7. Management

INTRODUCTION

7.1 The proposals described in the preceding chapters to improve walking and cycling facilities, public transport provision and the road network will represent a major investment in the transport system. In order to maximise the value of this investment in achieving the wider objectives of the Plan, a range of management measures are also proposed.

7.2 The management measures proposals are discussed under four headings, as follow:

♦ demand management measures that aim to influence choice of travel mode through initiatives such as parking supply and pricing policies, land use measures (for example those that seek to deliver higher density development and/or mixed use development that may lead to lower car use) and innovative work practices (for example more flexible work hours and greater levels of home working).

♦ technology – the use of new technology to improve the efficiency of operation of transport systems, including providing transport users with information; and

♦ education and awareness – measures to raise awareness of travel choices; and

♦ enforcement – supporting measures to ensure that the effectiveness of other demand management and traffic management proposals are maximised.

7.3 The RTS identifies the need for management measures in Belfast, both to optimise the contribution of additional public transport investment and to reduce the possible negative impacts of additional car use. In developing management options for inclusion in the 2025 Strategy and the 2015 Plan, consideration has been given to an extensive set of measures ranging from conventional demand management through to congestion charging schemes and the application of new technology in the form of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).

7.4 This chapter presents proposals for management measures in the 2025 Strategy and the 2015 Plan. Once again it is emphasised that the proposed management measures should not be viewed in isolation.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT

2025 Strategy

7.5 The 2025 Strategy proposes that a policy of demand management is pursued across the BMA as a means of reducing the number of car journeys made in peak periods. Demand management will initially be focused upon applying a parking policy that

increases the level of parking restraint[25] within central Belfast as a means of tackling peak car use, while still providing for car journeys outside peak periods as a means of maintaining the economic vitality of the city centre.

7.6   During the Plan period the emphasis will be on improving public transport, reducing the amount of public long stay parking in Belfast city centre and tightly controlling any growth in private non-residential parking. The amount of short stay parking will also be controlled and new car parks will only be provided to replace existing spaces or where they are an essential part of new development. A strong case will have to be made for any such provision.

7.7   Public transport and car parking will be closely monitored during the Plan period. Towards the end of this period public transport in Belfast should be of a quality and quantity to provide an attractive alternative to the car. At that stage further restraint measures will be introduced including providing a significantly higher level of priority for buses and then a reduction in the number of long stay and short stay spaces in the city centre. The level and timing of these measures will be decided in the final review and the reduction will continue in a systematic and phased way (i.e. by a specified percentage each year) during the Strategy period.

7.8   There will also be a major review of the role that congestion charging could play in providing the modal shift which is sought. This will include investigating how it could be used as a demand restraint measure and as a way of raising revenue to finance rapid transit or other improvements to public transport.

7.9   This approach to demand management will be carefully implemented to bring about a modal shift from the car to public transport in a way which supports the economic life of the city and enhances the quality of life of those to live in it and travel to it.

Parking Policy for Central Belfast

Overview

7.10   Currently, a large number of car parking spaces are available in and around Belfast city centre. The availability of these spaces, often at low prices or in some instances provided free of charge, tends to encourage the use of the car for journeys to the central area, even though there may often be good public transport alternatives.

7.11   There are a range of types of parking, each with different characteristics serving different types of journey purposes (see panel). Critically, a significant number of long-stay commuter parking spaces are available that encourage car-borne commuter journeys. These are the types of journey that could most easily be made by other means of transport thereby contributing significantly to reducing car traffic levels. However, there are also a significant number of parking spaces that are available for short stay use – typically serving the needs of shopping and business trips. Maintaining an appropriate level of provision for these types of uses is clearly important in maintaining the economic vitality and supporting the ongoing renaissance of the city centre.

---

[25] Parking restraint is a commonly used method of demand management that involves controlling the price of parking and/or the availability of parking spaces as a means of influencing travel choices.

7.12   Currently, the core of central Belfast is covered by a controlled parking zone within which all on-street car parking is controlled. The extent of this area is shown in Figure 7.2 and has been progressively increased over time. Outside this core area parking controls also exist at certain locations, particularly the main routes into and around the city centre but are not applied on a comprehensive area-wide basis as they are inside the core central area zone.

7.13   To date, parking policy in Belfast city centre has been fragmented and has not formed part of a coherent demand management strategy that aims to balance the need to maintain city centre vitality and the need to reduce peak car-borne commuting. This has seen an almost five fold increase in the number of public parking spaces available in the city centre since 1980: an increase that has contributed significantly to the use of the car for trips to the city centre as car parking provision has attempted to keep pace with demand. This increase has mainly been the result of new private-sector provision, both multi-storey car parks and surface car parks, many of which are available for long-stay commuter parking. It also includes temporary car parks operating without appropriate planning consents. In addition, there has also been a significant increase in the number of city centre private non-residential parking spaces – those associated with business premises – also associated with long-stay commuter parking.

7.14   The BMTP provides a major opportunity to redress this trend towards more and more car parking spaces: a trend that if left unchecked will seriously undermine the Plan's proposals to increase the use of public transport and increase levels of walking and cycling.

Parking Supply in Belfast City Centre

Belfast city centre currently provides a range of different types of parking for people wishing to travel into the city centre by car.

Parking supply can be characterised according to public parking spaces (those that are available for use by any car driver) and private spaces (termed Private Non-Residential or "PNR") that are provided in conjunction with business premises such as offices.

Public parking supply is further characterised by those spaces that are provided on-street and those that are off-street in either surface or multi-storey car parks. The location of existing off street public car parks in the city centre are shown in Figure 7.1.

The figure below provides an estimate of the number of spaces in central Belfast (as defined by the City Centre Core area shown in Figure 7.2 and based on 2001 figures) within each of these categories.
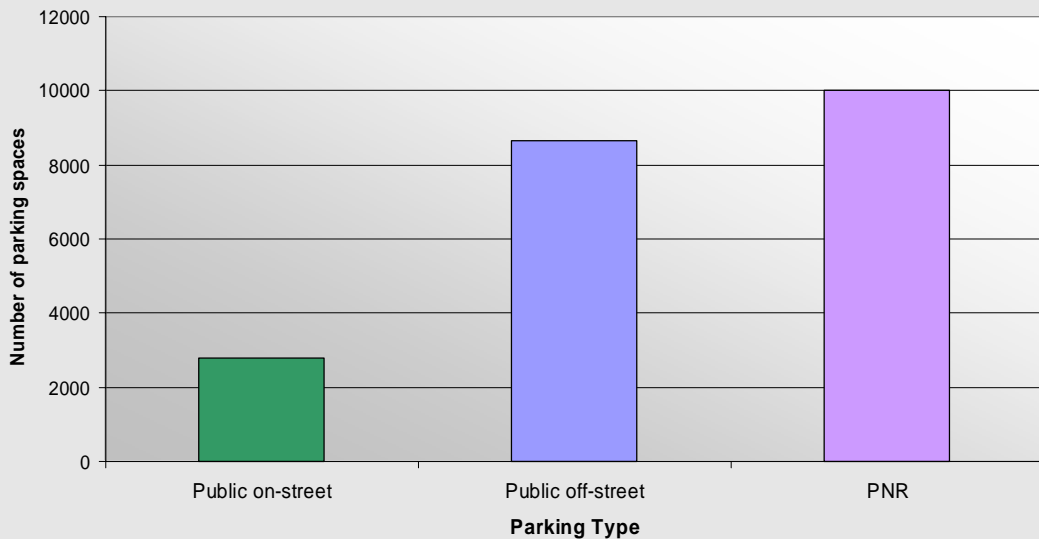
Within the on-street public parking spaces there is a further categorisation between those spaces that are controlled (i.e. with specific time limits on parking duration and may require payment of a charge or with restrictions on who can use the spaces such as disabled persons' parking bays) and those that are uncontrolled (i.e. no parking restrictions).

Additionally there are private residential off-street parking spaces within Belfast city centre associated with residential developments.
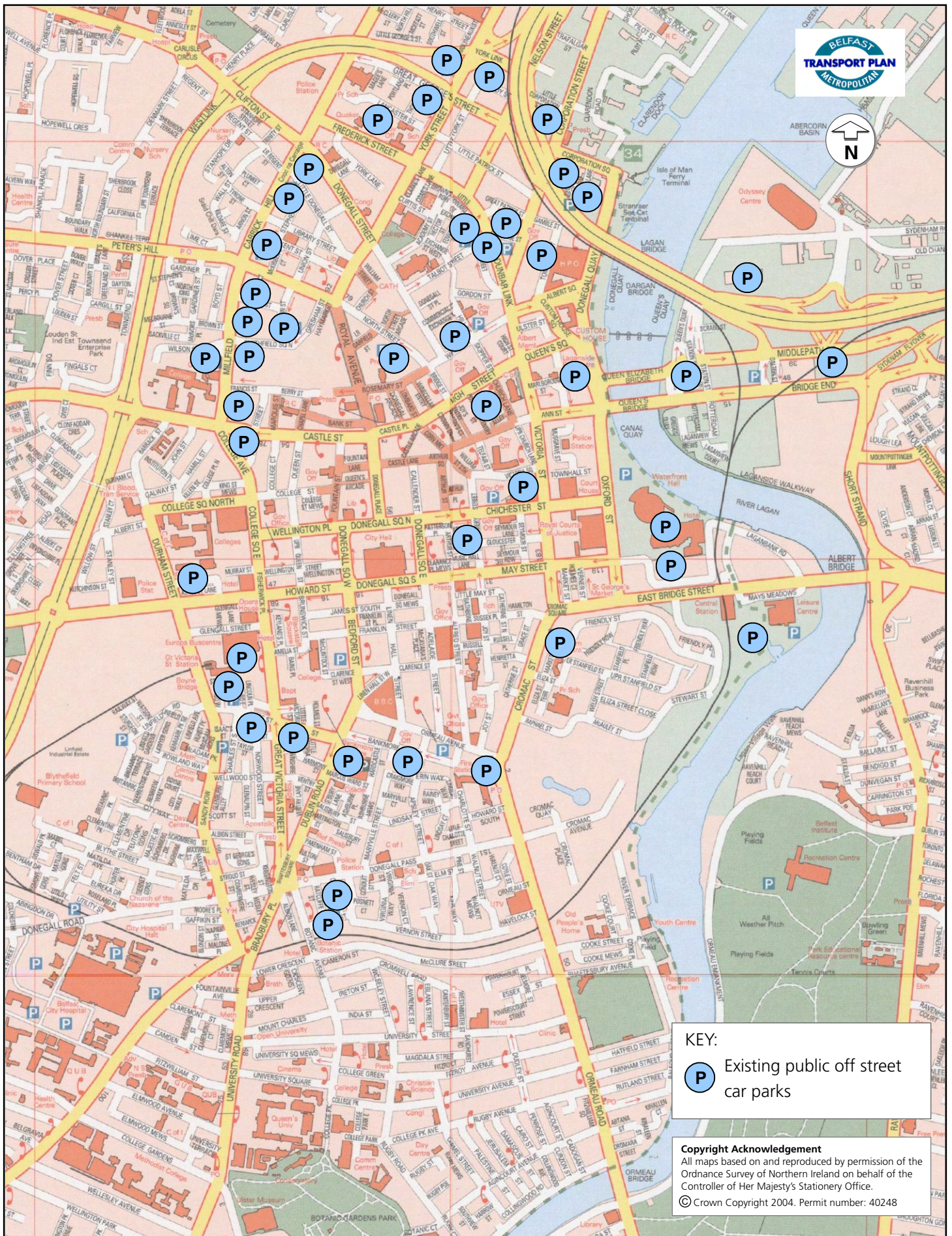
Figure 7.1 **Existing Public Off Street Car Parks in Belfast City Centre**

KEY:

P Existing public off street car parks

Copyright Acknowledgement
All maps based on and reproduced by permission of the
Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland on behalf of the
Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown Copyright 2004. Permit number: 40248

2015 Plan Proposals

7.15   The Plan proposes to reduce the level of provision of long-stay commuter parking in Belfast city centre. It proposes to apply parking restraint measures to control the price and availability of long-stay commuter parking as a means of promoting a shift from car use in peak periods towards other forms of transport. Parking restraint in central Belfast is considered an essential complement of the park-and-ride proposals described in Chapter 5, and will also strongly support other public transport improvements. In addition, the Plan proposes to enable the better management of short-stay spaces such that the use of these spaces is maximised to the benefit of the economic vitality of the city centre.

7.16   To reduce the number of long-stay spaces and more effectively manage short-stay spaces it will be necessary to introduce and modify parking controls over a wider geographic area than at present. It is proposed that an area of parking restraint is defined as a Controlled Parking Area (CPA) covering central Belfast and the area immediately surrounding the centre. Within this area parking will be managed such that it can form part of an overall parking restraint policy. The proposed area, as shown in Figure 7.2, is divided into two sub-zones as follows

  ♦   the **Belfast City Centre Core** zone, representing an extension of the existing city centre controlled parking area from its current boundary (also shown in the diagram) to include the area roughly bounded by the (Central station to City Hospital) railway line in the south; Sandy Row, Millfield and Carrick Road in the west; Westlink and Corporation Square in the north and the river to the east. As with the existing central Belfast area it is proposed that all on-street parking spaces within this area are controlled and that, additionally, the number of long stay parking spaces provided in off street car parks are reduced; and

  ♦   the **Belfast City Centre Fringe** zone representing what may be termed the "walk-in" area – the area where car drivers could park and then walk into the city centre. Commuter parking in the inner city area is already recognised as a problem in certain areas and could be expected to become worse once restrictions on long stay parking in the city centre core zone are implemented. It is proposed that in this area the availability of parking spaces is controlled such that the prevalence of commuter parking in inner city residential areas will be substantially reduced. Controls in the form of residents parking schemes will be implemented in order to restrict parking availability. It is proposed that this area extends to a distance roughly one kilometre from the boundary of the City Centre Core. The area is defined on the basis of making the walk time from outside the controlled area longer than a ten minute comfort period in all instances. The proposed outer area will be bounded roughly by the Botanic Gardens Park, College Gardens and the City Hospital in the south; Falls Road, Northumberland Street and Agnes Street in the west; New Lodge Road and Limestone Road in the north; and Bridgend Flyover to Ormeau Leisure Centre in the east.

7.17   The Plan proposes a range of measures to manage each of the various types of parking provision. The proposals are summarised in Table 7.1[26].

---

[26] In implementing the parking management proposals a detailed audit of existing parking provision within the City Centre Core and City Centre Fringe zones will be undertaken with the information maintained and updated as the management proposals are rolled out.
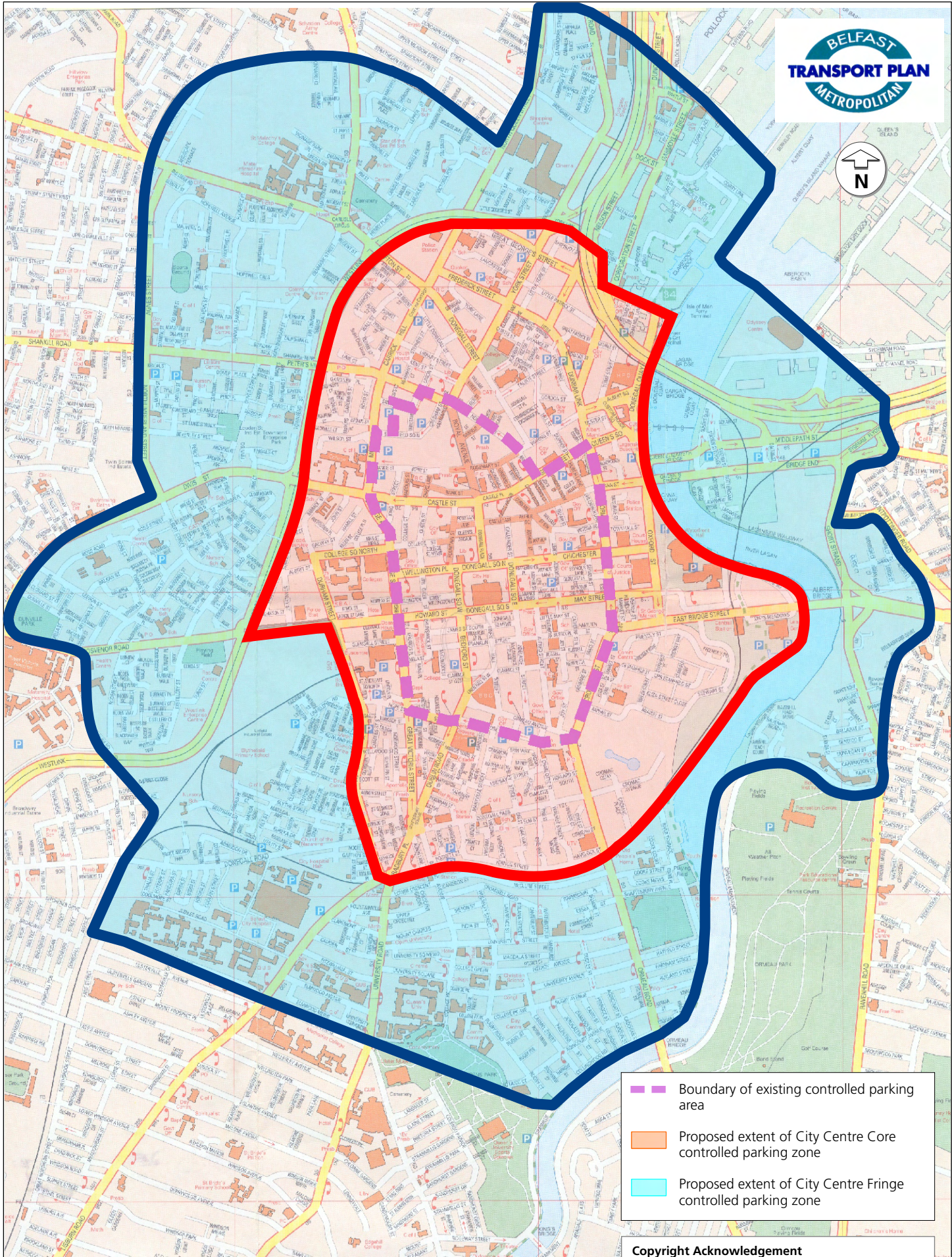
Figure 7.2 - **Proposed Controlled Parking Area for Belfast City Centre**

Table 7.1 – Parking Proposals for Belfast City Centre

Parking Type	Belfast City Centre Core Zone	Belfast City Centre Fringe Zone
On-Street	All on-street parking spaces will be controlled. This will extend the existing area in which on-street parking controls are applied to the wider area defined by the City Centre Core zone as shown in Figure 7.2. Two forms of control will be applied: ♦ **Parking bays with time limits** to ensure that spaces are used only for short-stay use (less than 2 hours) with charges levied for use of these spaces via parking meters or pay-and-display. A large number of such parking bays already exist in the city centre; ♦ **Residents-only parking** with restrictions as to who is permitted to park by using a system of parking permits which will be available to local residents and businesses. The precise number of spaces for use as residents only parking will be established through a detailed needs assessment and consultation. It is also likely that some spaces will be combined charged and residents parking spaces – i.e. that residents displaying the appropriate permit would be able to park in such spaces but that others would be required to pay and observe the parking duration requirements. Up to 5% of all on-street parking bays reserved in the City Centre Core zone would be designated for those with disabilities and available to Disabled (Blue) Badge holders. Emphasis would be given to provision of such spaces in the heart of the city centre to enable access to key city centre destinations. Provision of bays for loading/unloading will also be considered in determining precise number and location of spaces required.	All on-street parking spaces will be controlled. Currently only a small number of controlled parking spaces exist in this area. Three forms of control will be applied: ♦ **Parking bays with time limits** permitting medium stay parking (less than 4 hours) with charges levied for use of these spaces via parking meters or pay-and-display. Subject to more detailed assessment it is expected that a proportion of these spaces could permit long-stay parking in areas where conflicts with the needs of residents and local business were not compromised. ♦ **Parking bays permitting free short stay** (less than 2 hours) parking at locations in the controlled parking zone required for access to local shops and services. The precise number of such spaces and the maximum parking duration will be established through a detailed needs assessment and consultation. ♦ **Residents-only parking** with restrictions as to who is permitted to park by using a system of parking permits which will be available to local residents and businesses. The precise number of spaces for use as residents only parking will be established through a detailed needs assessment and consultation. It is also likely that some spaces would be combined free short-stay and residents parking spaces – i.e. that residents displaying the appropriate permit would be able to park in such spaces but that others would be required to observe the parking duration requirements. Up to 5% of all on-street parking bays reserved in the City Centre Fringe Zone would be designated for those with disabilities and available to Disabled (Blue) Badge holders. Emphasis would be given to provision of such spaces at locations close to local service centres within this area. Provision of bays for loading/unloading will also be considered in determining precise number and location of spaces required.

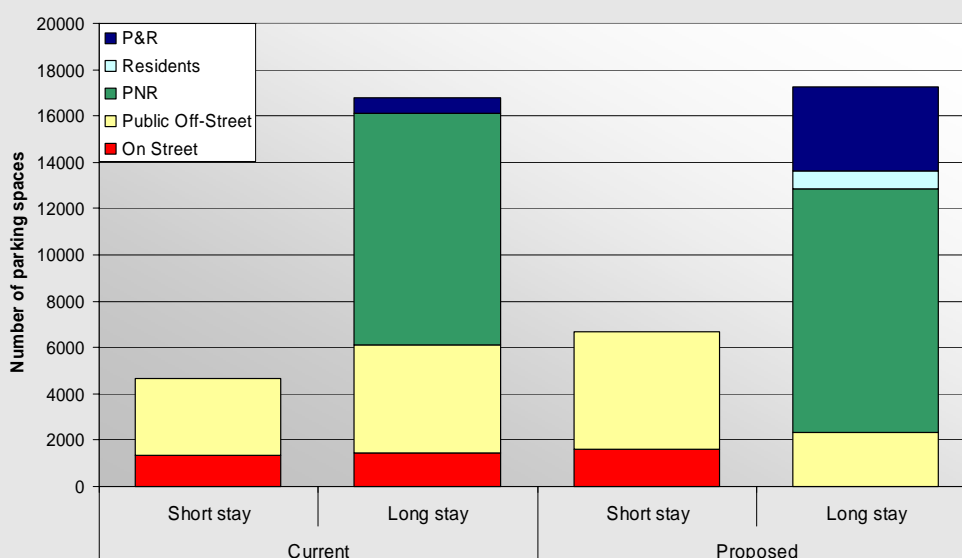| Parking Type	Belfast City Centre Core Zone	Belfast City Centre Fringe Zone
Public Off-Street Parking	The number of public off-street spaces available for long-stay use (i.e. greater than 4 hours) would be significantly reduced with greater emphasis given to providing short- and medium-stay use. A range of parking management measures are proposed recognising the specific attributes of different parking providers in this category, as follows: ♦ **Public off-street car parks – in public-sector ownership** DRD through Roads Service and NITHC own a number of public off-street car parks in the City Centre Core zone operated on behalf of the Department by private sector operators. It is proposed that the total number of long stay spaces currently provided is reduced by around 50% and that new charge structures are introduced that discourage long stay parking (including season ticket parking) such that long stay use is reduced. Up to 5% of all public off-street parking bays reserved in the City Centre Core zone will be designated for those with disabilities and available to Disabled (Blue) Badge holders. ♦ **Public off-street car parks – in private-sector ownership.** A significant number of public off-street spaces in the City Centre Core are provided by the private sector. A substantial proportion is provided as part of major retail locations. There are also a number of temporary car parks that have been established on derelict land. The Plan is unable to directly influence the use of many of the spaces that exist already or for which planning consent has already been given. It is anticipated, however, that the redevelopment of sites currently used as temporary car parks will reduce the number of public off street spaces available.	The number of public off-street spaces available for long-stay use (i.e. greater than 4 hours) would be reduced with greater emphasis given to providing short- and medium-stay use. A range of parking management measures are proposed recognising the specific attributes of different parking providers in this category, as follows: ♦ **Public off-street car parks – in public-sector ownership** DRD through Roads Service own a small number of public off-street car parks in the City Centre Core Fringe. It is proposed that the total number of long term spaces currently provided is reduced by around 50% and that new charge structures are introduced that discourage long stay parking (including season ticket parking) such that long stay use is reduced. There are also car parks associated with City Hospital that are also owned by the public sector. It is proposed that these sites remained unchanged. Up to 5% of all off-street parking bays reserved in the City Centre Fringe zone will be designated for those with disabilities and available to Disabled (Blue) Badge holders. ♦ **Public off-street car parks – in private-sector ownership.** A number of public off-street spaces in the City Centre Fringe are provided by the private sector, including those provided to serve specific purposes at retail centres such as Yorkgate and at leisure centres such as the Odyssey leisure complex. The Plan is unable to directly influence the use of many of the spaces that exist already or for which planning consent has already been given.

Parking Type	Belfast City Centre Core Zone	Belfast City Centre Fringe Zone
Private Non-Residential	Private Non-Residential (PNR) parking – that associated with commercial premises such as offices and shops and not available for general public use – currently represents a significant proportion of the existing parking supply in the City Centre Core Zone. The Plan cannot directly influence the number of PNR spaces currently provided. It is expected that regeneration initiatives and redevelopment proposals will add to the existing level of commercial floorspace in the City Centre Core. In order to limit the number of additional new PNR spaces this will create it is proposed that parking standards are applied that restrict the number of (non-operational) PNR spaces that are provided as part of new development. Parking standards will be outlined within the BMAP.	Private Non-Residential (PNR) parking – that associated with commercial premises such as offices and shops and not available for general public use – currently represents a significant proportion of the existing parking supply in the City Centre Fringe Zone. The Plan cannot directly influence the number of PNR spaces currently provided. It is expected that regeneration initiatives and redevelopment proposals may add to the existing level of commercial floorspace in the City Centre Fringe. In order to limit the number of additional new PNR spaces this will create it is proposed that parking standards are applied consistent with those for the City Centre Core area.
Residential	Off-street private parking associated with residential premises currently represents a relatively small proportion of total parking in the City Centre Core Zone. It is not part of the publicly available parking stock and does not therefore contribute directly to peak car commuting to the city centre. Nevertheless, the provision of residential parking spaces does contribute to car dependency and overall car use. Belfast city centre will be very well served by public transport as well as walking and cycling routes. The opportunity exists to restrict the level of provision of parking spaces in new residential developments. The Plan proposes that the provision of parking spaces in future residential developments within the City Centre Core Zone is constrained. Parking standards will be outlined within the BMAP.	Off-street private parking associated with residential premises currently also represents a relatively small proportion of total parking in the City Centre Fringe Zone and also does not contribute directly to peak car commuting to the city centre. For the same reasons as the City Centre Core Zone, however, the opportunity exists to restrict the level of provision of parking spaces in new residential developments. The Plan proposes that the provision of parking spaces in future residential developments within the City Centre Fringe Zone is constrained. Parking standards will be outlined within the BMAP.

7.18   The projected impact of the above measures will be to reduce the number of long stay parking spaces available in the City Centre Core zone and marginally increase the number of short-stay spaces (see panel). The reduction in long stay spaces will be implemented in conjunction with the provision of park-and-ride facilities in each of the MTCs on the edge of the main built-up area of Belfast. The number of short-stay spaces provided in the city centre will be monitored and managed in a way that balances the need to control the level of off peak car use for journeys to the city centre and the economic vitality of the city's retail core. It is expected that this will entail the rationalisation of the number of existing public off-street car parks in the city centre owned by DRD. The Department will be prepared to release off-street surface car parks for redevelopment, provided the number of spaces are replaced in appropriate locations and remain under the control of Roads Service. A new off-street car park will also be developed in the south-eastern sector of the city centre in conjunction with the implementation of City Centre Ring (see Chapter 8).

Projected Impact of the Parking Proposals on Parking Supply in Belfast City Centre

The estimated effect of the implementation of the BMTP parking proposals in the Belfast City Centre Core Zone is illustrated in the diagram below (based on 2001 information on parking supply). The diagram shows the indicative number of spaces provided for short-stay and long-stay purposes split by parking type, i.e. public off-street, public on-street parking, residents on-street parking, PNR parking and, since it is integral to the approach to demand management, the number of rail-based and bus-based park-and-ride spaces that would be provided on the edge of the built-up area of Belfast.

The diagram shows that the total number of short-stay parking spaces provided is projected to increase. It also shows that the number of long-stay spaces is projected to be broadly the same as at present, but that the physical location of the publicly available spaces is focused upon park-and-ride sites that are outside the city centre.

7.19   Analysis of the number of short-stay parking spaces available in the City Centre Core zone indicates that Belfast has a level of provision relative to the amount of retail floorspace that is comparable with the central areas of other major metropolitan areas in the UK. Accordingly, and because of the need to encourage greater levels of walking, cycling and public transport use, the Plan does not propose a significant change in the level of short-stay parking provision in the City Centre Core zone.

7.20   It is proposed that charges for short stay parking within the City Centre Core Zone under DRD influence are increased broadly in line with inflation and to recover operational costs. However, in order to maximize turnover of short-stay parking spaces (and thereby maximise visitors to the city centre) consideration will be given to progressively increasing the differential between prices between the shortest and longest durations that comprise short stay parking.

7.21   The implementation of parking control measures in the form of residents parking schemes in the City Centre Fringe Zone is an essential complement of the controls in the City Centre Core Zone. Unless these controls are implemented the reduction in long-stay parking spaces in the City Centre Core will lead to greater levels of commuter parking and in more areas than at present. The aim of the residents parking schemes will be twofold: to enable residents to have a parking spaces close to their homes; and to reduce the annoyance and intrusion of commuter parking. It is noted, though, that providing a resident's parking place will enable residents to park in designated streets close to their home, but would not provide them with the freedom to park in residents parking areas in other parts of the City Centre zones. In implementing the scheme the Core and Fringe zones will be divided into a number of parking sub-areas allowing residents to park in the area in which they reside. In order to operate and administer the residents parking schemes it will be necessary to levy a charge for the permit. The levy will be set at a level designed to contribute to the cost of administering the residents parking scheme. Detailed demarcation of the residents parking areas will be progressed in consultation with local communities and businesses to ensure that local needs are taken fully into account.

7.22   The effective enforcement of the proposed parking measures will be critical to their success. As discussed further below, DRD is already progressing with the implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) that will enable parking controls to be more effectively enforced.

7.23   An allowance of £2 million has been made in the Plan to establish the parking controls.

Parking Policy Outside Belfast City Centre

7.24   There are no proposals to introduce the same level of parking restraint planned for Belfast city centre in other parts of the BMA within the Plan period. The Plan does, though, propose better control, enforcement and management of parking in key locations, as follows:

♦   in the main urban centres of Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn

    The Plan proposes that on-street parking controls are introduced in each of the urban centres along with more effective enforcement (provided by DPE) such that parking can be used as a tool alongside traffic management measures to

assist in maintaining and enhancing economic vitality by making better use of parking spaces. The area covered by the parking management proposals is shown for each centre in Figure 7.3. In addition it is proposed that reduced parking standards are applied within these areas to limit the number of new parking spaces provided as part of new commercial and residential development, which will be outlined by the BMAP. Roads Service, in conjunction with council officers and city/town centre managers, is currently developing parking strategies for Bangor and Lisburn in this context.

♦ at key nodes in the main transport corridors

A number of key nodes on the main transport corridors will be identified. These represent localised areas of transport and commercial activity – such as local shops and services – where the implementation of parking controls and better enforcement will be required to maximise the use of limited parking supply to support greater economic vitality. Situated on the main transport corridors these nodes will be well served by public transport giving the opportunity to limit the increase in provision of parking associated with new developments by applying an appropriate parking standard which will be outlined by the BMAP.

7.25 Elsewhere in the BMA it is proposed that parking standards are applied to control the proliferation of new parking spaces associated with new development. These will be outlined in the BMAP.

Congestion Charging

7.26 Congestion charging – also referred to as road pricing or road user charging – is another form of demand management. In the urban context congestion charging would require the payment of a fee for driving within a particular area, such as central Belfast. The London congestion charging scheme where motorists are charged a fee for driving within central London commenced in February 2003 and is the first major implementation of urban congestion charging in the UK. Initial results indicate that traffic in central London has fallen some 15% since its introduction[27].

7.27 The 2015 Plan does not propose the implementation of congestion charging within the BMA. Congestion charging, however, is an evolving area and it will be reviewed further within the Plan period, drawing upon experience from other parts of the UK. The review will consider different types of charging systems and if they would benefit the BMA. The various types of congestion charging for possible consideration, include cordon-based systems focused on central Belfast (similar to that in use in London) and area-wide schemes using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) which could be liked to a nationwide charging scheme currently being examined by government as a more flexible alternative to the existing system of road tax and fuel duty.

---

[27] Managing our Roads, Department for Transport, July 2003.

BELFAST TRANSPORT PLAN METROPOLITAN

Bangor

Carrickfergus
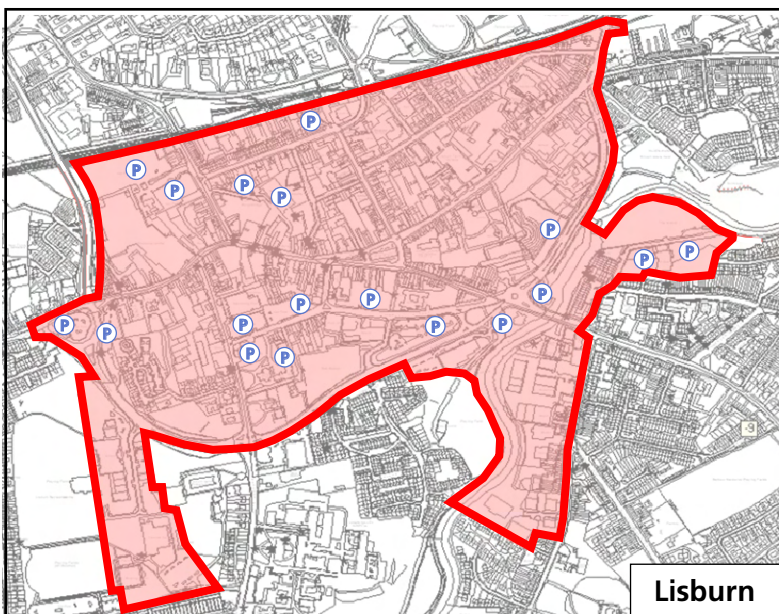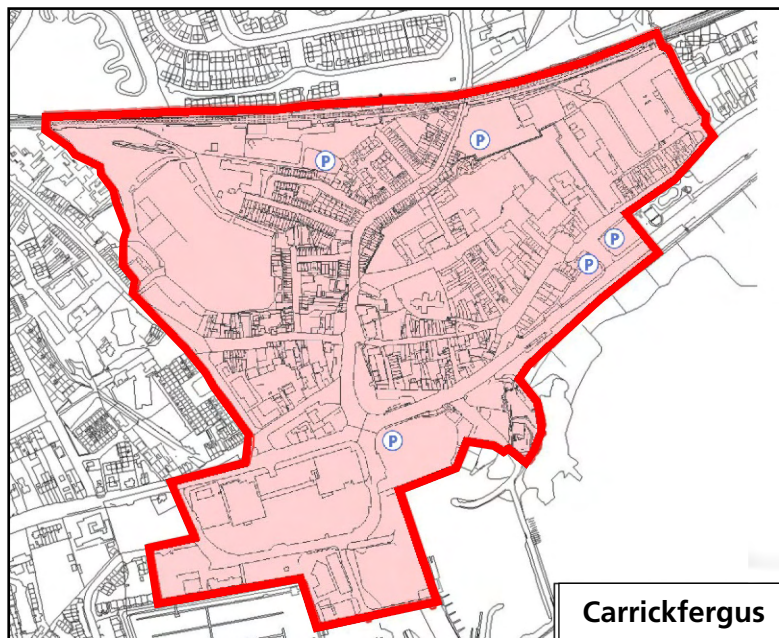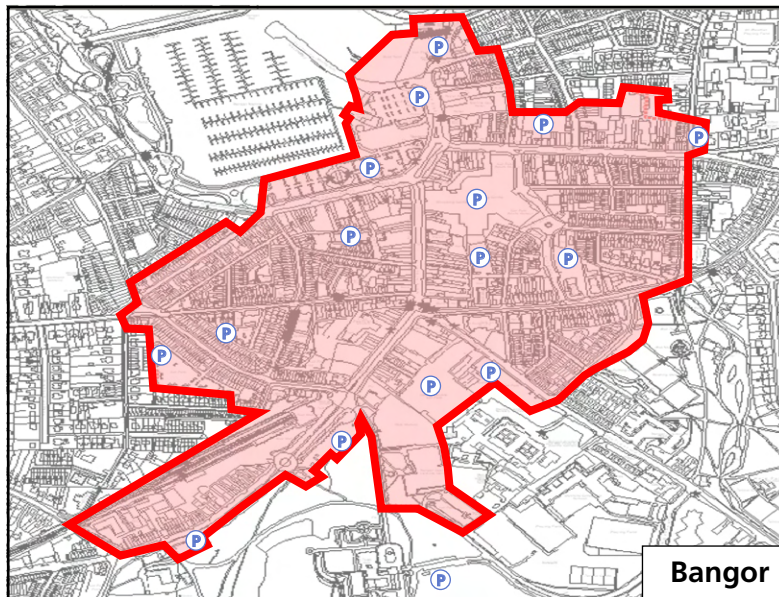
Proposed extent of controlled parking area

(P) Public off street car park

Copyright Acknowledgement
All maps based on and reproduced by permission of the
Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland on behalf of the
Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown Copyright 2004. Permit number: 40248

Lisburn

Figure 7.3 - **Controlled Parking Area Proposals for Bangor, Carrickfergus and Lisburn**

TECHNOLOGY

7.28   An assessment has been made of the contribution that a range of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) solutions (see panel) could make as part of a wider management strategy for the BMA.

> *ITS in Belfast*
>
> ITS solutions comprise the use of new technology to maximise the efficiency of the transport system and inform travellers of the travel choices available to them.
>
> Roads Service has been involved in the procurement and operation of ITS for over 25 years. Urban Traffic Control (UTC), the computerised linking of traffic signal timings, was first introduced in Belfast in 1980. Currently, the Traffic Information and Control Centre, Roads Service, operates one of the most advanced systems in Europe, integrating both urban and inter-urban traffic control with an electronic driver information system. Traffic flows are monitored by a network of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras on the urban and inter-urban networks.
>
> Other measures currently being progressed include the implementation of real-time passenger information and an integrated ticketing system for public transport.

7.29   Given the 2025 horizon of the strategy it is difficult to be too prescriptive about the types of measures that could be delivered, because ITS is a rapidly evolving area. Nevertheless, the implementation of complementary ITS solutions is a key element of the 2025 Strategy that will be kept under review.

Priorities within the 2015 Plan Period

7.30   Within the medium-term represented by the 2015 Plan Period the technology supporting Intelligent Transport Systems can be expected to evolve very significantly. Drawing upon an assessment of current expectations of ITS, the following measures have been identified as priorities for implementation within the 2015 Plan Period. They are discussed under public transport and highway initiatives.

Public Transport

Real Time Passenger Information

7.31   Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI) provides information to travellers on public transport at a specific location. It provides information such as:

♦   whether public transport vehicles are on schedule;

♦   the next stop on a train or bus;

♦   the location or arrival time of the next train or bus; and

♦   travel time to a destination.

7.32   RTPI is already being progressed on selected routes in the BMA. The Plan proposes that RTPI is provided on all QBC and rapid transit routes and is also introduced on the rail network.

Integrated Ticketing

7.33　The first phase of Translink's integrated ticketing project has seen the introduction of new ticketing equipment to the entire Citybus and Ulsterbus fleet. As part of this process in December 2002 Citybus launched a new multi journey smart card named Smartlink which replaced paper multi journey tickets. These electronic Stored Ride cards allow storage of multiple journeys on a plastic smart card. These cards offer significant benefits to the user including quickening boarding time on a vehicle, providing a cash free method of payment while also offering significant cost savings on regular fares to the passenger. Translink are currently extending this new ticketing system to the NIR network.

7.34　Translink have ambitious plans to further develop their integrated ticketing system for future years. This will include soon the installation of "On Street" ticket vending machines which will enable passengers to purchase and top-up their Smartlink travel cards at their own convenience. Other developments include the introduction of a similar type Smartlink card for the Ulsterbus network allowing cash free fare payments. Translink is also planning for the future rollout of a cross modal integrated ticketing project and Metrocard which will enable passengers to purchase one ticket which will allow travel across the entire bus and rail network.

Travel Information Dissemination Systems

7.35　There is a wide range of technologies and devices that allow travel information to be disseminated to the public. These include the Internet which permits the use of interactive facilities. The 2015 Plan proposes the widespread introduction of these systems in support of transport services.

Highway Network

7.36　The Plan proposes selective implementation of a variety of measures to improve strategic highway network performance.

Protected Routes

7.37　Planning control on new development which strictly limits access to main traffic routes, will continue through the designation of Protected Routes[28]. Protected Routes comprise Motorways and other Trunk Roads, which make up the roads element of the Regional Strategic Roads Network (RSTN) and other selected routes with high traffic flows. These roads contribute significantly to economic prosperity by providing efficient links between all the main towns, airports and seaports, and with the Republic of Ireland.

7.38　In considering proposals for new development the Planning Service and Roads Service will seek to restrict the number of new accesses and control the level of use of existing accesses onto protected routes. Any new access or intensified use of an existing access on to a Protected Route should not compromise the route's function of facilitating the free and safe movement of traffic or should not significantly add to congestion. Additionally on stretches of Protected Routes designed specifically to

---

[28] Further information regarding the Protected Routes Policy will be outlined within PPS3 "Access Movement and Parking". The Protected Routes will be identified within the BMAP.

facilitate the free and safe movement of traffic, it is essential that access which would compromise road safety or prejudice the purpose of their design standards, is severely restricted. The Department considers that there is a need to balance the restriction of access onto Protected Routes within settlement limits with the potential adverse impact that this may have on the layout and the design of the development. Severe restrictions are clearly necessary for access to motorways, ring roads, through-passes, by-passes and dual-carriageways within settlements.

Variable Message Signing (VMS)

7.39 These are a common and effective means of providing en-route information to drivers. They are widespread and very popular among drivers when they are placed in the proper location and convey messages that are helpful and easy to understand. They have been made even more effective with wireless technologies that allow them to be remotely updated in response to changing conditions. VMS has already been installed at a number of locations on the BMA's strategic road network.

Improved Incident Detection and Motorway Control Systems

7.40 These consist of the detection of traffic queues at motorways and the application of advisory speed limits to protect stationary/slow-moving vehicles at the back of the queues. Detectors installed below the road surface at regular intervals continuously detect traffic volumes and speeds for each lane and this information is used in real-time to determine speed limit settings. This system aims to make the most effective use of the existing road network, to reduce congestion and pollution problems, to reduce stop/start driving conditions, to smooth traffic flows and where possible to reduce accident levels. Roads Service already operates an Automatic Incident Detection (AID) system on the motorway network. There is currently a commitment to introduce the more advanced MIDAS (Motorway Incident Detection and Automatic Signalling) to enable the system to be expanded.

Parking Guidance Systems

7.41 These are primarily based on the use of message signs (including Variable Message Signs described above) to assist drivers in finding parking facilities with available space. Information may also be presented via phone, the Internet, or in-vehicle navigation systems. These systems reduce the time spent searching for a parking place, reduce congestion and reduce illegal parking. They also allow better distribution of parking demand and higher utilisation of parking facilities. The Plan proposes the use of these systems in central Belfast and at approaches to park-and-ride sites.

Linking of Systems through Urban Traffic Management Control

7.42 Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) is an initiative in response to growing needs for cost effective methods of managing transport in urban areas in order to give priority to public transport, reduce the impact of traffic on air quality, improve safety and manage congestion. The existing Urban Traffic Control system already operating in the BMA is expected to form the heart of the UTMC system that would integrate a number of transport and traffic systems to enable the exchange of relevant information between the various applications (UTC, VMS, Incident Management Systems, Car Park Guidance Systems, CCTV, Bus Real-Time

Information and Automatic Vehicle Location, etc) and with other organisations such as the Police, bus operators and radio stations.

Implementation Cost

7.43 In total an allowance of £21.8 million has been made in the Plan for the implementation of ITS.

CHANGING TRAVEL ATTITUDES

7.44 Both the Strategy and the Plan recognise that infrastructure measures and service improvements are, on their own, unable to deliver fundamental changes in travel behaviour and reductions in car dependency. As guided by the RDS, measures to raise travel awareness are an essential complement.

7.45 The 2015 Plan identifies a range of management measures as necessary support to public transport, highways and walking/cycling measures. The prioritisation of management measures is therefore very closely tied to the priorities included in the Plan for the other themes.

7.46 The 2015 Plan contains three key measures aimed at changing travel attitudes:

♦ campaigns to raise travel awareness with BMA-wide multi-media campaigns undertaken on a regular basis supported by local schemes to complement new public transport initiatives;

♦ the promotion and development of travel plans for businesses and major travel attractors such as hospitals and education establishments, with a mandatory requirement tied to planning consents for travel plans for new commercial developments; and

♦ the expansion of the Safer Routes to School pilot.

7.47 The Plan makes an allowance of £3.5 million for the above measures.

ENFORCEMENT

7.48 Effective control and enforcement of parking measures within the CPA proposed for Belfast will be required. DRD is currently developing proposals for decriminalisation of parking offences (see panel). Under current legislation illegal parking is treated as a criminal offence – in the same way as speeding offences, for example – and is therefore the responsibility of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Decriminalisation, which will require legislation, will make parking offences a civil issue and will thereby no longer require the PSNI to take responsibility for enforcement. This will enable the enforcement of parking controls, including those within the CPA and in other controlled parking areas in the BMA such as on the main radial routes, to be managed directly by the highway authority, currently the DRD. At present the many other demands on the PSNI mean that the enforcement of parking restrictions is not as effective as it could be. Experience in many other towns and cities in the UK has shown that the direct management of parking restrictions by the highway authority made possible by decriminalisation has enabled parking restrictions to be more effectively and rigorously enforced, and thereby enabled parking management to form a key part of their wider transport strategies.

Parking Enforcement

Effective parking enforcement is an important part of an integrated transport policy and will contribute to the achievement of a number of transport objectives. Following the decision by the PSNI to withdraw from the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions to allow a focusing of resources on core policing functions, it is the Department's intention to introduce new primary legislation which will enable a Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) scheme to be implemented. The responsibility for enforcement of on-street parking restrictions would then pass from the PSNI to the Department. DPE systems are widely used elsewhere in the UK and have proved effective in achieving greater compliance with on-street waiting and loading restrictions and permitted parking regulations.

The Department is confident that the development and implementation of a DPE scheme will have benefits for road users throughout Northern Ireland and, in particular, will bring about improvements in road safety, traffic movement and management, accessibility and local environmental conditions.

The proposed new arrangements will lead to more economic, efficient and effective enforcement of existing waiting and parking restrictions. For example, although legislation exists at present to permit residents' parking schemes, in the absence of effective enforcement on the ground, to date no such schemes have been introduced. Under the proposed DPE regime, residents parking schemes would be introduced and enforced and, as a consequence, would bring real advantages – particularly to those in inner urban areas.

7.49   Enforcement will play a part in making travel safer in the highway network with the use of safety cameras.

7.50   The Plan also proposes that, subject to appropriate legislation, full use is made of bus lane enforcement cameras to maximise the effectiveness of proposed bus priority measures.