



Gateshead Parking Strategy

CONTENTS

Executive Summary

1. Introduction
2. Policy Context
3. Town Centre and Gateshead Quays
4. Local Centres
5. Metrocentre
6. Park and Ride
7. Other Key Issues for Gateshead
8. Parking Management Strategy

Executive Summary

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework for the proposed Decriminalised Parking Enforcement regime, and to define the role of parking in the overall transport and regeneration strategies of the Council. This Strategy will be developed in partnership with key stakeholders in the area to ensure that our policy contributes to the success of the local centres and provides a first class facility for visitors and local users of the car parks.

The provision and pricing of car parking has a major influence on the demand for travel. Therefore, the Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan for Tyne and Wear and the draft Network Management Plan for Gateshead.

Chapter 2 – Policy Context

National, regional and countrywide transport strategies should be applied to the local provision of parking. These relate to the need to balance the reality of continued usage of the car with restraining demand for car travel, particularly for commuting.

Parking has a role within the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan for addressing the Government's priorities of reducing congestion and improving air quality, road safety and accessibility.

Chapter 3 – Town Centre and Gateshead Quays

Details of public parking provision.

Chapter 4 – Local Centres

Details of public parking provision.

Chapter 5 – MetroCentre

Details of public parking provision.

Chapter 6 – Park & Ride

Details of the public parking provisions adjacent to Metro stations and current Council policy with respect to P&R initiatives.

Chapter 7 – Other Key issues for Gateshead Council

The parking issues that currently exist and are likely to prevail in the future are considered under a series of topics outlined below:

- 1) Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) – DPE extends the previous role of patrolling Pay & Display car parks to cover on-street parking functions.
- 2) Network Management Duty – The provision of car parking and effective enforcement influences overall demand for car travel and also affects on-street capacity and traffic flows.
- 3) Intrusion of car parking in residential areas – To identify particular needs for controlling such parking.
- 4) Private non-residential parking – To exercise control through the planning process and possibly by the application of statutory powers to introduce charging in the future.
- 5) Parking for people with disabilities – Addresses the issue of having a high proportion of badge holders in the Borough and the need to provide facilities in appropriate locations to cater for these needs.
- 6) Safety and security – A rolling programme of enhancements to achieve ‘Park Mark’ status at all Council managed car parks.
- 7) Parking for Taxis – To develop a more effective system of taxi ranks so that they are only provided where there is likely to be demand for their use.
- 8) Promotion – To provide information on the available facilities.

Chapter 8 – Parking Management Strategy

Taking account of wider policies, trends and other key issues as outlined above, the Parking Strategy is developed in this chapter to define the Council’s approach to the provision and charging of parking facilities, to the day to day management and enforcement functions and to its contribution to the network management duty.

The overall parking provision within the Town Centre will be determined in conjunction with an assessment being made of other centres in the conurbation, through the Transport Innovation Fund. The monitoring of usage and spare capacities indicates that there is currently sufficient parking provision. As demand increases, it is proposed to maintain a balance in favour of short stay provision in order to support economic regeneration whilst not encouraging growth in car commuting that increases congestion and environmental problems.

The regeneration of the Town Centre and the continued redevelopment of the Gateshead Quays area will have a significant impact on the existing car park and so development proposals will cater for displaced provision and demands.

Gateshead Parking Plan

The key objectives of the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement regime will be to ensure that short stay provision is protected for short stay use, support the vitality of the commercial and tourist areas, provide a level of security to make the car parks attractive to customers and to support the wider transport policies.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Parking is no longer a stand-alone issue, but has become a key aspect of both transport and land use planning. It must be integrated with all other aspects of urban policy now that it is to be managed at levels below 'unfettered demand'. This is necessary in order to promote and to support:
- Lifestyles that are less car-dependent;
 - Transport provision that is more socially inclusive;
 - Development that is more sustainable in terms of energy and pollution; and
 - Settlements that are more attractive and user-friendly.
- 1.2 Control over the availability of parking spaces is a key policy instrument in limiting car trips, and for the time being is the most widely available and readily accepted method of doing so. Even without control over private parking, strict control over public parking could have a major impact on travel choices
- 1.3 As policy has moved from a 'predict and provide' approach to one based on the achievement of wider objectives, the management of parking has become a more important part of national policy. It is becoming accepted that the unlimited growth of car use cannot be tolerated, as the infrastructure costs of providing the necessary road and parking space would be unacceptable in both financial and environmental terms.
- 1.4 Accordingly, a new policy framework has emerged in a range of Government documents, of which the most important are the Transport White Paper issued in 1998, the Future of Transport White Paper in 2004, the Transport Act 2000, the Traffic Management Act 2004, the 10 Year Plan, Planning Policy Statement or Guidance Notes, particularly PPG13, Regional Planning Guidance (including Regional Transport Strategies), and a number of supporting documents and good practice guides. Fuller details of the main policies appear in Section 2.
- 1.5 The Council manages a number of Pay and Display car parks within the Borough. For a number of years, the patrolling and enforcement of these has been contracted out. From July 2007, the proposed introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) will extend the role of managing the off-street Pay & Display car parks to the enforcement of other parking controls such as waiting restrictions and residential permit schemes. **The principal purpose of this Strategy is to set the strategic framework for the DPE regime as well as defining the role of parking in the overall transport and regeneration strategies of the Council.**
- 1.6 Gateshead Council is a partner, along with the other Tyne and Wear district councils and Nexus, of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The second LTP, covering the period 2006 to 2011, addresses the Government's priorities

for transport, which are reducing congestion and improving sustainable accessibility to jobs and services, improving air quality and reducing road casualties. So whilst economic regeneration is a high level objective, this will be achieved in the context of the Government's transport priorities.

- 1.7 The supply and pricing of car parking, both public and private, has a fundamental influence on the way people travel, particularly to town and district centres. Research has shown that even where good public transport services exist, if cheap and convenient parking is available then people with access to a car will choose this mode of travel.
- 1.8 The Council has a Network Management Duty under the 2004 Traffic Management Act with the responsibility for ensuring the expeditious movement of traffic. The origins of the duty are in the need to control the disruptions caused by street works. However, enforcement of parking restrictions and demand management (which includes the strategic role of car parking) will also be central to the Network Management Plan and effectiveness of this Duty.
- 1.9 Through the planning development control system, the Council can also control the amount of car parking that is provided in new developments and changes of use. Over time, this influence can help maintain an acceptable balance of private non-residential parking provision.
- 1.10 Therefore, the purpose of this Strategy is to provide a comprehensive framework for addressing a number of issues. The development of this Strategy will be undertaken in close partnership with key stakeholders in the area. The aim and objectives of the Strategy are outlined in the following chapters.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 This chapter outlines the policy context in which Gateshead's Parking Strategy will be set. The policies at national, regional and local level relating to parking are outlined and links associated to transportation issues are highlighted where appropriate.

NATIONAL POLICY

- 2.2 National government influences the provision and management of parking in several ways; through policy, legislation and advice. The following section summarises the relevant national policy. The seven Traffic Advisory Notes that relate to parking are not summarised here but are referenced within the report as appropriate.

Planning Policy guidance (PPG) Notes

- 2.3 PPG notes were first published in the 1990s and have been updated where necessary to reflect policy changes. The guidance notes are designed to help those involved with planning and development achieve sustainable development that stimulates economic growth whilst minimising the impact upon the built and natural environments. Three of the PPG notes are relevant to parking:

- PPG3: Housing
- PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Development
- PPG13: Transport

- 2.4 The specific elements from each of the three PPGs that are relevant to the provision and management of parking are outlined below.

PPG3: Housing

- 2.5 PPG3 provides guidance for authorities developing policy for sustainable housing developments. The guidance encourages local authorities to focus upon the quality of living environments. When considering residential development, it encourages local planning authorities to give priority to the needs of pedestrians rather than to the movement and parking of vehicles.
- 2.6 The guidance also refers to maximum parking standards, which are used by local planning authorities to restrain the number of parking spaces provided at new developments. The guidance states that local planning authorities should:
- "Introduce greater flexibility in the application of parking standards, which the Government expects to be significantly lower than at present"

- “Allow housing developments with limited or no off-street car parking in areas with good public transport accessibility and where effective on-street parking control is present or can be secured”
 - Not require developers “to provide more car parking than they or potential occupiers might want, nor to provide off-street parking where there is no need, particularly in urban areas where public transport is available or where there is a demand for car free housing”.
- 2.7 PPG3 provides an outline maximum standard of 1.5 off-street parking spaces per dwelling which it suggests should be the average number provided at sustainable residential developments.

PPG6: Town Centres and Retail Developments

- 2.8 The overarching objective of PPG6 is to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town and city centres. The government sees maintaining an efficient and competitive retail sector as key to realising this objective. The provision of good quality car parking gives confidence to investors and retailers, but heavy demand for access by car can adversely affect a centre’s attractiveness if problems such as congestion and pollution emerge. PPG6 places a heavy emphasis upon consultation with the business community to ensure support for and success of City Centre parking strategies.
- 2.9 Of particular significance is paragraph 2.32 which states “that local authorities should achieve better use of existing car parking, by adopting policies which give priority to short-term parking for visitors to the Town Centre, such as shoppers (and tourists), and discourage long term parking for commuters”.
- 2.10 City Centre development must, however, be sustainable and the government emphasises the importance of centres being the focus of transport interchanges which maximise the opportunity to use means of transport other than the car. The guidance also stresses that providing a wide range of shops, employment opportunities, services and facilities in a central area can help to encourage linked trips where one outing, whether by car or by other means, can serve several purposes. It indicates that the parking that is provided should serve the centre as a whole, rather than being dedicated to individual developments.
- 2.11 The government advises that parking policy and strategy should be used to reinforce the attractiveness and competitiveness of town and city centres. Like PPG3, it makes specific reference to parking standards and states that local authorities should ensure that “parking provision at peripheral developments is not set at high levels which would have the effect of significantly disadvantaging town centres”.

PPG13: Transport

- 2.12 PPG13 provides the most comprehensive advice with regard to parking. The guidance aims to secure sustainable development from a transport perspective. A reduction in the rate of traffic growth, reduced reliance on the car and additional use of alternative means of transport are integral to this objective.
- 2.13 Studies have shown that the availability of car parking is a major influence on the means of transport people choose for their journeys. Some studies have shown that levels of parking provision can be more significant than levels of public transport provision when trip makers determine their mode of travel (particularly for the journey to work). Reducing the amount of parking in new development (and in the expansion and change of use in existing development) is therefore essential, as part of a package of planning and transport measures, to promote sustainable travel choices.
- 2.14 PPG13 sets out a framework within which parking policy should reside. It states that a co-ordinated approach to parking should be adopted regionally and that the aims and objectives should be established in the Regional Transport Strategy. Co-operation between neighbouring planning authorities will help to avoid wasteful competition between different locations based around the supply or cost of parking.
- 2.15 PPG13 also places emphasis on the use of parking charges as a control mechanism. Again a co-ordinated approach is recommended so that appropriate charges are established that do not undermine the vitality of other centres. PPG13 is clear that any parking controls, both on-street parking and in car parks, require adequate enforcement measures for them to be a success.
- 2.16 PPG13 sets out eight principles that local authorities should adopt when developing and implementing parking policy (PPG13, paragraph 51). Each of the principles is designed to ensure that parking policy:
- Helps to promote sustainable travel choices;
 - Maximises access to community facilities for everyone;
 - Maintains and supports the vitality and viability of city centres; and
 - Protects the environment in which people live.
- 2.17 PPG13 also defines maximum levels of parking that should be provided at various classes of development. The guidance states that more rigorous standards may be applied at the discretion of each local planning authority.

A New Deal for Transport – Better for Everyone

- 2.18 In July 1998 the Government published a transport White Paper entitled “A New Deal for Transport – Better for Everyone”. The White Paper sets out the government’s strategy to create a better more integrated transport system to tackle the problems of congestion and pollution, promote transport choice and reduce car dependency.
- 2.19 The White Paper sets out a framework within which more detailed policies would be taken forward. The key element in relation to parking was the Government’s commitment to introduce legislation that would enable local authorities to levy a charge on private workplace parking spaces. It was proposed that this levy would primarily address peak hour congestion but would also be a way for local authorities to raise revenue that could fund transport improvements.

REGIONAL POLICY

- 2.20 Existing Regional Policy is set out in Regional Planning Guidance Note 1 (RPG1), published in November 2002. Policies T12 and T13 provide advice on car parking. The overarching objectives of these is to encourage that:
- Parking standards in development plans should be based upon maximum rather than minimum standards;
 - Developers should not be encouraged to provide more parking spaces than they themselves wish to;
 - Shared use of parking between neighbouring developments should be encouraged;
 - In town and city centres secure and attractive parking provision should support retail and commercial functions, with priority given to short-stay parking for shoppers and visitors;
 - Parking policies should seek to reduce car dependence, especially for single occupancy commuter journeys.
- 2.21 A draft Regional Spatial Strategy was published in June 2005. This sets out a long-term strategy for the spatial development of the North East. Policy 54 – Parking and Travel Plans recommends that Local Transport Plans and other strategies, plans and programmes should:
- Seek to minimise parking provision for non-residential developments, linked to co-ordinated proposals for public transport and accessibility improvements and demand management;
 - Set maximum parking standards for non-residential land uses in line with national planning policy, seeking to reduce provision below

those levels in locations with good public transport access, particularly in the Strategic Public Transport Interchanges and to a lesser extent in the sub-regional and local interchanges;

- Develop management strategies in each Interchange Centre for the appropriate level of total parking stock that is consistent with the above;
- Apply guidance set out in national planning policy on residential parking standards, reflecting local circumstances;
- Ensuring that the pricing of new parking provision is consistent with local parking regimes;
- Ensuring Travel Plans are prepared for all major development proposals that will generate significant additional journeys, which should seek to maximise travel by public transport, cycling and walking. At the Prestige Employment Sites, consideration should be given to developing a co-ordinated approach to the whole site, including overall levels of parking provision.

LOCAL POLICY

2.22 The Parking Strategy for Tyne and Wear was adopted by the Local Transport Plan (LTP) partners in 2002. This policy is based around the following five key themes:

- Co-ordination, management and control of on- and off-street local authority facilities
- Monitoring of and partnership with private operator facilities
- Greater consistency of UDP and development control policies
- Examination of the potential for workplace parking levies and other price-based mechanisms
- Linkages with other initiatives and modes of transport.

2.23 A revised LTP covering the period 2006-2011 was submitted to Government in July 2005, with a final version submitted in March 2006. In this document a number of actions were put forward for the partners to adopt and embrace, which are to:

- Agree of a set of 'maximum' car parking standards
- Unify car parking standards for blue badge holders, cyclists and powered two wheelers
- Review car parking space provision in centres with viable alternative public transport options

- Improve liaison between the partners and private parking operators to prevent duplication of resources
- To trial a series of innovative parking regimes during 2006-2011, such as:
 - i) Late opening of public car parks to prevent commuter parking
 - ii) Re-allocation of spaces from long to short stay
 - iii) Mitigate problems of commuter parking in residential areas through the introduction of residential parking schemes.

Gateshead Transport Strategy Statement

2.24 The Gateshead Transport Strategy Statement, approved in December 2004, brings together the main themes of the LTP together with other transport related strategies in a single summary document for Gateshead. This recognises the importance of:

- Resolving localised parking problems, particularly where demand for parking is greater than supply due to commuter parking or high levels of car ownership;
- Identifying ways of reducing the problems of parked vehicles obstructing pavements;
- Effective management of car parking, including appropriate levels of charging in Gateshead town centre and other important locations throughout the Borough.

Gateshead Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

2.25 The Gateshead Unitary Development Plan was adopted in 1998. This sets out maximum levels of car parking to be provided in new development and, through Policy T13, sets out an overall approach towards parking aimed at ensuring:

- The safety of pedestrians and other road users;
- The best use of available spaces;
- The efficient operation of public transport;
- Ease of access for people with disabilities;
- The efficient operation of new and existing businesses;
- The avoidance of unnecessary traffic movement.

2.26 draft revised Unitary Development Plan was published in June 2004, with a revised version published in January 2006. The approach to car parking in this draft seeks to:

- Limit car parking in new development to that necessary to secure the safe and effective operation of the development (Policy DC4). Revised maximum

parking standards have been published in the supporting document IPA 11 – Parking Standards;

- Introduce car parking charges at in and out of town retail centres, where this can be achieved without threatening the vitality and viability of the individual centres (policy T11);
- Develop park and ride at various locations across the Borough (Policy T12).

3. TOWN CENTRE AND GATESHEAD QUAYS

3.1 Off-Street Parking supply

3.1.1 Off-street parking is the definition used for all parking areas that are not on the public highway. Off-street car parks may be controlled by local authorities or by private organisations.

3.1.2 The table below summarises the current provision of public off-street car parking in the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays (including temporary car parks).

Existing supply of public off-street car parking in the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays

	Town Centre	Quayside
Council control	425*	548**
Private control	462	578
Total	887*	1126**

* A further 110 spaces are available for public use on Saturdays. The Multi-storey car park is closed to the public on Sundays with a net loss of 256 spaces.

** 380 of these spaces are within temporary car parks that are part of the GQ2 development site.

3.1.3 A Council controlled dedicated car park (11 bays) is also available off Oakwellgate to accommodate Coaches.

3.1.4 Charges are made for parking at all the Council operated car parks. Tariff structures vary slightly (with the Town Centre car parks having more tariff bands). Charges are reviewed annually in line with inflation and local and national transport policy.

Car Park use

3.1.5 Analysis of survey information in the Council controlled Town Centre car parks indicates that they are generally being well utilised although some still have spare capacity. The Multi-storey car park in particular is only operating at 58% of its capacity on a daily basis, although this partly due to other factors such as perceived fear of crime.

3.1.6 Usage of the car parks in the Council controlled car parks that support the Gateshead Quays fluctuates. Analysis of survey information since the Sage Gateshead opened at the end of 2004 do not appear to identify a particular trend, with some months being significantly busier than others.

This would tend to suggest that car park usage is intrinsically linked to the popularity of certain performances at the Sage Gateshead.

- 3.1.7 To ensure an equal distribution of parking and corresponding traffic movements within the Quays area, all the tariffs in the car parks under Council control are set the same. Due to its close proximity to Newcastle Quayside and the excellent pedestrian links that exist between both Quays, a restriction of 4 hours was imposed on all the car parks in the Gateshead Quays area to discourage commuter parking.
- 3.1.8 The privately operated car parks are all attached to retail outlets or leisure sites. Parking is free in all but two of the car parks. Surveys indicate that those car parks without charges are the most heavily used. A large percentage of this is long stay parking, much of which can be attributed to commuters. This is considered to be undermining the Council's Parking Strategy for the area.

Quality

- 3.1.9 The quality of off-street car parks is variable. Security features at all off-street car parks are in need of improvement to meet current "standards" for car park design. The Council-operated multi-storey car park presents a particularly poor image and parking environment.

Future Major Developments

- 3.1.10 The Council has in recent years commissioned a Regeneration Framework and following this has adopted a Planning Strategy for the Town Centre, both of which propose redevelopment of the central retail 'core area' including the shopping centre and car park. This Strategy arises not only out of economic considerations but also as a result of two comprehensive consultation exercises involving the public and town centre businesses, where the overwhelming desire was for demolition of the car park and Trinity Square shopping development. Accordingly, the Council is now working with the existing owners to achieve a scheme for redevelopment of the area, which meets its aspiration for an improved, mixed use town centre which serves the existing population but also provides for a much broader catchment, both in terms of income groups and geographical area.
- 3.1.11 Work has started on the site of the Baltic Business Quarter off Hawks Road. This is a development that will include a number of business and academic units. A total provision for up to 4000 spaces within the Baltic Business Quarter has been agreed with Gateshead Council depending

upon the type, size and nature of the individual businesses. Of these spaces 3,311 would be reserved for business use, and up to 689 spaces for public car parking facilities. Gateshead Council reserve the right to alter the total number of spaces required as development progresses. As part of the development agreement with Gateshead Council the developer has agreed to implement a 200 space dual use car park (to be accessed directly off Hawks Road). Dual use means that the car park will be reserved for staff and visitors between business hours and will be available for use by the general public outside of these hours.

3.1.12 Gateshead College intend to relocate to the Baltic Business Quarter from Durham Road, Low Fell. As part of their application they intend to create 300 spaces for use by college staff, students and visitors (within the 3,311 total spaces allocated for business use).

3.1.13 The Council have recently marketed the 2.25 ha of land between The Sage Gateshead and the Baltic Quayside apartments which is currently occupied by two large temporary car parks and vacant former industrial units (GQ2 Site). Development on this land will be strictly controlled to ensure that it is consistent with the Council's vision for the Gateshead Quays area. The development is to be mixed-use with residential accommodation, leisure and commercial units. It will also incorporate a multi-storey car park to support this development and provide overspill parking generated by the existing Gateshead Quays leisure/tourist attractions.

3.2 On-Street Parking supply

3.2.1 There are currently an estimated 119 controlled on-street spaces in the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays, of which 33 are free. In addition there are a number of areas with limited waiting restrictions in place, which appear to be ignored by visitors and are not regularly enforced by traffic wardens due to resource constraints. There are also a large number of spaces in unrestricted areas on the peripheral of the Town Centre that are heavily used.

3.2.2 There are currently three locations in the Town Centre area that operate on-street Pay & Display parking. Surveys indicate that occupancy levels in these bays fluctuate and have dropped compared to data collected in 2001. This is a consequence of the level of alternative free on-street car parking that exists in the area. The survey also highlighted a significant amount of abuse of the 2 hour restriction on length of stay, which was considered detrimental to the operation of the spaces.

3.2.3 Much commuter parking takes place in town centre streets (particularly near the Tyne Bridge) where there are no restrictions.

4 LOCAL CENTRES

4.1 There are some 26 district/local centres in the Borough. These range in type from fairly substantial commercial centres to single parades of shops. Clearly with this range in scale parking provision and requirements vary greatly between centres.

4.2 The UDP defines seven larger centres. These all have off-street parking and are:

- Blaydon
- Birtley
- Coatsworth Road
- Felling
- Low Fell
- Whickham
- Wrekenton

4.3 In addition, three smaller centres - Fewster Square, Swalwell and Winlaton – also have a significant amount of public off-street parking. In the remaining local centres parking is provided on street.

4.4 Off-Street Parking supply

4.4.1 From analysis of survey information it can be seen that:

- Commuter parking (for which occupancy at 9 a.m. is taken as a proxy measure), comprises a substantial proportion of parking usage at all of the centres, being in excess of 50% of the overall peak occupancy at all but Coatsworth Road (40%) and exceeding 70% at Felling, Low Fell, and Whickham. Whickham had the highest estimated proportion of commuter parking at nearly 90%.
- Parking ratios vary considerably. They do however, generally match or exceed maximum parking levels for new retail developments set out in PPG13 (1 space per 15 m² for food retailing). It is noted that the lowest ratio is at Whickham, which also has the highest percentage occupancy.

4.4.2 There are currently no charges for car parking or restrictions on use (i.e. maximum permitted stay) in any of the local centres.

4.4.3 There is no enforcement action undertaken in any of the local centre car parks. Repeated complaints are received regarding abuse of the marked disabled bays and obstruction problems.

- 4.4.4 Legislation introduced as part of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part 3 relating to Discrimination in the provision of Goods, Facilities and Services imposes a duty on the Service Provider to ensure that facilities are provided to disabled persons enabling them to make use of facilities/services offered to other members of the public. There is a further duty that empowers the Service Provider to ensure that any dedicated disabled facilities are fit for purpose and reasonable steps taken to ensure that disabled persons can make use of the facilities i.e. discourage abuse.
- 4.4.5 Subsequent demand surveys carried out in all of the main Local Centres as part of the study demonstrated that a significant proportion of parking was attributed to long-stay commuter parking. In many cases, there was little short-stay parking left for visitors. This is considered detrimental to the long-term vitality and viability of the retail areas. The current absence of any charging for parking gives an incentive for additional car use, undermines the ability to manage car parking space to the best benefit of local shops, and limits the scope for funding improvements. It is recognised however that the advantages of introducing charges can be outweighed by the problems for the local economy if the charges deter users.

Quality

- 4.4.6 Off-street parking in all the centres is provided in surface car parks. There is currently no specific budget identified for the maintenance of car parks. In the past, localised remedial work has been funded from the income generated from charges in the Town Centre, Gateshead Quays and Heworth car parks. Unfortunately, in a number of locations the condition of the surface now warrants more significant reconstruction works.
- 4.4.7 Most car parks in all the centres have good pedestrian access and are convenient for the centres they serve.

Impact of developments

- 4.4.8 Other than through the occupation of currently vacant floor space or redevelopment of currently occupied sites, there is little scope for the development of additional floor space within most of the district centres. The only centre where there is current development proposals is Blaydon.

Developments in Blaydon district centre

- 4.4.9 The owners of the retail centre are considering developing additional retail outlets on the existing car park, although no firm proposals have been submitted.
- 4.4.10 The car park that would be developed is currently significantly underused with maximum occupancy of around 50%. Hence, depending on the scale and nature of development and its potential for new trip generation, a significant reduction in existing spaces could be accommodated without adverse impact on the overall parking supply/demand ratio.
- 4.4.11 Blaydon has been identified as a potential site for 'Park and Ride' following redevelopment. This will have to be taken into consideration when determining the overall car park capacity required to support the viability of the centre.

4.5 On-street parking provision

- 4.5.1 On-street parking is mostly controlled within the larger centres. In a number of centres there are permitted parking spaces comprising limited waiting (30 minutes or 60 minutes) and disabled spaces. Where designated spaces are provided they are generally well used. Surveys have demonstrated that waiting restrictions are extensively abused.
- 4.5.2 On street parking in areas adjacent to the centres is uncontrolled. There is therefore substantial on-street parking capacity on unrestricted roads close to the district centres.
- 4.5.3 In the smaller centres on-street parking restrictions are generally limited to main roads through the centres with parking being uncontrolled elsewhere.

5. METROCENTRE

- 5.1 The MetroCentre complex began trading in April 1986, consisting then of a superstore and a small number of retail shops, which were primarily trading convenience goods. The MetroCentre has since expanded with the gradual development of the main complex and associated adjacent developments. This includes the provision of retail warehouses, the ASDA hypermarket and IKEA home store to the west, and the establishment of the Metro Riverside, Costco wholesale to the north.
- 5.2 The MetroCentre complex primarily caters for customers travelling by car. It currently provides over 8,000 free car parking spaces adjoining the main shopping complex. These spaces are split into four main, colour-coded, quadrants located around the MetroCentre.
- 5.3 Additional free car parking is located in the coach park, to the northeast of the MetroCentre railway station, with a capacity of over 1,000 vehicles (+ 40 coach spaces). Staff at the MetroCentre that arrive by car are encouraged to use the coach park, in order to free up space in the adjoining car parks for customers to the complex. This area may be further developed for use as a park and ride facility for Newcastle and Gateshead centres in the future.
- 5.4 A further 2,700 (approx) free car parking spaces are provided for visitors to the retail complex, at the Ikea and Asda stores to the west of the MetroCentre.
- 5.5 The recently opened 'red quadrant' development comprises of 34,500 m² of retail floor space and a multi-storey car park. The development "package" includes:
- 400 car parking spaces.
 - The appointment of a Travel Co-ordinator and introduction of a Travel Plan.
 - A dedicated bus link to Gateshead Town Centre and shuttle bus linking with surrounding areas.
 - A transport interchange (extra rail platform, overhead footway linking bus/rail with the Centre).
 - The introduction of a cycle lanes and an extra 100 cycle parking spaces.

- 5.6 The development has increased the retail floor space at the centre by around 36%. Trip generation is expected to increase but not necessarily in direct proportion to the increase in floor space. There is, however, little empirical evidence with regard to the impact on trip generation of increases in the retail offer at such centres.
- 5.7 Car parking provision (pre and post Red Quadrant opening) in the main MetroCentre complex and the areas to the west are set down in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Sector Parking Provisions

Area	Pre-Red Quadrant Parking Provision	Parking Provision Oct 2004 with Red Quadrant opened
Metro Retail Park	918	918
Metro Park West	1,114	1,114
Asda	660	660
Aldi	115	115
Harry Ramsden's	85	85
Coach Park	1,073 + 40 coach spaces	1,073 + 40 coach spaces
Red Quadrant – (Outdoor)	758	850
Red Quadrant – (Multi Storey)	0	1,101
Small Green	105	105
Large Green	1,425	1,400
Blue Multi Storey	1,758	1,758
Small Blue	0	250
Yellow including Multi Storey	2,762	2,762
Service Yard	350	350
Total	12,196 + 40 coach spaces	12,541 + 40 coach spaces

- 5.8 There is little information on the use of individual car parks relative to capacity. The overall turnover per space associated with the main retail complex is very hard to determine and would appear to vary between 2 and 4 vehicles per space per day. The popularity of individual car parks can to some extent be gauged by the relative usage of the entrances to the main shopping malls at set down in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Visitors by Entrance: 2003

Entrance	Total Visitors (Millions)	Percentage of Total
Red Mall	1.612	7.0
House of Fraser	0.630	2.8
M & S Green	6.461	28.2
Rail/Coach	0.895	3.9
Blue Multi-Storey	3.219	14.1
Bus Station	4.252	18.6
Yellow Multi-Storey	5.839	25.4
Total	22.908	100.0

- 5.9 All parking is free and CCTV is operational at all car park entrances and exits.

Car park use

- 5.10 In terms of parking ratios (floor space per parking space), the parking ratios of the MetroCentre significantly exceed the maximum parking standards within PPG13 for retail development (1 space per 14m²).
- 5.11 Automatic Traffic Counters (ATC) are located on the A1 and at strategic locations on the MetroCentre area road network. Traffic flow information is obtained on an hourly and daily basis throughout the year. An analysis of ATC data collected indicates that the centre currently has sufficient car parking capacity to accommodate normal (i.e. excluding the pre-Christmas period) weekday and Saturday demand. The limitations of that data in estimating car park occupancy should be borne in mind. However, it is anticipated that the increased traffic flow generated by the red quadrant development and background growth in car use, could increase demand such that it exceeds the practical capacity of the car parks on Saturdays.
- 5.12 Even without considering the impact of additional car trips on the adjacent road networks, it is apparent that the measures to promote more sustainable travel patterns to the MetroCentre will be critical to accommodating the transport demands from an expanded MetroCentre.

6. PARK & RIDE

Existing provision for P&R

- 6.1 Current provision of park and ride in Gateshead is centred upon Heworth and Felling Metro station, with parking available for some 414 spaces available on a long stay basis and a further 64 spaces available with a maximum stay of 4 hours. These facilities are heavily used, with figures showing an average occupancy rate of 88%. Elsewhere within the Borough there is anecdotal evidence of informal park and ride from a number of locations close to the main rail, metro or bus corridors, including the Metrocentre.
- 6.2 Future development of park and ride is likely to focus on the main bus/rail corridors. Additional potential locations identified in Gateshead's draft replacement Unitary Development Plan include the Metro Centre, East Gateshead, Blaydon, Birtley, Pelaw Metro and Team Valley. However, with the exception of some feasibility work on East Gateshead, no substantive work has been done on identifying sites or funding for these proposals.

Policy

- 6.3 The development of park and ride within Gateshead needs to be seen in the context of meeting travel needs across the Tyneside conurbation as a whole. The role of park and ride specific to Gateshead town centre is likely to be limited in the short to medium terms given the abundance of PNR parking and relatively low cost of public parking. That role may increase in the longer term, particularly once the cost of long stay parking is increased substantially and restraint on the provision of new commuter parking bites.
- 6.4 P&R may, however, have an important role in meeting short-term capacity shortfalls, either seasonal or associated with major events at the Quayside. This potential should be explored further and specific proposals developed through the development of Travel Plans for major events.

7. OTHER KEY ISSUES FOR GATESHEAD

(1) Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Proposals

Primary legislation set out in parts of the Traffic Management Act 2004 imposes a new statutory duty on all local traffic authorities to manage their highway network so as to achieve, as far as reasonably practicable and taking into account their other duties and responsibilities, the expeditious movement of traffic on their highways (i.e. both pedestrian and vehicular). An efficient, proactive enforcement regime to combat inconsiderate parking is seen as an essential element in fulfilling this duty.

Currently, in Gateshead, the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions is carried out by Northumbria Police. The number of traffic wardens deployed across the borough has reduced over recent years. This has resulted in a growing mismatch between enforcement requirements and resource availability. Enforcement of off-street car parks is currently contracted out to Legion Group plc. The introduction of DPE will allow the Council to enforce both on and off street parking in a co-ordinated manner, which, for the first time, will provide a comprehensive single point for responsibility for the control and enforcement of public parking.

Under DPE local enforcement will be carried out by the Council's appointed parking attendants who will help to tackle dangerous and inconvenient parking, support local business, support towns needs, control loading and unloading, help relieve congestion, improve conditions in residential parking areas, improve safety outside schools and assist blue badge holders.

The Council will have direct control to ensure that traffic regulation orders are observed and where appropriate Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) issued for contraventions.

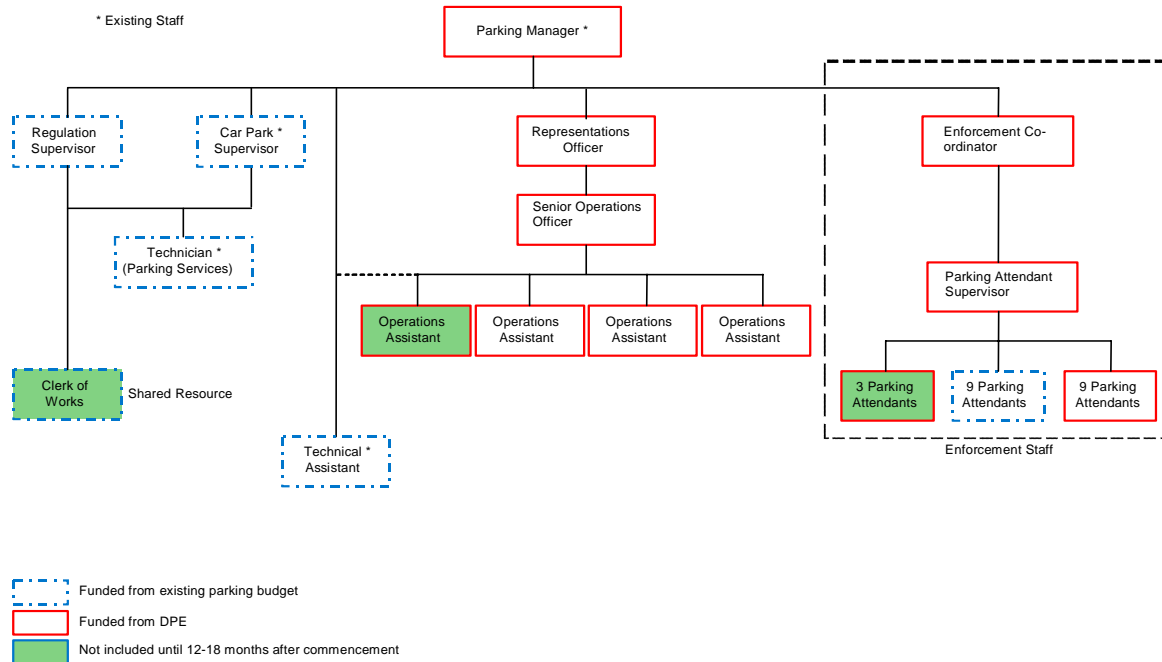
The income accrued from PCN's will be retained by the Council to fund the DPE scheme, with any surpluses being ring fenced under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act, to improve certain parking, public transport and highway related matters.

The main advantages of local authority enforcement of regulations are as follows:

- Effective implementation of parking policies seeking improved traffic flow, better management of traffic levels, fewer accidents, a fairer distribution of parking spaces and more pleasant streets.
- Better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of regulations
- Ability of local authorities to use the revenue from charges to fund enforcement with any surplus used for improving parking facilities or other transport related measures.

Through an examination of the factors that provide the greatest long-term benefits in terms of quality of service, it is the Gateshead Council’s intention to commence DPE using an internal enforcement/internal notice processing system. It is considered that this option offers greater control over public interface and a better opportunity for exchange of intelligence between the various enforcement/community safety teams currently operating within the Council’s Local Environmental Services i.e. Neighbourhood Wardens, CCTV monitoring, etc. It also offers the potential for synergy of the roles in the future. A new expanded team incorporating existing and new staff will be established to meet the increased workload and administrative duties of the DPE operation and the other parking and regulatory functions.

Proposed indicative staff structure – Parking Services



(2) Intrusion of Car Parking into Residential Areas

To enable the Council to have a proactive approach to the growing problem of inappropriate parking in residential areas, a new Resident Parking policy was established in 2004. The principles of the revised policy are as follows: -

- New schemes will only be considered where requested by residents or Members on residents’ behalf;

- The introduction of a new scheme will only be considered where 85% of the kerbside parking capacity is being used and the proportion of non-residents' car parking is greater than 30%;
- A scheme will not be introduced unless it has the support of at least 50% of the households/businesses within the proposed zone/street;
- Surveys will be used to determine the nature of the problem and the appropriate period of restriction applied accordingly;
- It is considered necessary to introduce an annual residents charge (initially set at £15 per annum) to ensure that an expanded and enhanced scheme can be sustained. This charge to be reviewed annually. This charge is required to fund a dedicated Traffic Warden to ensure an improved enforcement regime and to pay for an improved secure permit to discourage counterfeiting, which has proven a considerable problem with the previous scheme;
- There are specific instances where residents in a number of streets seek to park regularly in another street because of its perceived favourable location. The activity may be deemed to be of significant detriment to the residents of the favoured street. Feelings can run high and ongoing debates can become acrimonious. The times of most conflict will usually be weekday evenings and at weekends. Problems of this type unfortunately set resident against resident and any 'solution' is likely to increase tensions within communities and create significant enforcement difficulties at demanding times. Schemes will therefore not be considered in these instances.
- Controls will generally operate for a standard period of 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday. Longer operating hours will only be considered where justified by specific local circumstances. Core time only restrictions will be considered when surveys dictate that this is appropriate.

Types of permit

Due to the extended period of the restriction, the need will arise to incorporate provision for access to the area by legitimate "users" in addition to residents.

These will include:

- Businesses
- Occasional visitors. Permits will be available for visitors to park for a limited period.
- OAP/Disabled Residents who are in need of essential daily care by relatives or home care workers can apply for a Residents Visitors Disc at a reduced 'one-off' cost.
- Health Visitors will be able to obtain an All Zones permit.

Temporary permits will also be available at a relatively small charge for trades people working on a site within the area covered by the parking scheme.

The issue of business permits will require supporting evidence of need together with evidence of eligibility of the individual employee to whom a permit will be allocated.

The first few schemes have recently been introduced, with a number of others in various stages of implementation. These schemes will have to be monitored carefully over the following 12 months to determine the impact of the restrictions and the management of the permit system. If necessary, the policy may have to be refined to ensure that the problem is not simply moved from one street to the next.

(3) Private Non-residential Parking

Existing private non-residential (PNR) parking represents a major potential source of traffic generation over which the Council at present has no control in terms of its regulation and use. The availability of such parking therefore can present a significant constraint on the extent to which the Council can use parking policies to deliver sustainable transport objectives.

The powers now available to introduce workplace-parking levies do provide the Council with a potential mechanism to influence the amount and use of PNR at existing developments while the development plan and development control process allows the Council to control the amount of PNR parking at new developments.

Surveys have demonstrated that the main concentrations of PNR parking are in the Town Centre and in the Team Valley.

Team Valley

The Team Valley Trading Estate is home to a total of some 650 companies employing approximately 17,000 people. Company activities range from retail, manufacturing and distribution/warehousing to office based activities. There is no geographical pattern to the location of the company types within the Estate, other than the clustering of retail outlets at the southern edge of the estate. There are 68 companies known to employ over 50 members of staff. Between them, these companies employ approximately 10,000 or 59% of the employees of the estate.

The Council will be undertaking a comprehensive study into the parking arrangements and traffic patterns in the Team Valley Trading Estate in 2006/07. The study will take into consideration information obtained in the Travel Plan Feasibility Study carried out in 2002.

Town centre and Gateshead Quayside

The most recent data on PNR parking in the town centre and Quayside (from aerial photographs taken in 1996 and counts carried out by the Council in 2000) indicate that there is over 2,000 PNR spaces in the town centre and a further 270 spaces in the Quayside area. The PNR parking in town centres was observed to be 75% occupied during the working day while the spaces at the Quayside were around 35% occupied.

The following points can be drawn from the assessment of PNR parking in the town centre and Quayside:

- The number of PNR spaces exceeds the current number of public spaces in the town centre and Quayside.
- The PNR total for the town centre represents one space per 0.39 employees or 2.55 employees per space – the corresponding figure based on full time equivalent employees are 0.46 and 2.18.
- The PNR total represents a provision of one space per 14 m² of floorspace (all use categories) in the town centre – a rate equivalent to the PPG13 recommended maximum for food retail uses and over twice the PPG13 maximum standard for office uses.
- The Civic Centre is the largest single source of private parking and accounts for 30% of the total for the town centre. It is also the most intensively used, with an occupancy rate of 96%.

Civic Centre

Gateshead Council is the major employer in the town centre. The Civic Centre has the largest element of PNR parking in the centre and Council employees are also issued with permits for use in public car parks. The Council's staff Travel Plan will therefore have a key influence on the parking situation, and on traffic movements in the centre.

The Plan has been formed using central government best practice guidance through a council-wide steering group. A large volume of data was collected during the period September – December 2002 through focus groups, formal and informal discussions, surveys and site audits.

Five-year targets for each form of travel have been set based on the information gathered and in line with local and national targets. The most significant of these are:

- 15% reduction in single occupancy car commuting;
- 15% reduction in business mileage;
- 15% increase in bus use;
- 13% increase in Metro use; and
- 33% increase in car sharing.

A range of actions has been identified to achieve the Plan's targets, resolve the issues and respond to the information collected. The provision and management of car parking is recognised as an important element in this and proposals will be developed as one element of the implementation of the Plan as a whole.

Workplace parking levies

The Parking Strategy for Tyne and Wear undertakes to examine the potential for workplace parking levies and other price-based restraint mechanisms.

Workplace parking charges, as a general measure, are not considered a feasible option for Gateshead, at least in the period to 2011. However the potential for further use of available powers, possibly as a targeted measure to relieve local congestion or improve the effectiveness of travel plans may be considered as part of a wider overall strategy to reduce congestion.

Parking standards for new development

The Council can influence PNR through the planning development control process when planning applications are submitted for new developments, extensions or changes of use, by the application of maximum parking standards as defined in the Local Development Framework. Planning Policy Guidance Notes are designed to seek to change the balance of parking provision by influencing the locations of certain types of development (PPG6) and by constraining the amount of free commuter parking space that is provided. Applicants should implement or contribute to measures to cater for travel by alternative means (PPG13).

Current Council guidelines for the provision of parking in new development are provided as part of Interim Policy Advice (IPA) as part of the Unitary Development Plan review.

(4) Parking for People with Disabilities

To improve accessibility for people with disabilities is a key objective of the Local Transport Plan and is reinforced by legislation contained in the Traffic Management Act. Many disabled people rely on their car and so the Council is actively improving their ability to reach their destinations through the provision of car parking places.

In April 2000, the blue badge scheme that is common throughout Europe was introduced. In Gateshead, the following allowances are made for Blue Badge Holders:

- Parking on a single or double yellow line (where there are no loading restrictions) is permitted, but is limited to 3 hours maximum and both the disabled badge and time clock (which must be set to show the time of arrival) must be displayed.
- Parking in Council-managed Car Parks for an unlimited time (wherever possible the driver should park in designated disabled bays)
- Parking in pay and display bays, free of charge and without time limit, provided that the disabled badge is clearly displayed with all the relevant details visible.

In 1999, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) published a review of the Orange Badge Scheme which raised concerns about the:

- a) Dramatic increase since 1987 in the number of badges that have been issued, in particularly the number of discretionary badges.
- b) Continuing reported abuse/misuse of the scheme, which is undermining the value of the scheme.

As a response to DPTAC's report, in 2001 a government review of the Blue Badge Scheme throughout the UK was initiated that investigated eligibility, the role and the function of local authorities and enforcement issues. A discussion paper was published in December 2001. In April 2002, the DPTAC published a response, and the government then responded to DPTAC's recommendations in December 2002.

Both primary (Act of Parliament) and secondary (Statutory Instrument) legislation is required to take forward the changes recommended by DPTAC. One of the key recommendations requiring primary legislation is the ability of enforcement officers to inspect badges. Provision for this was included in Section 94 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Other recommendations requiring changes to secondary legislation (regulations) include extending eligibility to children under the age of two who need to travel with bulky medical equipment and the issue of badges to those who have temporary disabilities.

Comprehensive guidance on new regulations is still awaited following DPTAC's review. One of the principle issues stalling this is research being carried out in the independently mobility needs of certain groups of disabled people to determine whether there is a need to extend the eligibility for badges. Consultation will be carried out that will look at the possibility of raising the statutory charge for a Blue Badge that has been static since 1983 at £2.

Changes with the Blue Badge Scheme will have an impact upon Gateshead in a number of ways:

- Eligibility will remain linked to the higher rate of the mobility component of DLA and other automatic criteria currently used. However, research is examining the case for eligibility for groups such as people with mental health problems, partially sighted people, people with severe learning disabilities or severe behavioural difficulties and people with severe autism.
- Eligibility will be described in terms of 'automatic without further assessment' or 'eligible subject to further assessment'. Therefore, people outside the automatic eligibility criteria will receive a decision based on recommendations from an assessment of their mobility needs. Who is eligible for a 'further assessment' will be consistent throughout the country.
- Assessment of independent mobility will be required where people do not automatically qualify and these will be undertaken by an accredited independent health professional (but not a person's GP).
- Whilst local authorities will continue to administer the Blue Badge Scheme, they are free to determine which department should administer the scheme.
- A national database of badge holders is to be introduced in time.
- Government has rejected DPTAC's position that there should be no charge for a badge and intends to raise the statutory charge following consultation.
- Local authorities will have to give a statement of reasons when they refuse to issue a badge, and explain what the appeals process is.
- The government has accepted in principle the idea of a two-tier appeals system throughout the UK. An initial right of appeal to review the grounds of refusal, and a right of appeal to a local government ombudsman if an applicant believes due process has not been followed correctly by a local authority.

- Temporary badges will be made available for people with a clearly defined temporary mobility impairment that will last for less than three years. This will be subject to an independent mobility assessment.
- An 'institutional' badge will be renamed a 'group' or 'organisation' badge, and qualifying organisations will be better defined in guidance.
- Future guidance will outline appropriate penalties for abuse by badge holders and when it is appropriate to withdraw a badge.

(5) Safety and Security

Car crime is generally on the increase nationally and in Tyne and Wear this includes incidents of breaking into vehicles, theft of vehicles, vandalism and possible attacks on the occupants. In Gateshead, a programme of installation of CCTV and lighting, and the provision of patrols in the car parks within the Town Centre, Gateshead Quays and adjacent to the Metro stations have been effective in achieving a comparatively good record of crime reduction. It is essential to maintain and improve this in order to give people the confidence to continue to use our car parks.

(6) Parking for Taxis

The current location of taxis ranks does not appear to be serving the needs of Gateshead Hackney Carriage Association or its users efficiently. Taxi ranks should be provided where there is likely to be a demand for their use. In establishing sites for taxi ranks, the local taxi drivers' association will be consulted, as they will be aware of the locations and times when demand arises. In some areas it may be appropriate to provide part-time taxi ranks, for example, close to places of entertainment late at night in locations that might be required for loading during the day.

(7) Promotion of the Facilities

The majority of people parking in the Borough are regular visitors and generally use the same car parks and traffic routes to access them. However, some frequent visitors are not familiar with all of the car parks that are available. Moreover, there are tourists attracted to the area who need to be aware of the facilities that are available. Therefore it is essential to ensure that good publicity material is distributed and good signing is provided for the service user. It is also recommended that good partnership working arrangements be fully utilised with key stakeholders.

For the past three years, a parking information leaflet has been produced with a map showing the locations, and giving details of, the number of spaces, time limits and charges for the car parks in the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays

area. This is widely available at Council offices, libraries, tourist information centres and many other public outlets. The information is also available on the Council website, with supplementary information regarding the disabled provision in each car park and adjacent areas of public interest.

The Parking Strategy places a great emphasis of making most efficient use of existing/planned parking resources in the town centre and Quayside, and integrating these two areas to effectively “share” parking resources. The success of such a strategy is heavily dependent on the implementation of clear and dynamic signing for drivers to direct them to the most appropriate car parks for their destination.

Parking Guidance Information (PGI) systems provide ‘real time’ information to drivers on the location and availability of car parking spaces. Such systems are installed to provide information to drivers searching for a parking space; reducing congestion by removing circulating and queuing traffic. This leads to a reduction in vehicle emissions. PGI systems can also help improve car park turnover and occupancy rates, spreading and balancing demand between available parking provisions.

To coincide with the opening of the Sage Gateshead music centre in December 2004, Gateshead Council installed the first phase of the PGI system centred on the music centre and its allocated car parks.

In the longer-term the Council's aspiration is to install a new Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) compliant installation, which would allow for the future phased expansion of the system as the development of the Gateshead Quays and the Town Centre progresses. This would also allow the system to be used extensively as a network management tool. All the interim work has been done in a manner that allows the installed equipment to be utilised for such a scheme.

8. PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Taking into account the assessments and issues discussed in the previous sections, this chapter now defines the scope of the car park management function and sets out the detailed aims and objectives for the Borough.

8.1 Town Centre and Gateshead Quays

8.1.1 The importance of providing an adequate supply of parking - particularly short-stay parking - to maintain the accessibility and to support the viability of centres is recognised in national and local planning and transport policy. This is particularly the case in areas such as Gateshead town centre and the Gateshead Quays where economic development and regeneration are primary policy objectives.

8.1.2 Analysis of current parking demand indicates that there are adequate levels of parking in both the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays to accommodate current demand.

8.1.3 The policies proposed for the provision of public off-street parking are that:

- A reduction in the demand for long-stay parking will be sought through Travel Plans, particularly for Council staff.
- Additional short stay parking will be needed to meet the future needs of Gateshead Town Centre. The precise level and location of this will be determined as part of the emerging Town Centre regeneration framework.
- Additional parking to meet peak evening parking demand from the Gateshead Quays developments will be provided using the spare evening capacity in the Town Centre car parks and in the parking at the Baltic Business Park.
- Parking at new developments will be provided for public use and planning conditions placed on new private car parks to ensure this happens. The conditions should also enable the Council to influence patterns of usage. This will usually mean control over:
 - 1) Tariff structures;
 - 2) Charge levels
 - 3) Specification of minimum standards of provision and maintenance

- Planning conditions should also be considered at any appropriate stage during re-development of existing private car parks or associated buildings to ensure that the Council can similarly influence patterns of usage in these car parks in line with the principles of the Parking Strategy for the area.

8.1.4 Use of town centre parking and parking at the Baltic Business Park for the Gateshead Quays will have potential spin-off benefits of increasing the economic integration of the Gateshead Quays and town centre with the latter benefiting from the increase in evening activity.

The cost of parking

8.1.5 Pricing of short-stay parking needs to balance objectives for the efficient use of spaces and the viability and vitality of the town centre, as well as the impact on the Council's revenues. Co-ordination of the management and control of local authority parking facilities is one theme of the Tyne and Wear Parking Policy. Hence future policies for parking charges in Gateshead will also, to an extent, have to be co-ordinated with those for other town centres in both the Gateshead conurbation and neighbouring Newcastle town centre and Quayside areas.

8.1.6 In order to change or have a direct effect on modal shift, pricing should be consistent with other sustainable transport policies, without adversely affecting the vitality of business and retail operation.

8.1.7 Policies regarding the cost of off-street parking in the town centre and Quayside are therefore:

- Ensure consistency across Gateshead Town Centre / Gateshead Quays / and Newcastle City Centre and Quays areas;
- Long Stay pricing of the off street parking should encourage the use of other sustainable modes which will prove cost effective against trips in a private vehicle;
- Encourage commuters to edge of area car parks for long stay and maintain smaller centralized short stay car parks for retail and leisure users, with appropriate pricing.
- Introduce appropriate pricing structure to encourage short stay parking and an increase in the turnover of spaces in smaller central off street facilities.

8.1.8 To continue to increase long-stay charges in real terms (i.e. at above the rate of inflation). The target will be to increase them over time to a level that makes public transport price-competitive for journeys to work within

the Town Centre and discourages use by commuters to Newcastle and surrounding areas.

- 8.1.9 To set short-stay parking charges at a level that maintains the attractiveness of the town centre as a place for car-borne visitation and is consistent with the objectives of the Tyne and Wear Local Transport Plan. In the medium term as the viability and vitality of the town centre is bolstered by current regeneration and development proposals, short-stay charges need be gradually increased in real terms.

8.2 Local Centres

- 8.2.1 It is apparent that the current economic and parking situations differ significantly between centres. The district centres cannot therefore be considered as one homogenous category for the development and application of parking policy.
- 8.2.2 First, the centres vary significantly in scale and function. Secondly, from the analyses of vacancy rates it is apparent that the viability and vitality of several centres is somewhat fragile.
- 8.2.3 The overall objective of the parking strategy with respect to local centres must be to support the viability of those centres. All aspects of parking provision will be important in this - including its quantity, quality and accessibility by car and on foot, and its cost/regulation.

Regulation and Pricing

- 8.2.4 Analysis of survey information indicates that in most centres there is more than an adequate amount of parking to meet current demand and future demand. There is however significant level of commuter parking in these centres. Regulation measures should be considered first to maximise the efficiency of use of the existing supply. Should a need for additional parking still be identified then sites for this should be identified in the UDP.
- 8.2.5 Pricing and/or regulation will be used to enhance efficiency in the use of car parking (by increasing turnover) where there is pressure on parking capacity or the parking stock is not making as effective a contribution to the viability and vitality of a centre as it could.

8.3 Metrocentre

- 8.3.1 The traffic analyses emphasises the importance of the development and implementation of effective measures to reduce reliance on the private car for travel to the centre. This will be done within the context of a Travel Plan agreed with the Council.
- 8.3.2 Within the wider context the existence of a major regional centre providing free parking on the current scale is seen as anomalous, undermining efforts to promote sustainable travel and adding to traffic congestion. A level of charging for car parking will assist in the better management of existing car parks. Although significant technical difficulties remain, the eventual introduction of an appropriate level of parking charges within the wider Metro Centre area remains a key policy objective for this Strategy.

8.4 Other out of town retail centres

- 8.4.1 Currently car parking in out of town retail centres lie outside existing policies, particularly in terms of cost/parking management. The widespread provision of free car parking in such centres promotes additional car use, with car users enjoying a subsidy not available to others. The inclusion of such centre within parking management and charging policies, in line with policy T11 of the revised UDP will be sought.

8.5 The quality of off-street car parks

- 8.5.1 Safety and security, of people, vehicles and possessions, are of paramount importance in developing and implementing effective parking strategies. The Strategy must therefore pay due regard to the personal safety of everyone likely to use a facility or service. This includes movement to, from and within parking facilities and services.
- 8.5.2 All new car parks shall therefore be designed to the standards in the Park Mark Safer Parking scheme. This is an initiative of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPOs), aimed at reducing crime and the fear of crime in parking areas. The Park Mark Safer Parking award is granted to parking areas that have achieved the requirements of a risk assessment as conducted by the Police. These requirements mean the parking operator has put in place measures that help to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, thereby doing everything they can to prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime in their parking area. For customers, using a Park Mark Safer Parking area means that the area has been vetted by the Police and has measures in place in order to create a safe environment.

8.5.3 All existing car parks should be brought up to the standards set out in the Park Mark Safer Parking scheme.

8.6 On-Street Parking Policy

8.6.1 On-street parking controls and restrictions are applied to improve safety and regulate parking behaviour. This involves the use of signs and markings indicating the regulations, and an enforcement regime to encourage compliance of drivers with these regulations. In many circumstances the need for controls and their enforcement can be reduced by 'designing out' the problem.

8.6.2 In places where parking is not wanted at anytime, such as formal and informal pedestrian crossing places, junctions, access crossovers and bus stops, consideration will be given to re-aligning the footway and kerb to prevent parking physically, or at least discourage it.

8.6.3 In determining policies for the control of on-street parking and loading, it is worth noting that there is no general right to park a vehicle on the public highway. There is a common law right to pass and re-pass along the highway and to use the highway for access to premises fronting the highway, but an unattended stationary vehicle is potentially a highway obstruction, unless local parking regulations deem otherwise. The absence of any right to park on the highway has a direct bearing on the management of on-street parking. For example, the issue of a resident parking permit grants privilege to a part of the highway that is denied to those not in possession of the permit. The provision of that privilege involves a cost in administrating and enforcing the permit scheme. The principle is, therefore, that charges for parking on the street (or highway) will be set at a level that covers all the costs of implementation, administration, enforcement and maintenance.

8.6.4 The policy outlined in Section 7 will be refined to ensure that it achieves its objectives without simply dispersing parking problems from one street to the next. Future requests for resident parking schemes will be considered in accordance with this policy.

8.6.5 There it is considered that new developments necessitate the introduction of a residents' parking scheme or an extension of an existing scheme, it is appropriate that the developer meets the costs of establishing a new scheme and any initial revenue costs associated with it.

8.6.6 Where a scheme is required within a new residential area the developer will meet the implementation costs and pay an annual sum equivalent to the net operational cost of the scheme (i.e. running costs less revenue

from permits). That sum will be paid for five years from completion of the development.

- 8.6.7 Transport Assessments (TAs) are required to be submitted for all developments with potentially significant implications for travel demand. The TAs will include a clear statement regarding the proposed provision for parking on-site, including its management, together with an assessment of parking conditions within the walk-in catchment of the development (defined by a 500m-750m radius from the site depending on the scale of development). Levels of parking will be within Council guidelines, and should be related to anticipated trip generation from the site (including the anticipated reduction as a result of any Travel Plan associated with the site). Where there is on-street parking available adjacent to the site and 'unconstrained' parking demand is likely to exceed on-site provision then the Council will consider the introduction or extension of controlled parking on streets around the site. Other measures proposed in conjunction with the development that will influence the demand for car travel (enhanced bus service for example) will be taken into account in assessing the need for off-site parking controls.
- 8.6.8 In addition to implementation costs the developer will meet the full operational costs (including enforcement) of the residents' parking scheme for the first year following completion of the development (enabling permits to be provided free to existing residents initially).

Town Centre and Gateshead Quays

- 8.6.9 Appropriate policies for the management of on-street parking within the Town Centre and major retail and leisure areas are important since:
- The availability of on-street parking in a centre can give rise to environmental and traffic problems as drivers circulate looking for a space
 - On-street parking is often the most convenient parking and hence should be regarded as a "premium" resource and managed to ensure that it is used most effectively in the context of the wider interests of the town centre
 - Where parking is free, use can be inefficient as turnover is less than where it is charged for
 - The availability of uncontrolled on street parking within or adjacent to the centre has the potential to undermine sustainable transport policies to discourage car use, particularly for journeys to work.
 - Vehicles manoeuvring in and out of spaces in streets with high pedestrian activity cause a particular hazard.

8.6.10 General policies for on-street parking in these areas are:

- 1) The amount of permitted on-street parking will not increase. Indeed such parking will be removed where it gives rise to particular environmental or traffic problems
- 2) On-street parking will be managed to give priority to certain user groups – these will include the disabled, deliveries, very short-stay users and other "special cases" where a need is identified.

8.6.11 In the Town Centre and Gateshead Quays, all on-street parking will be controlled to prevent use by commuters. Restrictions will be introduced to limit the length of stay and on-street pay and display considered where a high turnover of parking is considered beneficial to aid the vitality of commercial and retail areas. Pricing will reflect the “premium” nature of on-street parking.

8.7 Enforcement

8.7.1 The basic premise of parking enforcement is that motorists should (1) park within the law as required by Traffic Regulation Orders; (2) pay to park where appropriate or (3) park in accordance with the terms of a permit, dispensation or other agreement. The consequence is that those who do not comply with this premise may be issued with a PCN.

8.7.2 It is thus the prime function of parking offices to maintain public awareness of that premise and to administer enforcement accordingly. The role of Gateshead Council (the Council) is to operate parking controls throughout its area and to provide a comprehensive notice processing system to carry out enforcement functions including quasi ‘judicial’ responsibilities – i.e. disputes (e.g. Challenges and Representations) and responding to appeals to NPAS.

8.7.3 The Council's parking control objectives under DPE will be to:

- Minimise the use of vehicles in the busiest and congested areas at what experience and research shows to be the most appropriate times;
- At the same time provide sufficient short-stay parking facilities to support shops/ commercial organisations and leisure activities thereby underpinning social and economic life;
- Reduce the risk of accidents;
- Safeguard the needs and requirements of residents, businesses/ organisations and visitors;
- Improve traffic conditions;

Gateshead Parking Strategy

- Encourage the use of public transport;
- Preserve and improve the infrastructure and the general environment;
- Increase and improve pedestrian and cyclist mobility;
- Regulate and control parking both on and off street.