NESTRANS REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY

DRAFT

February 2012

1. Introduction

1.1. The Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) recognises that parking is a key element of managing demand and that parking policy will be an important element in influencing modal choice and achieving the RTS objectives. The RTS also commits Nestrans to producing a Regional Parking Strategy for the North East.

1.2. The aim of a Regional Parking Strategy is to agree a policy framework under which actions can be delivered at a local level that ensure provision, management and control of parking in both the city and shire works towards and supports the wider objectives of the RTS and the two Local Transport Strategies (LTSs).

1.3. The way in which parking provision is managed and supplied can have a significant impact on a range of issues and links to a wide range of other policy areas. It can be used to stimulate economic activity or encourage the use of more sustainable modes, thereby reducing congestion and improving air quality. Parking policies can also be used to manage demand and ensure access to services.

1.4. The availability of parking and the way in which it is managed can also impact significantly on the performance of other services, particularly public transport services and the performance of the local economy in general.

1.5. This Regional Parking Strategy will complement the RTS and LTSs through consideration of the ways in which parking control can influence mode choice, environment and the economic vitality of the region.

1.6. This strategy has been informed by a review of national, regional and local policy in relation to parking as well as consultation with the two Councils and consultation with stakeholders at the North East Transport Consultative Forum (NETCF). A study was also carried out by Aecom in early 2011 to quantify some of the issues in relation to Private Non Residential Parking and Business Permits in the region.

2. **Key issues and opportunities**

Key Issues and opportunities

2.1. Parking can play a significant role in maintaining and improving the **economic vitality** of town centres to meet the needs of local businesses by allowing access for customers to shops and services, encouraging a turnover of spaces in the town centre and reducing congestion. There are opportunities to manage parking provision in a way that encourages short stay parking in town centres and long stay parking further out. This issue applies equally to Aberdeen City Centre, Aberdeenshire towns and to other retailing centres such as Torry and Rosemount which also depend on a supply of short stay parking for customers.

2.2. **Congestion**, particularly during the peak commuting periods, is a key concern in the centre of Aberdeen and on the key routes into the City as well as, to a lesser extent, parts of Aberdeenshire. Increasing congestion is affecting businesses in and around the city and also the operation of the bus fleet which is increasingly being affected by congestion. This is resulting in longer and more uncertainty in journey times which in turn makes it more difficult to encourage increased bus use. Management of parking through charging mechanisms and encouraging use of the most appropriate car park through signing etc can contribute to reductions in car journeys and to reductions in cross city / cross town car trips. Although congestion is less of an issue in Aberdeenshire towns, management of parking has a role to play in managing traffic in general and encouraging more sustainable modes of travel. Congestion is not however simply a city issue and is caused by and affects both City and Shire residents alike.

2.3. The volume of traffic and the level of congestion also have a direct impact on **local air quality**, with levels of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter from transport of particular concern. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been designated in Aberdeen City Centre, on Wellington Road and Anderson Drive and an action plan has been developed for these areas. Parking management and control measures form a key element of the Air Quality Action Plan in order to try and better manage the volume of traffic in the city. Air quality is primarily a problem within the city rather than Aberdeenshire however with the growth in population and housing forecast in the Structure Plan, it is an issue that will need to be monitored into the future. Inverurie for example suffers from congestion at some times of day and air quality is a concern, although not at European standard levels.

2.4. The role that parking provision and management plays in supporting the delivery of other strands of the RTS is significant, in particular in encouraging increased use of public transport services (including park and ride), air quality, access to services and economic growth. Although one of a number of influencing factors, there is an opportunity for parking policy to better support delivery in these areas.

Other issues and opportunities of relevance

2.5.   The extent of **private non-residential parking (PNR)** availability in Aberdeen is a key issue and has been identified numerous times during stakeholder consultation. A study undertaken by Aecom in 2011 estimates that there are over 7,000 PNR spaces within the controlled parking zone, almost 34,000 spaces within industrial areas in Aberdeen and major industrial estates in Westhill and Portlethen and a further 5,000 spaces at other locations in the City Region such as Foresterhill and the Universities. In total there is estimated to be 46,000 PNR spaces in the City Region, almost all of which provide free parking predominantly used by commuters. It is estimated that less than 10% of car commuters across the region pay for their parking. This poses a significant challenge to other policies aimed at encouraging mode shift away from private car to bus, rail and park and ride as most drivers will perceive the cost of driving all the way to work as cheaper than using public transport. This challenge is even more acute in respect of peripheral employment areas, where virtually all drivers have free parking readily available. This is the area that is most difficult to influence.

2.6.   Due to national policy, the Councils have no powers to impose workplace parking charges (this tool is available in England and Wales), however there are opportunities to engage with employers through the travel planning process encouraging them to develop travel plans and adopt car park management policies that support more sustainable modes of travel such as car sharing and cycling. The two Councils and other public sector partners have control over a significant volume of the region's car parks and there are therefore some opportunities for these organisations to lead by example in their control of private workplace parking.

2.7.   In areas where demand for private non-residential parking is significantly greater than the supply, this can have a significantly detrimental impact on adjacent areas if there are no or few restrictions on parking e.g. residential areas. This has been evident in the past in the areas surrounding the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and the Universities where overspill parking has meant local residents are unable to park in the area that they live. In such instances, the City Council has introduced **zones with an element of residents only parking** controlled by a permit system with sections of pay and display in some parts. The City Council LTS states that the price and availability of residents' parking permits will be managed in order to minimise the over-subscription of permits, ensure the fairest possible allocation of permits and favour environmentally-friendly vehicles.

2.8.   There are also opportunities to review the extent of the controlled parking zone and expand into areas where there are currently no restrictions, where problems associated with long stay commuter parking are identified as impacting detrimentally on local residential and/or local business needs. Aberdeenshire currently has zones in which residents permits apply in the towns of Banchory, Banff, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Inverurie, Peterhead, Stonehaven and Turriff.

2.9.   On-street parking raises different issues in different areas in terms of balancing the needs between residents, businesses, customers, employees and others. In terms of the problems they create, where these relate to road safety and traffic

management issues, these are dealt with by the two Councils. This issue is therefore not covered in any detail in this strategy.

2.10. The **comparative cost of car parking** in both Aberdeen City and Shire, compared to bus fares is a key contributing factor to the current challenges faced in trying to encourage mode shift. This is an issue for both parking policy and bus policy to try and improve people's perceptions about the true cost of driving, its impacts and to strike the right balance between providing parking at a price that encourages economic growth whilst also supporting wider policies to encourage mode shift. More detailed work may need to be done to fully examine the economic impacts of increasing parking charges as it has to be remembered that less than 10% of people who drive to work pay for their parking.

2.11. The rates charged for on-street **business permits** in Aberdeen City (£200 per year / £17 per month) offer a significantly discounted rate compared to a monthly season permit in an off-street car park (£200/month). The objective of this is to ensure that local businesses are still able to access parking adjacent to their premises, an important factor for those that require access to their car for business purposes during the day. This permit system can be used to park all day in short stay parking spaces at any time of the day and is often used for all day parking in spaces zoned for short stay parking. This is evidenced in the results of the study carried out by Aecom in 2011 which surveyed business permit parking and shows that many key city centre streets, adjacent to the main shopping areas, are frequently used by a majority of cars with business permits. The price of the permits, in relation to the cost of season tickets that can be obtained for private off street car parks, appears to be very cheap and enabling long-stay in areas where short-stay is prioritised seems to be counter-productive. Furthermore, the eligibility criteria do not take account of the size of the business or the amount of car parking spaces that are available to that business. A sample survey of business parking on Queens / Rubislaw Terrace also found that 71% of the cars displaying business permits at 0930 in the morning were still parked there at the end of the day, indicating that a high proportion of these vehicles are not in use during the working day, contrary to the LTS objective of encouraging turnover.

2.12. Although **parking and loading restrictions** are in place across the region, limited resources mean that not all areas can be enforced at all times and restrictions are sometimes ignored, even on bus lanes and key routes. Abuse of parking and loading restrictions, particularly in the city centre, can seriously disrupt the flow of traffic with even a small disruption to traffic flow having widespread implications across the whole network. This has the knock-on effect of causing congestion which can result in delays to bus journeys. This in turn makes the bus a less attractive mode of transport and increases operational costs for the operators which often then get passed on to the passenger through increased fares.

2.13. The Nestrans **Park and Ride** operation study concludes that one of the strongest messages arising as a result of the study is that successful development of Park and Ride is more challenging without the right supporting policies, particularly in respect of a parking strategy in the city centre (and other destination areas where appropriate) and bus priority measures. Park and Ride works well in locations such as Durham and York because access to, and parking in the city centre is necessarily constrained for physical and geographical reasons. In other places

such as Edinburgh there is comparatively little availability of private non-residential (PNR) parking and public parking is relatively expensive, particularly in comparison with bus travel. The North East currently has none of these features and in recent years has suffered from declining bus and park and ride patronage.

2.14. The region's rail stations also provide park and ride opportunities and the opening of Laurencekirk station, with far greater levels of patronage than projected, illustrates the latent demand for rail travel. Although a large proportion of rail passengers should be encouraged to walk and cycle to the rail station, it is important that sufficient parking is also provided in order to make this an attractive option for those that live further away. Parking at some of the eight stations in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire is already at capacity. In addition to increasing the supply of parking at rail stations, there are also opportunities to work with ScotRail to influence the way in which the parking is managed. This can mean a number of things and can be achieved through the introduction of time restrictions and / or charges, which could be discounted against rail tickets. This can help to manage the availability of spaces throughout the day but needs to be balanced to ensure people are not put off travelling by train.

2.15. **Parking for disabled people -** In March 2010, there were 23,914 Blue Badge holders in the North East[1]. This represents some 11% of all cars registered in the region and has risen by approximately 28% since March 2006. The implications of this are that there needs to be appropriate provision and enforcement of parking for disabled people across the region and that this requirement may increase in the future if this trend continues. Aberdeen City Council also operates a Green Badge parking scheme which allows holders to exclusively access certain reserved short stay kerbside spaces in central Aberdeen. These are located as close to key destinations in the city centre as possible in order to minimise walk distances. People eligible for a Green Badge are those who, due to the severity of their disabilities, find it difficult to use other designated city centre parking facilities for people with disabilities. The Green Badge spaces allow for people getting out from a vehicle either by a side ramp or a tail lift, or for the transfer of a driver or a passenger out into a wheelchair. Kerbs have been lowered at every Green Badge location. The Disabled Persons Parking Places (Scotland) Act 2009 now makes it a requirement that all disabled parking bays become legally enforceable. The Councils therefore now have a duty to make all on-street disabled bays and all off-street disabled bays in Council operated car parks enforceable. This is very much a local issue to be addressed by the two councils and is therefore not dealt with further in this strategy.

2.16. A **car club** is due to be launched in the City in April 2012. This initiative will see specific car club parking spaces designated in key locations across the city. These spaces have already been agreed and are awaiting implementation once the car club is operational. Car clubs provide the opportunity to have access to a car when you need one, without having to pay for a car when you don't need it. They can help to reduce the number of cars on the road and with every car club car estimated to replace around 10 private cars they can help to cut emissions and help reduce congestion (a study carried out by TRL in 2010/11 showed that 30% of respondents would have bought a car if they had not joined a car club and 61% are
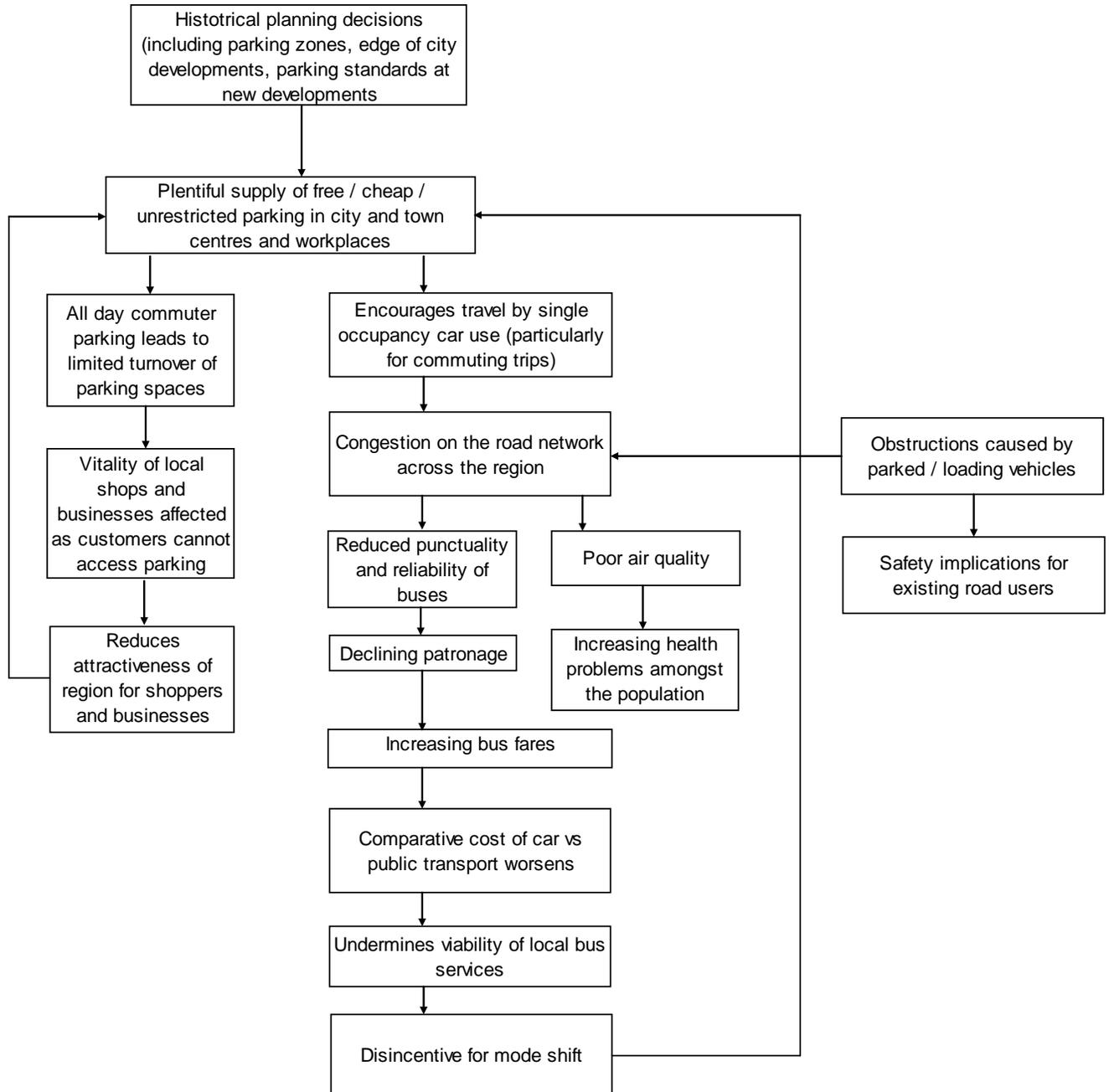
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[1] Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2011

less likely to buy a car in the next few years as a result. It was also shown that, on average, car club members make more frequent use of other modes including bus, walk and cycle).

2.17. The most recent transport results from the Aberdeen City Citizens Panel show that 14% of respondents feel that more **cycle parking** at destinations (e.g. shops / work) would encourage them to use an alternative mode of transport.   The Aberdeenshire Council Citizens Panel also shows that 52% of respondents travel less than 5 miles for work and 34% travel less than five miles for shopping trips. Although provision of cycle parking now tends to be standard as part of the design of new developments, there are still significant opportunities to enhance cycle parking provision at existing key destinations and workplaces.

2.18. Both Councils provide supplementary planning guidance on transport which includes guidance on the **provision of parking at new developments**. Both sets of guidance are being updated as part of supplementary guidance for the Local Development Plans.   National guidance on parking at new developments sets maximum standards and local guidance is developed in line with this. The level of parking at new developments, as defined through the planning process will play a significant role in influencing future travel patterns and mode split, particularly on the journey to work.

2.19. Discussion with the two Councils has identified that across the region a number of the existing coin based **pay and display machines** will shortly require replacement due to corrosion. Replacement of these machines provides the opportunity to consider new technologies and cashless parking, relying on mobile phone technology. This would minimise collection costs and also provide the opportunity to link to the DVLA database and the potential to consider variation of parking rates dependent on CO_2 emissions. This option is currently being explored by Aberdeen City Council to encourage motorists to consider CO_2 emissions in future car purchasing, and is reflective of current practice whereby road tax is now charged differentially based on car engine emissions. Such initiatives are intended to influence a cleaner, more efficient national car fleet, which will contribute to improvements in air quality and reducing CO_2 emissions.

2.20. Car parking charges and the issuing of permits provide a source of **revenue** to the two Councils. The Road Traffic Regulation Act states that parking controls and charges cannot be used as a revenue raising measure and that there must always be a valid traffic regulation reason for applying charges. The income that is generated can be used to ensure the ongoing operation, enforcement, maintenance and future upgrades of the system.

Figure 1: Cause and effect of parking related issues

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│ Histotrical planning decisions   │
│ (including parking zones, edge   │
│ of city developments, parking    │
│ standards at new developments    │
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                 │
                 ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Plentiful supply of free / cheap │
│ / unrestricted parking in city   │
│ and town centres and workplaces  │
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All day commuter parking leads to limited turnover of parking spaces

Vitality of local shops and businesses affected as customers cannot access parking

Reduces attractiveness of region for shoppers and businesses

Encourages travel by single occupancy car use (particularly for commuting trips)

Congestion on the road network across the region

Reduced punctuality and reliability of buses

Poor air quality

Declining patronage

Increasing health problems amongst the population

Increasing bus fares

Comparative cost of car vs public transport worsens

Undermines viability of local bus services

Disincentive for mode shift

Obstructions caused by parked / loading vehicles

Safety implications for existing road users

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3. **Objectives**

3.1. Following a review of the relevant policy documents and identification of the key issues and opportunities, two key overarching strategic objectives have been identified. These reflect the role that a regional parking strategy can play in guiding parking policy across the North East, particularly given that the powers to set parking standards and charges lie with the two Councils.

3.2. These objectives are in line with the overarching objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy.

1. **To support the economic vitality of the city and town centres and the wider objectives of the Regional Transport Strategy through a balanced approach to the management of car parking.**

   a. **Indicator:** Length of stay and charging criteria in city and town centre locations compared to locations further away from the centre.

   b. **Indicator:** the number of publicly available parking spaces available in the city centre, smaller retailing centres and Aberdeenshire town centres relative to their size and role as a service centre.

2. **To support and influence increases in the proportion of journeys undertaken by sustainable modes, particularly by bus and rail.**

   a. **Indicator:** Proportion of journeys undertaken by sustainable modes compared to private car, split by mode.

4. Policies and actions

4.1. The role of the Nestrans Parking Strategy is to set the high level policy for parking across the region. As the Nestrans region is such a large and diverse area covering Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire towns, villages and rural areas, management and control of parking needs to play a different role in different areas.

4.2. The delivery and management of parking also falls primarily to the two Councils and to private car park operators. This strategy therefore aims to set out the wider objectives and strategic direction for the region as a whole, rather than set out the specific mechanisms for delivery at a local level.

Turnover of spaces

a) **Support local parking policies and controls which encourage a high turnover of spaces in city, town and local centres where there is a concentration of local services.**

Different parts of the region have different requirements for parking provision and control. Although the setting of parking controls and charges is very much a local decision and something that varies depending on the location, the following principles should be applied across the region:

   i. Encourage short stay parking in city, town and local centre locations i.e. through maximum stay of 1-2 hours in on-street and off-street spaces in central areas and / or appropriate charging regimes that discourage all day commuter parking;

   ii. Such centres should include Aberdeen City Centre, Aberdeenshire town centres and local centres such as Rosemount and Torry.

   iii. Encourage long stay parking to use areas outwith these central areas and in off-street car parks through the use of appropriate charges and time restrictions.

   iv. Length of stay and charging restrictions should reflect the desire to discourage long-stay parking in areas that rely on a high turnover of spaces to allow customers access to services.

   v. The ongoing revenue requirements for the maintenance and effective enforcement of parking restrictions should be fully considered from the outset to ensure their continued effectiveness. Consistent enforcement of any restrictions in place is essential if they are to be effective.

Nestrans and the two Councils will work together to review current parking zones and restrictions across the region. Although these principles already apply in many areas, changes in recent years may mean that the current zones and restrictions may no longer be appropriate.

b) The provision and management of parking should support a thriving evening economy in appropriate areas whilst balancing the needs of local residents.

Visitors and customers of evening and night time services in the city and town centres should be provided with a choice in how they access these services and with a safe and reliable route home. This should include access by car along with public transport provision. Supply and management of parking for evening and night time users should have consideration to the perceived and actual safety of off-street car parks and also the requirements of local residents to park. Allowing local residents to use off-street car parks in the evenings and overnight, allowing a turnover of on-street spaces adjacent to popular trip attractors is supported by this strategy.

Charges

c) Parking charges should reflect the need to support economic vitality but also be set in the context of the costs associated with using other modes of transport in order that it does not dis-incentivise use of more sustainable modes.

As well as being a mechanism for managing the length of stay, and therefore turnover, of spaces (as set out in policy a above) parking charges should support both objectives of this strategy and form part of the package of wider RTS measures aimed at encouraging a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport. This means consideration of relevant local bus fares, park and ride charges and rail fares in comparison to parking charges. The focus should be on encouraging commuters and long-stay parkers to use public transport leaving town and city centre spaces available for short stay customers and service users.

In Aberdeen City the scale of PNR and the number of parking spaces under the control of private car park operators means that the influence of the Council on parking charges is limited to Council owned off-street car parks and on-street parking. This does add up to a significant proportion of parking spaces but the comparisons between private off-street and Council parking charges needs to be borne in mind. There are opportunities for the Council to influence the parking charges and restrictions in any new car parks developed through legal agreements as part of the planning process. For example, a requirement could be attached to the operator of a new car park that ensures parking charges are no lower than those charged in Council car parks. This should be considered as appropriate in relation to planning applications for any new private car parks in the central area of Aberdeen.

Aberdeenshire Council currently operate parking charges in Banchory, Banff, Crathie, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Inverurie, Peterhead, Stonehaven and Turriff. The regional parking strategy supports a review of parking charges within Aberdeenshire towns, particularly the balance between free and pay and display car park provision and the locations where charges apply to ensure that they remain relevant in the longer term and meet the objectives set by this strategy. This strategy also supports the consideration of parking charges in relation to other key towns in Aberdeenshire where it is felt that turnover of spaces is

restricted and there are opportunities to encourage mode shift for local journeys. A review of parking provision in Aberdeenshire towns will be carried out at a local level and is an action contained within Aberdeenshire Council's Local Transport Strategy.

Permits

d) **Support a review of the current business permit policies currently operating in Aberdeen City.**

As part of the work carried out by Aecom in early 2011 to support the development of this strategy, a sample survey of business permit use was undertaken on Queens / Rubislaw Terrace, just outside the city centre. The survey demonstrated that parking in this location is dominated by business permits and the majority of those cars displaying business permits (71%) were parked there all day. Anecdotal evidence elsewhere supports this evidence that the current system enables all day commuter parking in areas adjacent to the city centre that are zoned for short stay parking. This works against policies that seek to promote accessible short stay parking adjacent to the city centre, and seeks to limit long stay commuter parking in the city centre.

This strategy supports a review of this system to better align it with policy a) above. Any review should have regard for the resource implications of a more complicated scheme as well as the objectives of this strategy.

Enforcement

e) **Support on-going enforcement measures as well as the identification and targeting of specific problem areas which impact on the flow of traffic and / or cause a safety concern.**

In order for policies a) to d) above to be effective in achieving the objectives of this strategy, enforcement of the parking restrictions implemented is essential. Parking is decriminalised in Aberdeen City and is enforced by the City Wardens team for both on and off-street parking and road markings. In Aberdeenshire, parking is enforced through the use of parking operatives using excess charge notices in off-street car parks and by the police for on-street parking. Enforcement is a resource intensive task and the frequency with which areas are enforced and the penalty charges set need to present a sufficient deterrent to non-compliance. Enforcement needs to cover off-street and on-street parking and also other parking restrictions including double yellow lines, bus lane waiting and loading restrictions and disabled parking bays / use of blue badges.

As well as being dangerous, illegal parking can cause significant congestion in Aberdeen City and in Aberdeenshire towns which has knock-on effects for the reliability and punctuality of bus services general traffic. As well as the continuation of existing enforcement measures, this strategy supports the identification and targeting of specific areas where illegal parking and loading causes particular congestion issues. One such area is Market Street in Aberdeen where video surveys in 2010 showed significant parking and loading

occurring during the restricted periods. Problems in this area have been shown to impact significantly on congestion within the city centre.

Infrastructure

f) **The two Councils and Nestrans should work together to achieve consistency in the exploration and application of new parking technologies and infrastructure e.g. automatic number plate recognition and mobile phone payments.**

There are benefits to ensuring a consistent approach, where possible, across the region in terms of the methods available for payment of parking. Investment in new technologies and easier ways to pay for parking (such as via mobile phone) will contribute to making the city and town centres more attractive as destinations. There may also be benefits and cost savings to be achieved when looking to upgrade and improve parking infrastructure such as ticketing machines and these should be realised where possible. Both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils have or are currently trialling cashless parking systems and this strategy supports a co-ordinated approach to this to ensure maximum benefits for the region as a whole.

Park and Ride

g) **Facilities for bus and rail park and ride across the region will continue to be developed and promoted.**

Park and Ride is one of the key transport tools available to address increasing car use and traffic levels whilst maintaining accessibility, promoting economic vitality and at the same time reducing congestion within the city centre. Both bus and rail park and ride opportunities are currently available in the North East with parking at all rail stations and bus park and ride sites at Kingswells, Bridge of Don and Ellon. Two new bus park and ride sites are also planned on the A96 and A90(S) corridors. Parking controls are one of the most effective measures that can be used to encourage the use of park and ride through discouraging long-stay commuter parking in the city centre. Parking controls and enforcement, which are the responsibility of the two Councils, are therefore key to ensuring the success of regional park and ride facilities.

Currently there are no restrictions on parking at park and ride sites and the charge for use is made on the bus. This method of operation will be reviewed in the light of new developments coming forward adjacent to existing park and ride sites and the development of new park and ride sites in order to ensure that the use of these sites is limited to those using park and ride services and that they are not used as alternative parking for adjacent developments. The operation of the network of existing and new park and ride sites will be reviewed as a whole as well as consideration of the requirements at individual sites.

In relation to capacity of park and ride sites, a recent study commissioned by Transport Scotland considered the effects of parking supply on public transport demand and parking supply, quality and pricing at both rail and bus park and ride sites.

With regard to parking at rail stations, the study concludes that if parking availability is increased, the level of new rail demand is relatively small and the subsequent change in car distances travelled is negligible. As a result, the case for delivering additional car parking spaces at stations must be linked to other objectives, for example addressing specific car parking capacity constraints that may have arisen as a result of rail service improvements. Such rail service improvements have occurred in the North East in recent years resulting in significant patronage growth, particularly at Dyce and Inverurie. Further work to explore in more detail the capacity constraints at station car parks across the region would be beneficial in order to better understand the requirement for additional capacity. Nestrans will explore this issue in partnership with the two Councils.

The same study also looked at bus based park and ride and included surveys at Bridge of Don park and ride site. The study concludes that while there is evidence to suggest bus based park and ride can help to reduce the overall number of car trips, existing schemes in Scotland are relatively under-performing compared with other examples. The linkages with wider transport policy need to be strengthened to help attract a higher number of motorists to use the site. This includes linkages to the cost of city centre parking, the cost of bus fares, tickets available and means of purchase and journey times.

Nestrans will continue to promote both bus and rail park and ride through a variety of channels, including the Getabout brand, and will work with Aberdeen City Council to better integrate parking policy with the success of park and ride. The development of two new park and ride sites on the A96 and A90(S) provides a significant opportunity to consider the operation of the bus park and ride network as a whole including how the car parks are managed. Nestrans will continue to work with both Councils to identify the optimal method of operation of the bus based park and ride network and on actions to increase use.

Planning policy and development management

h) **National guidance on maximum parking standards should be applied to all new developments and the introduction of car free or low car developments supported where appropriate.**

Maximum parking standards are set out in national planning guidance and are incorporated into the Local Transport Strategies and supplementary planning guidance of the two Councils. In addition to the application of these standards, this strategy supports, where appropriate, the introduction of car free developments or developments that propose lower than maximum standards to facilitate mode shift through provision of alternative measures. Such alternative measures to be considered should include contributions by developers, where appropriate, to supporting car clubs as part of the planning agreement and the provision of car share parking bays.

i) **Input will be sought at an early stage in the development of masterplans and supplementary guidance on strategic issues relating to parking and travel planning issues.**

Car parking availability is a key determinant of modal choice and there is a need to ensure that the impacts of parking provision are considered at an early stage in the planning process. Nestrans will provide a strategic, regional perspective to ensure alignment with the objectives and principles of this strategy. In order to fulfil this role, the local authorities should consult with Nestrans on masterplans and on planning applications which propose to exceed the national parking standards.

It is important to also ensure that complementary travel planning is considered at an early stage in the planning process and that implementation of travel plans is monitored. This will be required to be done at a local level by the Councils however the regionally available Travel Plan Builder and I-Trace software provides the tools to aid the standardisation and monitoring of travel plans.

Equal consideration should also be given to the provision of parking for bicycles and motorcycles and other parking policies such as car share bays at new developments and more efficient use of available parking in order to encourage reductions in single occupancy car trips.

Travel Planning

j) Employers and groups of employers should be supported to encourage development, implementation and monitoring of travel plans.

The establishment of travel plan networks where groups of employers in one area can work together, for example by jointly subsidising bus services for staff or through car share databases, should be encouraged. The South Aberdeen Travel Plan Network is an example of this which is currently developing a travel plan for the Altens / Tullos area of the city.

Awareness raising amongst employers of the cost of parking provision compared to subsidising more sustainable forms of travel should also be encouraged. Nestrans will continue to actively engage with employers on this issue through a range of channels including the Getabout brand and will encourage and assist in the set up of other travel plan networks, in partnership with the two councils.

k) Support the set up of car clubs in the North East

Car clubs provide a range of benefits, both for individual members and for the wider community. Car clubs reduce the number of cars on the road and it is estimated that every club car replaces at least ten private cars[2], therefore helping to reduce demand for parking, cut congestion and reduce air pollution. Aberdeen City Council is already in the process of introducing a car club in the city and have allocated 20 dedicated spaces across the city centre with funding from Nestrans towards lining and signing of the parking bays.

Although this scheme is initially limited to the city centre, this strategy supports the expansion to other parts of the city should it be successful. The benefits in

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[2] Atkins & The University of Aberdeen (2009) "Mitigating Transport's Climate Impact in Scotland" suggests that one car club car replaces 23 cars as 14 cars are sold and 9 not purchased.

terms of the potential to cut emissions, reduce congestion, alleviate parking problems and increase accessibility means that it will meet a range of local and regional objectives. Although historically successful in densely populated urban areas, there may be benefits to introducing car club facilities in the more populated parts of Aberdeenshire such as Inverurie and Stonehaven (where there are also large Council offices) and also in areas with lower car ownership. If such a scheme was considered viable in Aberdeenshire, this strategy would support a regional approach to this and extension of the scheme operating in the city. This would ensure that residents signed up to a scheme in each local authority area could benefit from cars available across the region.

l) Encourage partners and public sector organisations to lead by example in implementing car parking policies for their own staff which contribute to the aims and objectives of this strategy.

Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and other public sector partner organisations need to recognise the role that they have to play as significant employers in the region and manage their own staff car parks in ways that contribute to the objectives of this strategy. The public sector needs to lead by example in terms of travel plans, carbon reduction targets and corporate responsibility.

Reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality

m) Support work to consider the benefits and feasibility of applying differential parking charges to reflect the impact of larger and more polluting vehicles.

The City Council is investigating the potential for introducing emissions based parking charges, and this policy aims to support the objectives of this and wider objectives in relation to local air quality and carbon emissions across the region as a whole. Aberdeenshire Council will also be reviewing their car parking charging regime which will include consideration of this issue.

There are significant opportunities to encourage the take up and use of low emission vehicles through parking management and incentives such as discounted parking charges. In the City, this policy is supported through the City Council's Air Quality Action Plan 2011 which identifies that car parking policies have the potential to have a significant air quality impact.

Summary of actions and delivery timescales

The parking strategy will be implemented over a 3 year timescale following its approval and will be reviewed after this time to ensure the policies and actions remain valid and appropriate. The indicators will be monitored on an annual basis as part of the Nestrans RTS monitoring report in order to monitor progress in meeting the objectives.

Policy	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
a)	Review the current parking zones and restrictions in the region to ensure they remain appropriate.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Years 1-2
b)	Consider allowing local residents to use off-street car parks in the evenings and overnight, allowing a turnover of on-street spaces adjacent to popular trip attractors.	Aberdeen City Council	Year 1
c)	Consider the use of planning conditions to influence parking charges in any new private car parks in the centre of Aberdeen.	Aberdeen City	Year 1
c)	Review parking provision in Aberdeenshire towns on a town by town basis.	Aberdeenshire	Years 1-3
d)	Review the business permit policy in the city.	Aberdeen City	Year 1
e)	Identify areas where illegal parking and loading causes particular congestion issues with the intention that enforcement can be targeted to address them.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Ongoing
f)	Work in partnership to achieve consistency in the exploration and application of new parking technologies and infrastructure.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Ongoing
g)	Explore in more detail the capacity constraints at station car parks across the region in order to better understand the requirement for additional capacity.	Nestrans	Year 2
g)	Strengthen the policy linkages between park and ride and the cost of city centre parking, the cost of bus fares, tickets available and means of purchase and journey times in order to increase useage.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Years 2-3
g)	Review the operation of park and ride car parks.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire	Years 1-2
g)	Continue to promote bus and rail park and ride through a variety of channels, including Getabout.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Ongoing
h)	Apply national guidance on maximum parking	Aberdeen City &	Ongoing

Policy	Action	Responsibility	Timeframe
	standards to all new developments and the introduction of car free or low car developments where appropriate.	Aberdeenshire	
i)	Local authorities to consult with Nestrans on masterplans and on planning applications which propose to exceed the national parking standards.	Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Ongoing
j)	Actively engage with employers on the issue of travel planning through a range of channels including the Getabout brand and encourage and assist in the set up of travel plan networks.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Ongoing
k)	Support the set up of car clubs in the North East.	Nestrans	Year 1
l)	Lead by example in terms of travel plans, carbon reduction targets and corporate responsibility.	Nestrans, Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Ongoing
m)	Consider the benefits and feasibility of applying differential parking charges to reflect the impact of larger and more polluting vehicles.	Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire	Years 1-2