenities are charged at a higher rate in order to promote short stay parking. Car parks located further from the heart of the town centre will be charged less in order to provide sites for long stay parking.

It should be noted that the old tavern site off Strand Avenue in Holywood is not considered to be an option for a car park because of various difficulties with delivering it.

In Holywood, private car park operators provide limited off street parking provision. It is recommended that such operators regularly monitor their parking provision in terms of usage and behaviour, to ensure provision is appropriately utilised. It is also recommended that private parking operators actively seek to collaborate with the Council and DfI to ensure that parking is appropriate in terms of availability, location and price.

Furthermore, Park and Ride facilities are well used in the vicinity of Holywood rail station, however there are issues with commuters using a number of public parking facilities all day, and anecdotally of parking in nearby residential areas such as Kinnegar Road and Kinnegar Drive. Therefore, it is recommended that Translink conducts regular monitoring and enforcement at the existing station site to ensure that parkers are using public transport services and not misusing the facility for other purposes. Furthermore, it is recommended that the proposals for the extension of Holywood Park and Ride, as per the Masterplan are progressed.

Additionally, Translink have recently provided a secure bicycle parking facility at Holywood Rail Station for bicycle users. Also, there are plans to create a new 500 space park and ride site at Tillysburn off the Holywood Road. This new site will potentially alleviate some of the pressure currently experienced at Holywood.

DfI have control of 'on street parking' in addition to other highway responsibilities. DfI are considering making the A2 an Urban Clearway due to hard shoulder / footway parking by commuters.

AECOM carried out qualitative future assessments in Holywood to consider how potential development proposals may affect parking provision in the future. The assessment shows that despite in curtilage/communal parking provided as part of

future residential developments, there is likely to be increased in demand for services and therefore increased parking demand in Hollywood. A large mixed use development off Hibernia Street will increase vehicle trips once completed, and despite increased provision provided as part of the development there is likely to be increased parking demand.

Alternatives to parking in the centre of Hollywood are available and this includes Council car parks on the edge of the town centre e.g. Spafield car park which is located off High Street. Hollywood rail station is located off the A2 Hollywood Bypass and provides people with the opportunity to travel by rail and the town also has a regular bus service. There are also opportunities to cycle, walk and car share to/from Hollywood as an alternative to depending on car parking provision.

The Council currently have plans to provide covered cycle parking in Hollywood town centre at one of the Council car parks.

It is recommended that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided at Church Road car park in Hollywood, and Section 4.8 provides further detail concerning this recommendation.

This strategy recommends that formal coach drop off/pick up points are provided on street in Hollywood. Further information regarding this recommendation is set out in Section 4.9.

It is recommended that motorcycle parking provision is provided at Hibernia Street South car park, Hollywood. Further detail regarding this recommendation is set out in Section 4.11.

Table 3. Hollywood Car Park Actions

It is recommended that the car parking proposed arrangement at Council sites in Hollywood are implemented in the short term (1-2 years), and then reviewed in light of usage data. It is further proposed that changes to motorcycle provision are be implemented in the medium term (1-5 years).

3.8 Comber

There are five public off-street car parks in Comber, four of which are located in the town centre. The Council owns all five sites, all of which currently provide free parking provision.

Overall in Comber, approximately 50% - 75% of off-street spaces are full at any given time. However, when usage at individual car park level is examined, there are some car parks that are operating at capacity and this is leading to user frustration through difficulty in finding spaces to park in. Furthermore, this is a key theme coming through from the consultations that have been completed.

The two Council sites at Castle / Bridge Street and Killinchy Street are typically full (i.e. operate above 85% capacity). In addition, on street parking is typically full within the main retail core of Comber at any given time.

Around 50% of parkers (one in two) at Council sites are long stay i.e. parked for more than four hours. At three of the Council sites, greater than half of all vehicles were long stay i.e. Glen Link, Killinchy Street and Newtownards Road (Comber Road). This behaviour is having a significant impact upon space availability within Comber town centre.

Each of the above car parks are key assets for the town centre and there is a need to influence usage so that more spaces become available. There is also a need for parking price to be more reflective of the value of where each of the car parks are located.

The strategy proposes that the most desirable sites located closest to key attractions and amenities are charged in order to promote short stay parking. Sites located further out from the heart of the town centre will be free in order to provide locations for long stay parking.

Private car park operators provide off street parking provision in Comber, and this is generally associated with retail developments. It is recommended that such operators regularly monitor their parking provision in terms of usage and behaviour, to ensure provision is appropriately utilised. It is also recommended that private parking operators actively seek to collaborate with the Council and DfI to ensure that parking is appropriate in terms of availability, location and price.

Currently in Comber there are no formal Park and Ride facilities. However, DfI has a proposal to develop a park and share facility to the north of the town as per the Masterplan proposals. It is therefore recommended that Translink deliver this site.

DfI has control of on street parking in addition to other highway responsibilities and they have plans for Bridge Street which will prevent parked vehicles from blocking traffic at the junction with High Street and Killinchy Street.

Vehicles parked along footways (i.e. non-demarcated areas) are an issue along the extent of High Street (A21) in Comber town centre. This inevitably has impacts upon people accessing Comber town centre, vehicle progression and congestion within the town. This is a key theme which came across during the consultations that were carried out.

AECOM completed a qualitative future assessment in Comber in order to consider how future development proposals may affect parking provision. The assessment shows that despite in curtilage parking provided as part of numerous proposed residential developments, there is likely to be an increase in demand for services and therefore increased demand for parking in Comber.

It is recommended that charges are introduced at Castle / Bridge Street car park and Killinchy Street at the Tariff B rate and that a system is introduced for members of Comber Leisure Centre to access the car park free of charge.

Alternatives to parking are available in Comber town centre and this includes Council car parks on the edge of the town centre such as Glen Link and Newtownards Road (Comber Road) car parks. Consideration should also be given to developing the Council car park at Parkway to accommodate long stay business parking needs in the town. There are also opportunities for people to use bus services, walk and car share. Opportunities also exist to cycle in Comber with the National Cycle Network Route 20 and 99 converging in the town centre. Route 20 connects Comber and Downpatrick and Route 99 connects Comber to Newtownards and to Belfast via Dundonald.

The Council will be providing covered cycle parking facilities at a Council car park in Comber town centre.

This strategy recommends that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided in Comber at Castle / Bridge Street car park, and Section 4.8 provides more detail regarding this recommendation.

This strategy recommends that formal motorcycle provision is provided at Castle / Bridge Street car park, and further details concerning this recommendation are provided in Section 4.11.

Table 4 details the proposed changes which are advocated as part of the Parking Strategy in the five existing Council car parks in Comber. Table 4 also set outs the current and proposed parking arrangements alongside the associated rationale for any proposed alterations.

The above proposed car parking arrangements at Council parking facilities in Comber should be implemented in the short term (1-2 years), and then reviewed in light of usage data. It is further proposed that changes to motorcycle provision are be implemented in the medium term (1-5 years).

Also, it is recommended that tariffs in Comber are reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure that the Council car parks are performing efficiently and that tariffs continue to be appropriate.

Table 4. Comber Car Park Actions

| Car Park | Current Arrangement | Proposed Arrangement | Rationale |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------|

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--|--|
| Castle / Bridge Street | Free parking | <p>Introduction of Tariff B. Implement a scheme to permit Comber Leisure Centre members access the car park for no charge.</p> <p>Reconfigure car park design.</p> <p>Provide motorcycle parking provision</p> | <p>This is a key car park located in a desirable centre location; desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs. This will increase space turnover and control.</p> <p>Reconfigure current design to make better use of current space.</p> <p>Site's central and busy location makes it an appropriate place for motorcycle parking.</p> |
| Glen Link | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The site's peripheral location makes it an appropriate location for long stay parkers. |
| Killinchy Street | Free parking | <p>Introduce Tariff B</p> <p>Provide EV charging points</p> | <p>This is a key car park located in a desirable centre location; desirability should be reflected by premium tariffs.</p> <p>The site's desirable and central location makes it an appropriate location for EV provision.</p> |
| Newtownards Road (Comber Road) | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The site has ample spare capacity. It is mainly for access to the cemetery and is not suitable for long stay parkers. |
| Island Hill | Free parking | Maintain current arrangement | The site is for users of Island Hill; the current arrangement is reflective of this. |

3.9 Donaghadee

In Donaghadee there are five free Council off-street car parks, Railway Street, Templepatrick car park (231 Millisle Road), The Commons, The Commons East and Donaghadee Community Centre.

It was observed that there is sufficient spare off street capacity in the town centre, however during peak season surges in parking demand results in these car parks being more heavily used. In addition, on street parking is typically full in the town centre.

It was observed that there are issues with informal on street parking along the extent of the Parade.

An assessment was conducted in order to identify and review where potential new parking provision could be provided in Donaghadee, however as previously stated the car parks in Donaghadee are typically underutilised:

- A potential site off New Street was identified; however, there are issues with local planning designations, the need to consult with the site's owner(s) and issues around access/ egress. Therefore, the potential site off New Street is not considered viable and should not be progressed;
- A second potential site is at the old community centre to the rear of Pier 36. Consideration should be given to developing this site as a charged car park;
- A current car park at Railway Street is within 300m walking distance to the centre of town. This car park should be retained, and signage improved.

This strategy recommends that further discussions and consideration is given regarding parking provision in Donaghadee, however it is acknowledged that the aspiration for increased parking provision has to be weighed up against regeneration opportunities at specific sites. Also, it is recommended that existing car parks in Donaghadee are better utilised and signage improved.

The Council currently has plans to improve and develop the Motte as a tourist attraction, and therefore it is recommended that the Motte car park is upgraded. There are also plans to provide covered cycle parking provision in the centre of Donaghadee in a Council car park.

AECOM carried out a qualitative future assessment in order to consider how future development proposals may affect parking provision in Donaghadee. The assessment shows that several large residential developments, a retail unit and a day care nursery have been proposed and in curtilage parking is set out as part of each proposal. However, it is likely that the retail unit and residential developments will increase the demand for services and therefore increase parking demand in Donaghadee.

The Council already provides car parks outside of the heart of the town centre i.e. The Commons and The Commons East car parks, and these could be better used, particularly for long stay parking. The town is also well served by bus, with bus stops located in the heart of the town centre. It should be noted that the bus station site in Donaghadee is currently for sale. In addition, opportunities exist to cycle, walk and car share as alternative to private vehicle usage and parking.

It is recommended that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided at Railway Street car park, and Section 4.8 provides further details regarding this recommendation.

Furthermore, it is recommended that coach drop off/pick up points are provided at The Commons car park, and Section 4.9 provides more detail regarding this recommendation.

This strategy recommends that motorhome provision at The Commons East site is increased, further details of which are provided in Section 4.10.

It is recommended that motorcycle parking provision is provided in Donaghadee at Railway Street car park. Further details regarding this recommendation are provided in Section 4.11.

3.10 Development and Regeneration Sites

Regeneration of town centres within the Borough is a key focus for the Council. Redevelopment of land can enhance the built environment and the overall offer of each settlement; increasing the catchment and draw for those who would visit, work and live in the area. This development can be brought forward on an individual site basis or as part of a larger development brief.

Masterplans can also consider the strategic development of settlements in order to locate development and car parking in appropriate locations, and a number of relevant previous Masterplans have been considered as part of this study.

Car parks are often considered as potential development sites, and this is acceptable in principle, but careful consideration is needed in terms of the opportunity cost. Whilst the individual siting of car parks in town centres is not critical as they are easily accessed by motorists not matter the location, the development proposals need to be cognisant of the overall change to parking provision resulting from the change, both in terms of supply and demand. Under-provision can cause displaced parking in adjacent streets.

It is therefore recommended that car park redevelopment is considered on a 'case by case' basis, and as part of wider regeneration plans that may come forward in the future. In general, it would be appropriate to replace any parking provision that is lost, subject to a detailed assessment of the scenario envisaged.

3.11 Rural Villages

3.11.1 Ballygowan

Currently there are no Council operated off street parking facilities in Ballygowan village. Also, it was noted that informal on street layby parking along the Moneyreagh Road and along the Saintfield Road is typically full during the weekday.

It was observed that footway parking is an issue along the extent of the Comber Road. Also informal on street parking is an issue along the extent of the Moneyreagh Road, The Brae and in the vicinity of The Square. This behaviour is significantly impacting upon local residents and the safe usage of the footways by pedestrians and other footway users in order to access and explore the village centre. This is a key theme which was made apparent during the consultation process.

Therefore, it is recommended that formal off street parking is provided in Ballygowan. This was also a key theme which was raised during the consultations which were conducted.

Five potential sites where formal parking provision could be provided for the village were considered and this included the Green site adjacent to the village hall, Ballygowan Bus Depot, Dickson Park and the village hall. However, a preferred site at the Presbyterian Church Hall has been identified and this strategy recommends that this preferred option is pursued by the Council in order to provide formal charged off street parking provision in the village.

It is further recommended that if a new car park is provided it should be charged at Tariff B to aid management and enforcement and to reduce the likelihood that it would be dominated by all day parkers.

AECOM completed a qualitative future assessment in order to consider how future development proposals may affect parking provision in Ballygowan. The assessment shows that a residential development providing in curtilage parking has been proposed in the village. However, it is likely that the development will increase the demand for services and therefore increase parking demand in the village.

Furthermore, Translink have plans to increase parking capacity and potentially increase the service frequency of buses to and from the village, as services from the village will link with the Belfast Metro 5 service in the near future.

In addition, it is suggested that DfI complete regular monitoring and reviews of vehicles parked along footway and parked informally in Ballygowan.

It is also considered that Ballygowan would benefit from public realm scheme improvements.

3.11.2 Ballyhalbert

There are two free off-street Council car parks in Ballyhalbert, Harbour Road and Ballyhalbert Harbour.

It was observed that there is sufficient overall off-street capacity in Ballyhalbert, however seasonal surges in demand result in the car parks being well used during high season. It was raised during the consultations that it is difficult to find a spare parking space in the village itself.

It was observed that along High Street numerous vehicles were either wholly or partially parked along the footway. This behaviour impacts upon pedestrians and other footway users accessing the village on foot.

DfI are responsible for on street parking in addition to other highway responsibilities. DfI have received requests concerning the provision of a footway along the coastal road in Ballyhalbert, however this is unfeasible because the land is not available to provide the footway. It is suggested that DfI regularly monitor footway parking in Ballyhalbert and that it is kept under review.

The Council have actively consulted with DfI about the provision of a footway along the Shore Road and regarding required improvements to the Gospel Hall car park in Ballyhalbert. Despite a number of feasibility studies being conducted in relation to the potential of providing additional footways in the village, currently this option is not considered by DfI to be economically viable due to excessive costs. With regards to the Gospel Hall, recent improvements were made to improve the stability of the site and recent surveys by DfI consider that there are no significant signs of erosion at the car park.

AECOM conducted a qualitative future assessment in Ballyhalbert to consider how future development proposals may affect parking provision in the village. The assessment shows that there will likely be increased demand for services and therefore increased parking demand.

3.11.3 Cloughey

There are two free Council parking facilities in Cloughey i.e. Main Street and Cloughey Picnic Area.

In Cloughey it was observed that there is sufficient off street capacity in the village, however during high season the car parks in the village are busier due to seasonal surges in demand. During the consultations it was stated that there are currently no parking issues in the village.

It was observed that vehicles park informally and also along the footway along the extent of Main Road. Such behaviour impacts pedestrians and other footway users from safely accessing the village via foot.

In addition, DfI have recently provided a crossing at the school along with a new footpath in Cloughey.

DfI are responsible for on street parking as well as other highway responsibilities. It is suggested that DfI regularly monitor and keep under review the proportion of vehicles footway and informally parking along Main Road in the village.

This strategy recommends that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided at Main Road car park. Section 4.8 provides further information concerning this recommendation

As part of this strategy it is recommended that motorhome parking provision is provided at Main Road car park in Cloughey, further details of which are set out in Section 4.10.

3.11.4 Portavogie

In Portavogie there are two free Council car parks, Portavogie Amenity Site and Portavogie Road. It was observed that the sites have sufficient spare capacity, however during peak season the car parks experience increased demand.

Respondents during the consultations noted that they typically find it difficult to find a parking space.

It was observed that there are no issues relating to either on street or off-street parking in Portavogie village.

The Council have developed proposals to provide an outdoor gym at Portavogie Amenity Site.

In light of this, the Parking Strategy does not recommend any alterations to current off street parking provision in Portavogie.

It is recommended that at Portavogie Amenity Site car park electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided. Further information regarding this recommendation is set out in Section 4.8.

AECOM completed a qualitative future assessment in Portavogie to consider how development proposals may affect parking provision in the village. The assessment shows that a residential development is proposed for the village and it is likely that the development will increase demand for services and therefore increase parking demand in Portavogie.

3.11.5 Ballywalter

In Ballywalter there are two free Council car parks, Springvale Road and Ballywalter Amenity Site.

It was observed that there is sufficient spare parking capacity overall in the village centre, however during high season the parking facilities are busier due to seasonal fluctuations in demand. However, during the consultations, respondents stated that they typically find it difficult to find a parking space.

DfI have control of on street parking in addition to other highway responsibilities and have recently provided a new pedestrian crossing in the village.

No issues concerning on street or off-street parking were observed in Ballywalter and this strategy does not recommend any changes to current parking provision in the village.

This strategy recommends that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided at Ballywalter Amenity Site car park. Section 4.8 provides further information concerning this recommendation

It is recommended that motorhome provision and Aire de service facilities are provided in Ballywalter at Ballywalter Amenity site, further details regarding these recommendations are set out in Section 4.10.

3.11.6 Kircubbin

There are two free Council car parks in Kircubbin, Shore Road and The Green.

It was observed that there is sufficient off street capacity in the village centre, however car parks in Kircubbin are busier during peak season due to seasonal fluctuations in parking demand. Furthermore, on street parking typically operates at capacity within the main retail core of Kircubbin Village.

Around 50% of vehicles (i.e. one in two) parked at The Green car park are long stay i.e. parked for more than four hours. This behaviour is having a somewhat negative impact upon space availability in the village centre and this was highlighted during the consultation process.

It was noted that informal on street parking was an issue along the extent of the Shore Road and on the road leading to The Green car park. On street parking along the Shore Road obstructs the safe flow of traffic, and this was also raised as an issue during the consultations.

In addition, vehicles parked along footways are an issue along Church Avenue. This impacts upon pedestrians and other footway users who utilise the footway in order to safely access the village.

It is recommended that the Council complete improvements to The Green car park and that The Shore Road car park is reconfigured to make better use of the existing space. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Council continue to monitor usage to identify if there are capacity issues in Kircubbin, and if off street car parks require management.

DfI have responsibility for on street parking and therefore it is suggested that DfI consider:

- Introducing a one hour waiting limit along the extent of Main Street;
- Review informal parking along Shore Road and the recommendations stated as per the village plan so that this proposal is progressed; and
- Regularly monitor and keep under review on street parking usage and ascertain if any vehicles are footway parking in the village.

At the Green car park, it is recommended that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided and further information regarding this recommendation is set out in Section 4.8.

Furthermore, it is recommended that motorhome provision is provided at The Shore car park in Kircubbin, further details of which are set out in Section 4.10.

3.11.7 Conlig

In Conlig there is one Council car park which provides free parking provision at the Lead Mines.

It was noted that the car park has sufficient spare capacity, however during high season the car park is busier due to increased demand.

In addition, it was observed that there is sufficient spare on street capacity in Conlig.

In Conlig no issues concerning either on street or off-street parking were observed.

DfI have received a request to move the bus shelter on the A21 Bangor Road / Newtownards Road, however this is not feasible due to the speed of the road.

The strategy does not recommend any changes to current on street or off-street provision in Conlig.

3.11.8 Cunningburn

There is one free Council car park at Cunningburn i.e. Cunningburn Amenity Site. It was observed that the car park has sufficient spare capacity; however, the car park is busier during peak season when parking demand is greater.

No issues relating to either off street or on street parking were observed in the Cunningburn area.

Considering this, the strategy does not recommend implementing any changes in Cunningburn.

3.11.9 Greyabbey

At present the Council do not provide formal off-street parking provision in Greyabbey village. A public off street parking facility is provided off the A20 Portaferry Road and is owned and managed by The National Trust. Also, a small private car park is situated adjacent to the Greyabbey Primary School.

It was observed that formal on street parking in the village was typically full. Furthermore, numerous vehicles were observed parking on the footway along the extent of Main Street in addition to vehicles parked informally on street. This behaviour negatively impacts upon the village and contributes to local traffic congestion, and it also impedes footway users from safely accessing the village via the footway.

AECOM conducted a qualitative future assessment in Greyabbey to consider how future development proposals may affect parking provision in the village. The assessment states that an approved residential development will likely increase the demand for services and therefore increase parking demand in Greyabbey.

There is an identified need to provide a new public off street car park in Greyabbey and this was a key theme which was raised during the consultations.

AECOM identified three potential sites where off-street parking could be provided for the village;

- Portaferry Road National Trust Site,
- rear of Main Street (adjacent to roundabout junction at Newtownards Road/Main Street) and
- St Saviour's Church Hall car park (off Church Street adjacent to Grey Abbey) and
- the Presbyterian Church, Main Street.

However, the preferred sites at the rear of Main Street and the Presbyterian Church are no longer available.

It is recommended that the National Trust car park off the Portaferry Road is upgraded for users. It should be noted that this is an action which the Council are currently pursuing. Council should also continue to establish an additional free public car park within the village.

It is also suggested that DfI regularly monitor and review the proportion of vehicles parking informally and along footways in Greyabbey.

Furthermore, it is considered that Greyabbey village would benefit from a public realm improvement scheme in the future.

3.11.10 Groomsport

In Groomsport there are two free Council car parks: Springwell Drive and Groomsport Harbour.

It was observed that there is sufficient spare parking capacity overall in Groomsport. However, during peak season parking demand increases and the car parks are busier.

It was noted that informal on street parking is an issue along the extent of Main Street in the village centre.

DfI has control of on street parking provision alongside other highway responsibilities and it is suggested that DfI regularly monitor and review informal on street parking usage in Groomsport.

This strategy recommends that motorhome provision and associated Aire de Service facilities are provided at Groomsport Harbour car park, further details of which are detailed in Section 4.10. Additional off street car parking provision is not considered necessary at this time.

3.11.11 Millisle

There are four free Council car parks in Millisle, Ballywalter Road, Ballywhiskin (179 Ballywalter Road), Moss Road and Millisle Beach Park.

It was observed that there is sufficient spare capacity overall in the village centre, however the car parks are busier during the high season when demand for parking is higher.

On street parking is provided along the extent of Main Street and this appears to be well used during the weekday period.

There have also been requests for restrictions along the Shore Road due to inconsiderate parking and a one-way system introduced in the village centre. However, there is no current consensus relating to these suggestions and as such no formal plans have been proposed.

In addition, no issues relating to either on street or off-street parking provision were observed in Millisle. However, there are issues during peak months with vehicles parked on double yellow lines along Main Street which impacts upon the safety of pedestrians, this issue was raised during the consultations which were carried out.

Therefore, this Strategy does not recommend any changes to current on street provision in Millisle.

AECOM conducted a qualitative future assessment in Millisle to consider how development proposals may affect parking provision in the village. The assessment shows that several residential developments and a petrol station associated retail units are proposed for the village. It is likely that the residential developments will increase demand for services and therefore increase parking demand.

This strategy recommends that:

1. at Moss Road car park electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided. Further details regarding this recommendation can be found in Section 4.8; and
2. that motorhome parking provision is provided at Millisle Beach Park. Further details regarding this recommendation can be found in Section 4.10.

3.11.12 Portaferry

In Portaferry there are three free Council car parks i.e. The Square, Meeting House Street and The Rope Walk.

It was observed that there was spare capacity at Meeting House Street and The Rope Walk sites during the weekday; however The Square car park was typically operating at capacity. This is leading to driver frustration in being unable to locate a space in the centre of the village.

By comparison Meeting House Street is underutilised, and this was raised as an issue during the consultations. The Rope Walk car park is located to the rear of Exploris Aquarium, the site experiences seasonal surges in demand causing the site to operate at capacity at peak times. The lack of coach parking in the town and especially in relation to Exploris was raised as an issue.

On street parking is typically full within the main retail core of Portaferry and it was noted there are issues with informal on street parking along the extent of The Square, Castle Street, Cloughey Road and The Strand. In addition, vehicles were observed parking in contravention of yellow line markings along Church Street and Cloughey Road.

It should be noted that the Council is currently considering a public realm scheme in the vicinity of The Square in Portaferry which may reduce the parking available on the square. This should be addressed as the local Spar is developing a new car park for their customers behind the square.

Each of the above Council sites are key assets for the village centre and there is a need to influence usage so that more spaces become available for users.

It is not considered necessary at present to introduce charging at any of the Council car parks in Portaferry. However, if the demand at the Rope Walk increases or there is a need to control parking it is proposed that seasonal parking charges are introduced. This would be Tariff B.

The Council are actively examining the viability of redesigning the Rope Walk car park to provide coach parking and better access.

On street parking is not within the remit of this Parking Strategy, as DfI have control of on street parking in addition to other highway responsibilities, however it is recommended that a revision to the on street parking bays is provided along the extent of The Strand in order to address limited on street parking in the vicinity. It is also recommended that informal on street parking is monitored and kept under regular review by DfI.

AECOM carried out a qualitative future assessment in Portaferry to consider how development proposals may affect parking provision in the village. The assessment shows that several residential developments, a supermarket extension and retail units are proposed, and it is likely that the residential developments will increase demand for services and therefore increase parking demand in Portaferry.

It is recommended that electric vehicle (EV) charging points are provided at Meetinghouse Street car park; Section 4.8 provides further information concerning this recommendation.

It is also recommended that the redevelopment of the Rope Walk car park is fully implemented to provide coach parking.

Furthermore, this strategy recommends that motorhome parking provision and Aire de service facilities are provided at The Rope Walk site in Portaferry following the extension of the car park. Further details concerning this recommendation are set out in Section 4.10.

3.11.13 Whiterock

There is one free Council car park in Whiterock, and it was observed that there is sufficient overall capacity at the site. However, it is noted that the car park is busier during high season.

It was observed that there are issues with vehicles parked in contravention of yellow line markings along Whiterock Bay. On street parking is not within the remit of this strategy because DfI are responsible for on street parking provision as well as other highway responsibilities. However, it is recommended that regular reviews are conducted and that this is kept under review in order to ascertain the proportion of vehicles parking in contravention.

AECOM carried out a qualitative future assessment in Whiterock in order to consider how development proposals may affect parking provision in the village. The assessment shows that a large residential development is proposed for the village and it is likely that the development will not impact upon parking demand.

It is recommended that motorhome provision is provided at Whiterock car park; more information concerning this proposal is outlined in Section 4.10.

3.12 Additional Villages

This strategy has also considered parking within the following villages located throughout the Borough:

- Helen's Bay;
- Crawfordsburn;
- Lisbarnett and Lisbane;
- Killinchy; and
- Six Road Ends.

From consultations that were carried out it was noted that the feasibility of providing a greenway from Newtownards, Clandeboye and Helen's Bay is currently being considered. It was also noted that there are issues with commuter parking at Crawfordsburn and Helen's Bay Rail Stations; however, at present there are no preferred solutions which have been identified by Translink.

In Lisbarnett and Lisbane consultees highlighted that there are issues with parking at the school bus stop in Lisbane during the morning drop off and afternoon pick up times in the vicinity of Lisbarnett Road at the junction with Wallace Gardens. On

street parking is not within the remit of this parking strategy as on street provision is the responsibility of DfI, however it is suggested that DfI regularly monitor and keep under review issues relating to parking in Lisbarnett and Lisbane.

Issues with parking at Killinchy Primary School during pick up and drop off times were raised during the consultations. It is suggested that issues in Killinchy relating to on street parking are monitored and reviewed regularly by DfI.

No issues relating to parking in Six Road Ends was noted during the extensive consultations which were completed and as such this strategy does not recommend any changes to current parking provision in Six Road Ends.

4. Additional Actions

4.1 Car Park Features

This study has shown that there are a number of parking features which should be considered at car parks in order to ensure that the sites are fit for purpose.

It is therefore recommended that the Council regularly review each of their car parks in respect of ensuring that:

- Sites have a good quality surface;
- Parking bay size is appropriate;
- Car parks are regularly maintained and cleaned;
- Safety for users is addressed i.e. lighting is provided etc.; and
- Parking signage on approach roads to sites is adequate to reduce vehicle circulating times.

There are considerable resource and funding issues in meeting this requirement and Council needs to agree to funding a planned upgrade programme

4.2 Monitoring Strategy

Throughout the year parking demand ebbs and flows, therefore it is important to regularly assess the level of demand. Monitoring should be conducted at comparable times each year in order to identify long term trends. Furthermore, monitoring should record occupancy and duration of stay on weekdays in the first instance, with data also recorded on Saturday if required.

Monitoring assessments should also consider neighbouring on-street areas in order to ascertain if displaced parking is occurring. The monitoring strategy will seek to understand the reasons for such behaviour and will be used to inform any review of the Council's approach to parking.

Increased parking supply is only advocated in Ballygowan and Greyabbey as part of this Strategy because there is a lack of formal off-street parking provision, and on street provision is currently operating at full capacity. Potential additional car parks in Donaghadee require further discussion with the parties involved before a solution can be recommended.

Furthermore, there are some localised issues which can be addressed through either the introduction of or the revision of parking charges. It should also be noted that the private sector may provide additional parking provision if dictated by future changes, but this is not advocated as part of this parking strategy.

4.3 Parking for Disabled Users

There are two nationally recognised parking accreditation ‘standards’ which reflect high quality in parking provision. The first is the ‘Park Mark’ standard which examines how parking facilities can be improved to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and how parking provision can be improved for disabled users and parents with children, and this includes providing a greater number of dedicated spaces for both disabled users and families.

The second is the Disabled Parking Accreditation (DPA) which focuses upon improving the personal mobility of disabled motorists and recognises off-street car parks which are more accessible for disabled users.

It is recommended that the Council, where practicable, consider both accreditations in all of the charged car parks which may improve overall user experience and ensure that provision caters for all types of users.

Furthermore, it is recommended that a review of the number of disabled bays provided in each Council controlled car park is completed and compared to relevant guidance and also the need for disabled spaces at each parking facility. This is to ensure that an appropriate number of disabled spaces are provided that will be used accordingly. This review should also consider individual space size and the location of each individual space within each parking facility.

4.4 Signage

Throughout the consultations a significant issue highlighted by parking users was that they find it difficult to find a space to park in, however it is evident from parking surveys that there is sufficient spare capacity in each settlement. Therefore, it is important to provide a good level of clear parking signage in order to direct users to the parking facilities within a settlement. Good parking signage ensures that users are directed to the nearest available car park which reduces wasted time, driver frustration, circulating time in the local area and potentially traffic congestion.

It is recommended that the Council complete the following steps in relation to parking signage throughout the Council Borough:

- Undertake a review of existing parking signage;
- Identify gaps in existing parking signage provision; and
- Consider providing additional signage in identified gaps, in particular through ‘active’ signage in Bangor and Newtownards; and
- Provide the funding through increased parking fees to provide the identified signage and ‘active’ signage.

- parks provided.

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4.5 Car Park Lighting

Lighting provision reduces the risks of slips, falls, crime, anti-social behaviour etc. for users within a car park. Also, level access for wheelchair users and the need for safe and appropriate lux levels in relation to the mounting heights and spacing of lighting poles must also be considered. The following procedure may be useful for the Council to follow when considering if an individual car park should have lighting:

- Complete a risk assessment / equalities impact assessment to determine what type of users access the car park, how many bays of each type are provided i.e. car, disabled, coach, motorhome, motorcycle etc. and the site's operational hours;
- Consider nearby amenities that would be busier during hours of darkness e.g. restaurants and bars;
- Consider reduced light levels during winter months e.g. around 4/5pm when people return from work/shops; and
- Consult with PSNI to provide local advice, recommendations and highlight issues regarding car parking/lighting.

This strategy recommends that the above lighting assessment is completed at each of the ~30 unlit car parks in the Borough in order to determine if lighting provision is required.

4.6 Technology, Parking Application (app)

Through the Service Agreement with DFI the Council has access to the Parkmobile App which allows drivers to pay for their parking online. Usage of the app is very low in the Borough accounting for less than 5% on all parking transactions.

Furthermore, a key theme raised during the consultations which were carried out was the need for improved awareness and advertisement of Parkmobile across the Borough.

DFI is to introduce a new app at the beginning of 2020 which will offer much greater information to the user and allow the Council to promote activities through it. They are also developing a public information programme to get more people to use it.

Greater use of the app could reduce the cost of car parking services by reducing cash collections and machine servicing costs.

4.7 Season Tickets

Season tickets are currently available in 15 charged car parks throughout the Borough, comprising three sites in Bangor, two in Holywood and 10 in Newtownards. Season tickets are issued by the service provider as directed by the Council on a calendar monthly or quarterly basis and paid in advance at the rate specified in the current Off Street Parking Order. Each season ticket application is considered on an individual basis. Therefore, season tickets offer car park users a discounted monthly or quarterly rate for the use of a given charged car park.

Currently there are a maximum of 18 season tickets available in Bangor at charged car parks, 25 in Holywood and 75 tickets in Newtownards. The number of available tickets was set by DFI before Councils took charge of the car parks.

The number of season tickets available in Council car parks throughout Northern Ireland is generally consistent and as such there may be scope in increasing the number of season tickets available. However, the following should be considered before doing so:

- It is not possible to guarantee a space in any car park for season ticket holders;
- Increased season tickets will impact on car park revenue due to the concessionary rate; and
- User habits should dictate the number of season tickets available.

Therefore, it is recommended that current season ticket uptake and usage is reviewed by the Council in order to come to an informed decision as to whether increasing the number of season tickets is required on an individual car park basis.

4.8 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Although electric vehicles (EVs) are more expensive to buy, they have significantly lower running costs when compared to petrol or diesel equivalents. The number of EVs registered within Northern Ireland is increasing annually. The ecar network is owned and operated by the ESB Group through its ESB cars business. It consists of 160 double-headed 22kW fast charge points and 14 rapid charge points located through Northern Ireland.

Within the Borough there is currently only one EV charging point available for public use at a Council owned car park i.e. The Rope Walk, Portaferry. In comparison a total of 14 EV spaces are available for use at seven other sites including Mount Stewart, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, ASDA Bangor (x2), Crawfordsburn Country Park, Aurora Leisure Centre and Bloomfield Shopping Centre.

On street charging spaces throughout Northern Ireland are currently free to use with time limits of 2 hours in place. In charged Council sites standard parking tariffs apply although under the current Parking Order they must pay the parking fee and be actually charging their electric car to use the specified parking space. Also, in private car parks standard charges apply.

Due to increased demand for electric vehicles, the Council could improve their provision of EV spaces by providing additional charging points at sites within the study area in order to encourage owners of such vehicles to charge their vehicle in an off street, safe environment. The need to expand current EV provision across the Borough was raised by several stakeholders during consultations.

Electric vehicle parking is subject to the existing parking restrictions of the surrounding car parking spaces within public car parks. This means that if other cars pay for parking in the car park then EV owners must pay the same. The former Department for Regional Development (DRD) introduced legislation to allow free parking in on-street locations only.

This strategy recommends that EV provision is provided at the following parking facilities in the Council Borough:

- Bingham Lane, Bangor (x2);
- Luke's Point, Bangor;
- South Street / Court Street, Newtownards;
- Mill Street Gas Works, Newtownards;
- Killinchy Street, Comber;
- Church Road, Holywood;
- Railway Street, Donaghadee
- Ballywalter Amenity Site, Ballywalter;
- Main Road, Cloughey;
- The Green, Kircubbin;
- Moss Road, Millisle;
- Meetinghouse Street, Portaferry; and
- Portavogie Amenity Site, Portavogie.

It should be noted that these recommendations are subject to a feasibility assessment which must be undertaken at each site. Also, if local electric supply is located nearby, that would be useful in providing EV spaces.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Council carry out a review of current EV usage throughout the Borough through the completion of surveys.

4.9 Coach Parking

When consulted, the Federation for Passenger Transport NI (FPT) stated that good and accessible coach drop off and pick up points are required in close proximity to a coach's destination. Drop off / pick up must be limited in terms of stay duration e.g. 15 minutes, however this must be enforced in order to be effective; technology such as cameras could be utilised for enforcement. It was also noted that the location of coach parking on the outskirts of a town can be in any viable location i.e. no specific location.

Currently formal coach parking provision and pick up/drop off points are only provided at private sites in the Borough. It is therefore recommended that the Council consider providing coach parking facilities and / or pick up / drop off points at the following locations within the Borough:

- Bangor – Aurora Leisure Centre (layover), Luke's Point car park (layover), and on street in the town centre (pick up / drop off);
- Newtownards – Ards Shopping Centre (layover) NB. Agreement between the Council and shopping centre is required, and on street in the town centre along High Street (pick up / drop off);
- Hollywood – on street (pick up / drop off);
- Comber – Castle / Bridge Street car park (layover) adjacent to leisure centre and on street along Killinchy Street (pick up / drop off);
- Donaghadee – The Commons Car Park (layover) and on street along High Street (pick up / drop off); and
- Portaferry – outside the entrance of Exploris Aquarium (layover).

Consultation with Translink revealed that bus stations within the main towns of Bangor, Newtownards and Donaghadee cannot be used for the purpose of coach drop off and pick up.

Furthermore, FPT advised that a clear, concise visual representation of coach parking facilities in the Council Borough will improve accessibility for coaches and coach users. It is therefore recommended that a map is made available on the Council's website and that it is widely distributed within the Coach and Tourism industries. The Council should consider successful examples for coach parking maps developed by other settlements e.g. Armagh City.

Cruise ship departure times from Belfast after 2018 will be extended in the evening resulting in locations which were previously too far for coaches to reach becoming more accessible.

FPT also noted that there are a range of underutilised tourist attractions throughout the Council Borough which could be better promoted e.g. Saint Patrick's Trail. Also, it was suggested that there may be potential to encourage visitors to Castle Ward,

which is a major tourist attraction, via the Portaferry ferry at Strangford and Portaferry.

4.10 Motorhome Parking

Presently motorhome provision is provided at one car park throughout the Council Borough i.e. The Commons East car park, Donaghadee provides two spaces. Motorhome provision contributes to tourism and the economic vitality of an area; consideration should be given to the provision of motorhome parking at appropriate locations throughout the Ards Peninsula.

As part of a consultation process carried out by the Council, an online parking user survey received 500 responses and a key issue raised by respondents was the lack of motorhome provision in the Borough and the need to provide dedicated motorhome parking spaces and facilities for users.

The feasibility and potential to provide motorhome parking provision should be considered at the following car parking facilities. It is recommended that between three and five spaces are provided at each site:

- Luke's Point, Bangor;
- Millisle Beach Park, Millisle;
- The Rope Walk, Portaferry (NB this is recommended following the extension of the Rope Walk car park as part of the Exploris Parkland project);
- Main Road, Cloughey;
- Groomsport Harbour, Groomsport;
- Whiterock car park, Whiterock;
- Shore Road, Kircubbin; and
- Ballywalter Amenity, Ballywalter.

Increased motorhome provision is also recommended at The Commons East, Donaghadee (i.e. further two / three spaces) where provision and an aire de service facility is already provided.

In addition, there is potential for the private sector (caravan parks etc.) to provide motorhome provision at other key sites throughout the Council Borough.

Aire de service facilities are recommended at some of the proposed motorhome car parks. Aires de service provides dedicated motorhome facilities including electrical hook-up, fresh water fill point, waste water disposal point etc.

It is recommended that Aire de service facilities are provided at the following proposed sites:

- Luke's Point, Bangor;

- Groomsport Harbour, Groomsport;
- Ballywalter Amenity, Ballywalter; and
- The Rope Walk, Portaferry (NB this is recommended following the extension of the Rope Walk car park as part of the Exploris Parkland project).

It should be noted that to provide motorhome parking Council will need to comply with the provisions of the Caravans Act (NI) 1963 which will require separation of spaces and the provision of water, firefighting equipment and waste disposal at each site. There are likely to be high cost implications in ensuring compliance.

4.11 Motorcycle Parking

Motorcycle parking provision is currently provided at four car parks in the Borough, two of which are managed by the Council i.e. Queen's Parade, Bangor and Mill Street Gas Works, Newtownards and the remaining two are privately owned i.e. Sainsbury's, Bangor and Bloomfield Shopping Centre, Bangor. Both Council sites currently provide designated areas for motorcycles.

Currently motorcycles are permitted to park free of charge in all Council controlled off street car park facilities throughout Northern Ireland, although the motorcycle must be parked wholly within a demarcated bay.

By comparison motorcycles must pay for parking on street if they are parking within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). There are currently three CPZs in Northern Ireland, located within Belfast, Lisburn and Newry. However, motorcycle users may find it difficult to display their parking ticket when parking on street, as parkers must ensure that the ticket will not be spoiled by weather conditions etc. Therefore, cashless payment options such as Parkmobile may address this concern for motorcyclists.

It is recognised that motorcycling is a growing leisure activity and owners need access to safe and suitable parking spaces.

It is recommended that each of the main towns within the borough have a minimum of two motorcycle spaces; this provision is already provided in Bangor and Newtownards. Furthermore, this strategy recommends that two motorcycle spaces are provided at the following three car parks in the main towns of Comber, Holywood and Donaghadee:

- Bridge Street/ Castle Street, Comber
- Church Street, Holywood
- Railway Street, Donaghadee

It is also recommended that motorcycle provision is increased in Bangor and Newtownards by providing a minimum of four motorcycle spaces at Holborn Avenue, Bangor and Old Cross Lane West, Newtownards.

Any increase in spaces or provision would only be considered when a car park is being upgraded.

It should be noted that two formal motorcycle bays would result in the loss of one car parking bay. However, in general motorcycle parking bays are not individually demarcated in order to allow flexible use of the space, with signage and bollards demarcating the area to ensure the space is not misused by other motor vehicles.

4.12 Action Plan

The Action Plan identifies a range of specific actions that are to be delivered within the lifespan of the Parking Strategy, 2020 to 2030.

The actions listed are aligned to the objectives set out within Chapter 2, and identify the priority level, timeframe, funding and stakeholders including lead stakeholder who are required to implement each action. Furthermore, in order to ensure the successful delivery of each action, the next steps which should be taken are also set out.