

## ANNEX 17:

# Darlington Parking Strategy 2006-2011

### Introduction

This document sets out the framework for a 5 year parking strategy for Darlington along with details of how it should be implemented. It is intended to replace the "Car Parking Strategy for Darlington October 2002" and updates that document in view of local needs that have arisen since then. It is included as an Annex in the Second Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 and forms a part of the integrated thinking on transport that underpins that document.

Whilst the ethos of the Second Local Transport Plan is to provide travel choice, we recognise that many trips can only be realistically be made at the moment by private car. Research from our sustainable travel demonstration town initiative has revealed that 44% of local peoples' trips have to be made by car since there is no reasonable alternative<sup>1</sup>. This implies that provision to park a car safely, but conveniently to the destination is a prime requirement for many people in Darlington. Yet, we recognise the needs of others, such as local residents in determining how and when parking is supplied.

This document is laid out in the following sections:

- Policy Context
- Demand for parking
- Supply of parking
- Policies
- Programme
- Monitoring
- Indicators

We propose to carry out detailed consultation with stakeholders and others during 2006, with a view to publishing a final Parking Strategy in the year. In consequence, some of the issues identified in this document will require consideration of new responses on behalf of the Council.

### Policy Context

#### The National Picture

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) Transport states "The availability of car parking has a major influence on the means of transport people choose for their journeys. Some studies suggest that levels of parking can be more significant than levels of public transport provision in determining means of travel (particularly for the journey to work) even for locations very well served by public transport."

Policies on parking should therefore be coordinated with

parking controls and charging set out in the local transport plan, and should complement planning policies on the location of development.

PPG 13 sets out 8 areas that local authorities should have regard to when implementing policies on parking, namely:

- to ensure that, as part of a package of planning and transport measures, levels of parking provided in association with development will promote sustainable transport choices;
- to not require developers to provide more spaces than they themselves wish, other than in exceptional circumstances which might include for example where there are significant implications for road safety which cannot be resolved through the introduction or enforcement of on-street parking controls;
- encourage the shared use of parking, particularly in town centres and as part of major proposals: for example offices and leisure uses (such as cinemas) might share parking because the peak levels of use do not coincide, provided adequate attention is given at the design stage;
- take care not to create perverse incentives for development to locate away from town centres, or threaten future levels of investment in town centres. While greater opportunities exist to reduce levels of parking for developments in locations with good access by non car modes, local authorities should be cautious in prescribing different levels of parking between town centres and peripheral locations, unless they are confident that the town centre will remain a favoured location for developers. Advice in PPG6 makes clear that good quality secure parking is important to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres, and to enable retail and leisure uses to flourish;
- require developers to provide designated parking spaces for disabled people in accordance with current good practice.
- where appropriate, introduce on-street parking controls in areas adjacent to major travel generating development to minimise the potential displacement of parking where on-site parking is being limited;
- require convenient safe and secure cycle parking in developments at least at levels consistent with the cycle strategy in the local transport plan; and
- consider appropriate provision for motorcycle parking.

PPG 13 also includes the following advice on Parking Controls and Charges and Park and Ride Schemes:

<sup>1</sup> Socialdata Research 2004.

### Parking Controls and Charges

As part of an overall approach on parking, covering both the local transport plan and development plan, local authorities should adopt on-street measures to complement land use policies. Car parking charges should also be used to encourage the use of alternative modes. The Regional Transport Strategy should set out the context for parking controls and charges by each local authority. Within this context, local authorities should set out appropriate levels and charges for parking which do not undermine the vitality of other town centres. Controls over public parking (both on-street parking and in car parks) need to be backed up by adequate enforcement measures.

### Park and Ride Schemes

Park and Ride schemes, in appropriate circumstances, can help promote more sustainable travel patterns, both at local and strategic levels, and improve the accessibility and attractiveness of town centres. Schemes can vary considerably in size and purpose and may be based around bus, light rail or rail. Well-designed and well-conceived schemes - which accord with the advice in this guidance - should be given favourable treatment through the planning system.

### Regional

The Regional Spatial Strategy is currently at examination in public (early 2006). In the Strategy, which seeks to achieve a common vision for the North East, that is shared with other key strategies. This vision is centred on quality of life, economic development, a good environment and achieving peoples' potential.

The draft strategy contains two policies of most relevance to this strategy, Demand Management Measures and Parking & Travel Plans.

Policy 55 on Demand Management Measures directs that Darlington's 2LTP should include integrated demand management measures to address traffic congestion, environmental and safety issues. These include reallocation of roadspace, Park & Ride, car sharing, car clubs, pricing and personalised travel marketing.

Policy 56 on Parking and Travel Plans seeks to complement car park pricing as a means of demand management. Calling for a suites of measures, especially where a location is a Prestige Employment Site, the policy sets out that 2LTP's should, amongst other actions, set minimum parking standards for non-residential parking, prepare travel plans for major development proposals and ensure that parking charges are consistent with local parking needs.

Darlington's 2LTP contains proposals that continue our work on managing demand through car parking and other measures,

such as reallocation of roadspace, travel planning (both individual and by organisation), car sharing and Park & Ride. Those within the remit of this strategy are discussed in greater detail below.

"Demand Management in the Tees Valley: A Policy Framework" was published in June 2000 and included agreement that the five Tees Valley authorities (Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton ) were committed to sustainable policies which reduce reliance on the private car, encourage the use of alternative means of travel and in the long term seek to reduce the need to travel through the mechanism of land use planning . Transport Policy in the Tees Valley is thus based around the key objectives of an Integrated Transport Policy, as laid out in the 1998 Government White Paper "A New Deal for Transport: better for Everyone".

In order to achieve these objectives, implementation schemes must use a mixture of inducements to use alternative forms of travel, matched by fiscal and physical measures which dissuade the use of private vehicles. Demand management is principally concerned with these latter measures, ie the ways in which price and infrastructure can be used to alter individual decisions on transport choice.

The Tees Valley document will be revised in draft form by March 2006. The subject of demand management is an important part of all Tees Valley Local Transport Plans, in particular the need to manage demand for the use of private cars whilst providing travel choice and improved accessibility. Darlington's LTP thus contains measures designed to make the alternatives to the private car more desirable travel choices, as well as tackling traffic congestion. These measures include road space reallocation, improving and providing additional cycle networks, travel plans and many travel awareness campaigns and bus and rail improvements. They also include car parking pricing and supply. It is important that the authorities work together on these measures and that this framework continues to provide a basis for this joint working

A synopsis of the draft Tees Valley Demand Management Framework 2006 is attached at the end of this strategy. The Council is continuing to deliver its commitments under the previous Framework, for example maintaining numbers of long stay parking spaces at 2000 levels. It has also doubled the standard long stay parking charge per day over the period 2000 to 2006.

### Local Level.

The emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) is a significant document that this strategy needs to develop alongside. Initial discussion of the issues identified have revealed a role for integrated land use planning, including policies on travel plans, development of non-operational parking and consideration of accessibility by all modes of travel. These issues have been incorporated into the development of the LDF, through a proposal to write supplementary planning guidance to accompany the LDF itself. More detail on this process will be contained in the final version of this strategy

“Adding to Quality” Darlington’s development strategy sets out the conditions for securing and sustaining the competitive advantage of Darlington Town Centre, some of which is now being realised through the Darlington Pedestrian Heart scheme. The development strategy is concerned with the quality and location of parking supply in the town centre, rather than increasing as well as the overall number of parking spaces. The strategy calls for the provision of 2,000 car parking spaces within the area bounded on three sides by the inner ring road, an increase of some 300 spaces over the current provision in the area. This aspiration will be achieved, through the

development of the Commercial Street area into a new shopping centre, with an integral short stay multi-storey car park, and other developments.

As stated in the Second Local Transport Plan, Darlington as a sub-regional shopping centre, serves areas that do not have good alternative transport to the use of the car. This is especially true of the area to the south and west (North Yorkshire and County Durham). As identified in other Council strategies, the Council is planning to work with its neighbouring authorities to improve accessibility by all means of travel, including the use of bus services and cycling, but appropriate levels of parking remain important to the economic vitality of the town centre.

**Chapter 4** of the Second Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 (LTP2) sets out the Strategic Choices to be made by the plan in delivering Darlington’s second Local Transport Plan. Six Strategic Objectives are set out and all of them are directly relevant to this strategy.

The objectives selected for the Parking Strategy mirror those for LTP2. These have then been translated to reflect how vehicle parking can help to achieve the objectives (**Table 1**) overleaf.

Table 1 Links to wider strategy aims

STRATEGY OBJECTIVE	TRANSPORT SHARED PRIORITY	COMMUNITY STRATEGY	PARKING STRATEGY
A- To provide the framework for sustainable development of new and existing businesses, housing and services in Darlington.	Accessibility + Quality of Life	Improving the Local Economy + Enhancing the Environment	Deciding level and cost of supply. Provide parking for those without access to a car (cycles and motor cycles) Apply vehicle parking policies to planning applications. Negotiate and require workplace and residential travel plans as appropriate.
B- To improve access to employment and education, particularly for those without access to a private car, those with a disability and those that have greatest need.	Accessibility	Promoting inclusive communities + Raising Educational Achievement + Stimulating Leisure Activities + Improving the local economy	Provide secure parking for those without access to a car (cycles & motor cycles). Parking provision for blue badge holders to meet the needs of disabled people.
C- To tackle traffic congestion on key corridors and its potential impact on the economy and environment by making the most effective use of the transport network.	Congestion + Air Quality	Develop an effective transport system	Demand Management measures to influence travel choices and thus tackle congestion. Pricing and supply. Negotiate and require workplace and residential travel plans as appropriate.
D- To improve travel safety and security for all by addressing the real and perceived risks.	Road Safety	Promoting community safety	Retain and achieve further Park Mark awards in car parks. Car Park CCTV coverage.
E- To provide and promote travel choices to all, in particular to reduce the proportion of car driver trips.	Congestion + Accessibility	Promoting inclusive communities + Developing an effective transport system	Marketing and promotion. (sustainable travel demonstration town campaign) Negotiate and require workplace and residential travel plans as appropriate. Provide secure parking for those without access to a car (cycles & motorcycles). Improved parking enforcement to ensure punctual and reliable bus operation. Parent and child spaces.
F- To improve the health of the community through increasing levels of sustainable travel and improving access to health, leisure and fresh food.	Quality of life + Accessibility	Improving Health and Well Being	Ensure appropriate parking at key sites such as health, food and leisure destinations, and on all new sites via the planning system. Improve secure parking provision for cycles & motorcycles in town centre. Negotiate and require workplace and residential travel plans as appropriate.

The Council will continue to ensure that the road network operates efficiently through meeting its new duties under the Transport Act, 2004. The Council's Traffic Manager role has the dedicated task of tackling day to day traffic congestion and delay by co-ordinating the activities of all those involved in, or affecting the, operation of the local road network under normal conditions and during exceptional circumstances such as public events or emergencies. In addition the Traffic Manager has a more strategic role in land use planning, road space reallocation and parking enforcement.

The Council already has strong and appropriate demand management measures in place that manage the use of the private car, whilst protecting local quality of life. Behavioural travel research has shown that 44% of all local residents' car trips have no alternative, and it remains important that this Plan helps provide transport solutions for such trips, whilst helping those trips that can be made by alternative means, as detailed in Darlington's Transport Strategy (**Annex 3**)

## Demand for parking

Car parking in Darlington is the result of demand for other goods and services ie it is a derived demand from that for items like food, leisure facilities, banking services and clothes available in the town centre and other suburban locations. In this respect, car parking is the same as transport itself in that most people do not use it for its own sake, rather they use it to access something.

In Darlington, 5 types of demand of potential concern have been identified, namely:

- parking in the town centre for shopping and other short stay activities;
- parking in, or near, the town centre for those staying throughout the day;
- parking in residential streets where demand exceeds supply due to conflicting needs of users of different land uses (residential, employment, business, health etc), such as Darlington Memorial Hospital or Mowden Hall;
- parking associated with major transport facilities – Darlington Railway Station and Durham Tees Valley Airport; and
- private, non-residential parking such as that attached to the Argos regional distribution depot at Faverdale or at Lingfield Point, McMullen Road.

In considering how to respond to the different types of parking demand, we recognise that the Council is a partner with private sector organisations such as the Cornmill Shopping Centre and local business.

### Parking in the town centre

As outlined above, we feel that there are essentially two different needs for central area car parking:

- short stay facilities for those who need to park for a few minutes or hours; and
- long stay facilities for those who need to stay for longer periods of time, for example workers based in the town centre. In this case, the demand pattern may be repeated over several days.

Vehicle parking is thus required to support the town's economic vitality. "It needs to be suitable for the needs of the target users and needs to consider all those who use parking – be they disabled persons, those with young children or motorcyclists.

The different types of demand mean that the location of the parking can be at varying distances from the town centre, with short stay users preferring locations close to their final destinations, whilst longer stay users will often accept a short walk to their final destination. In Darlington, this means that the short stay car parks are mostly located within the arc described by the inner ring road, whilst long stay car parks are located just outside.

Irrespective of type, demand for car parking in the town centre is for safe, well managed facilities that are easily located by the visitor and that do not have an unsustainable impact on the local road network. Car parking as a generator of traffic congestion is an issue that the council is particularly aware of, especially due to the negative effects of traffic congestion such as air pollution, noise and delays to local bus services. Recent survey evidence<sup>2</sup>, has shown that demand exists for easy to find parking spaces, so necessitating some system to provide equity of opportunity, either through time limits or pricing structures.

### Parking in residential streets

In common with other towns and cities, some areas of Darlington experience an excess of demand compared to available kerbside parking spaces at certain times of day. This often is the result of the competition for on street parking generated by local residents who have no alternative parking spaces and demand generated by users of adjacent non-residential land uses. In Darlington, this problem of conflicting demands is most felt around the town centre and near the Hospital and Railway Station.

These two types of demand have slightly different characteristics; that for residential parking is for long stay parking especially overnight and at weekends or holidays in a safe, convenient location to the house of the driver. That for visitors is often for shorter periods of time, whilst the occupant(s) are visiting their final destination – although this can be for a whole day in the case of employees at a Hospital and elsewhere. We have identified the demand for on-street parking from users of Darlington Railway Station separately, since some users require parking for more than one day. Again, visitors and non-residents seek parking that is convenient to their final destination, safe and easy to obtain.

<sup>2</sup> on street parking surveys June 2004 & June 2005 Areas A-D

Conflicts often occur between the different types of demand, due to the overlap between long stay non-residents vacating their parking spaces at the end of the day, and the arrival home of residents after a day out at work or elsewhere.

One unique parking issue is that caused by the demand to attend football matches at Darlington Football Stadium on Neasham Road just off the A66(T). The Council has taken steps, in partnership with the Police and the Highways Agency, to mitigate any impact that this demand may have on local residents' and the local highway network.

We are aware that similar issues could occur in industrial areas where there are no residential properties. There are a few issues at the moment, for example parking pressures in the Yarm Road Industrial Estate primarily caused by inconsiderate parking by employees requiring access to local businesses. We shall, therefore, monitor such areas and seek to work with local business to introduce appropriate interventions as and when required.

### Parking near major transport facilities

Darlington is the location of two major public transport facilities that serve both the Borough and the surrounding Tees Valley City region, County Durham and North Yorkshire. The demand at Durham Tees Valley Airport is largely contained within its site and is thus not dealt with here (however, the role of the airport travel plan together with the transport assessment are recognised as the mechanism for dealing with any impacts on the local road network).

However, parking demand generated by users of Darlington Railway Station is an issue that we would wish to tackle through this strategy.

Darlington Railway Station is increasingly becoming the major railhead for the entire Tees Valley sub-region of 651,900 population (Mid 2004) – a role that it is likely to continue, despite the introduction of new rail services from Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees to London in 2007. As a consequence, the national trend for increasing rail use has translated into a 7% increase of passengers using the Station over the year to 1.8 million. Research carried out by the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit in 2004, revealed that some 238,000 people per annum used a car to reach the Station – and a substantial number of these subsequently parked there for the duration of their rail journey. As demand increases, the operator of the Station, Great North Eastern Railway has responded by introducing higher parking charges to manage demand and encourage use of alternative means of travel. Unfortunately, one undesired side effect has been the use of kerbside parking in residential areas to the east of the railway line (the western side being within an existing residential parking zone), this has caused some inconvenience to those wishing to access local properties by car. Current rail usage forecasts indicate that this trend is likely to increase and thus develop into a problem

unless management action is taken through this strategy.

### Private non-residential parking

Significant amounts of privately operated parking exists within the Borough to meet the demand for access by car to places of work, education, worship, retail and in some cases leisure. Demand for car parking that is entirely met by this means is not necessarily a problem for the local road network, although we recognise the potential long term effects on traffic levels of such parking, particularly if free at point of use. However, we are mindful of the road safety benefits of off road car parking, when the alternative could be inappropriate on-street demand.

Whilst the issue of existing private non-residential parking is primarily dealt with through our thinking on workplace travel plans, this strategy does have a role in influencing the future provision of private non-residential parking through the planning process.

## Supply of Parking

Currently there are 3,734 car parking spaces within the town centre available to the public and additional spaces at other locations within the Borough. Of the town centre spaces, 2,450 are short stay off street spaces and 909 are long stay off street spaces. In addition, there are some 375 short stay on street spaces, where charges apply.

The majority of the spaces are controlled by the Borough Council with the notable exceptions of the Cornmill Car Park in Priestgate (east end), Sainsbury's Car Park in Victoria Road, St Cuthbert's Way car park in East Street and Blockbuster car park in Northumberland Street. Nine car parks containing a total of 1,459 spaces have achieved Park Mark status which means that the parking area has passed a risk assessment by the police and the operator has put in place measures that help to deter criminal activity and anti social behaviour. A list of the town's main car parks are set out in **Table 2**.

### Location

Short stay spaces are generally located close to the final destination since car drivers are only planning to stay for short periods of time, whilst long stay spaces are generally located at a greater distance away from the final destination, as users will often be prepared to accept a short walk (since the overall journey time is proportionately less to that of duration of stay).

**Table 2 Location of Car Parks**

Car Park	Type	Spaces	Disabled	Park Mark	Other	Total
Beaumont St West	SS	45	0			45
Beaumont St North	SS	147	0	✓	3 Motorcycle bays	150
Beaumont St East	SS	124	4			128
Park Place West	LS	141	0			141
Park Place East	LS	93	0		Re-opening Spring 07	93
Chesnut Street	LS	180	0			180
Garden Street	LS	72	2	✓		74
Commercial St East	SS	137	9	✓	5 Parent & Child	151
Commercial St West	SS	165	5	✓	5 Parent & Child	175
Abbott's Yard	SS	73	22		1 Motorcycle bay	96
Archer Street	LS	79	0	✓		79
Kendrew St East	LS	90	0	✓		90
Kendrew St West	LS	97	0	✓		97
Winston Street	SS	110	6	✓		116
Town Hall	SS	216	15	✓		231
Central House	(W/Es only)	47	2			49
St Hilda's	LS	15	0			15
Hird Street	LS	12	0		1 Loading Bay	13
Park Lane	LS (RS)	120	7			127
East Street	SS	336	2			336
Sainsbury	SS (P)	500	12			500
Cornmill (Priestgate)	SS (P)	412	12	✓	Motorcycle area	412
Duke Street	SS (P)	27	0			27
Blockbuster	SS (P)	30	4			30
St Cuthbert's Way	SS (P)	53	2			53

There are also a total of 382 parking spaces at Darlington Bank Top Railway Station (224 long stay spaces at Garbutt Square), operated by GNER.

SS = Short Stay; LS = Long Stay; W/Es only = Weekends only; RS = Railway Station; P = Privately Run

Short Stay (Off Street) Total	2450
Short Stay (On Street) Total	375
Long Stay (Off Street) Total	909
<b>Combined Total</b>	<b>3734</b>

### Powered Two Wheelers

Parking for Motorcycles and other powered two wheelers has been historically provided in Beaumont Street North and Abbott's Yard car parks. Recently, further motor cycle provision has been made inside the new privately run Cornmill multi storey car park in Priestgate. These facilities aim to meet both short and long stay town centre demand by those using powered two wheelers.

### Blue Badge Holders

There are currently 90 parking spaces specifically designed for blue badge holders (registered disabled drivers) in Darlington's town centre car parks. In Council run car parks, Blue Badge holders can also park in non designated spaces without charge. The partial pedestrianisation of the town centre, under the Pedestrian Heart initiative have required some significant changes to be made to areas of on street parking for disabled persons from 2005, but when complete the scheme will increase the number of designated parking bays. These facilities aim to meet short stay town centre demand and are thus located within the inner ring road.

### Parking charges

Parking charges are applied to many car parks within the Borough, both as a means of repaying some of the costs of providing the facility (land, infrastructure, operation), but also to help enforcement of length of stay and so best meet the demand. For example, people wishing to stay more than 4 hours are often working in the town centre and are more appropriately catered for by the long stay car parks and the pricing structure reflects this. In Council operated car parks, this principle of a contribution is also underpinned by an ethos that asks that a payment is sought where the benefit is not universal to all residents.

Traditionally, we have also considered the policy context and the needs of the local economy in determining what level of parking charge is fair and reasonable to apply. Currently, the charges for all Council run short stay car parks are 80p per hour apart from the centrally located Abbott's Yard, where the charges are £1 for the first hour and £1.50 for subsequent hours. Charges for on street areas, which are also targeted at short stay use, are 40p per half hour with a maximum stay of 2 hours. As part of our continual process of assessing charges, some on-street locations will have new lower charges applied in 2006, in order to provide for local needs.

Council operated long stay car parking charges are £3.00 per day (£4.00 Park Lane) and £12 for weekly tickets. The Park Lane car park provides parking close to the main railway station at a lower charge, for those unwilling to use the more expensive GNER facility at the Station itself. In addition, the Chestnut Street Lorry Park is free for cars, whilst being £2.50

per night for overnight lorry parking. This exemption for cars reflects the current local circumstances of this edge of town car park with limited on-street space to meet the demand from neighbouring industry.

Blue badge holders can park free for up to 3 hours in all Council operated car parks, as an additional resource for short stay users.

All Council car parks are free after 6pm and on Sundays, and on the four Thursday evenings (from 4.30pm) before Christmas in order to support the town centre trade. Charges are applied on Bank Holidays, as the town traditionally holds a market on most of these days.

Currently, parking for powered two wheelers is free in those Council car parks that have such a parking facility installed.

We already recognise that some users need more than a weekly ticket and have introduced permit systems where these have not created an undue administrative burden on the parking service. For example, some permits have been purchased by the Primary Care Trust at face value for use by staff needing to use their cars frequently throughout the working day. A similar system applies to Council staff who need to travel by car as part of their employment, with staff paying for the permit through a salary deduction scheme.

The application of parking charges aims to meet both short and long stay demand through providing an equitable allocation of spaces.

### Residents' Parking Schemes

There are six existing Residents' Parking Schemes which seek to tackle the conflicts between the differing types of parking demand prevalent in these areas. The six schemes are named after the primary street, with the type of demand that they are designed to meet or mitigate:

- Larchfield Street (commuters and residents)
- North Lodge Terrace (commuters and residents)
- South Terrace (commuters and residents)
- Hollyhurst Road (hospital workers & visitors and residents)
- Victoria Road (commuters, rail travellers and residents)
- Neasham Road (football match days only)

A further scheme is being implemented in 2006 at Stanhope Road, which aims to address the conflict caused by the needs of those going to the local College, those working in the town centre and residents.

## On Street Parking

On Street Parking charges were introduced in November 2004 close to the town centre, in response to issues surrounding illegal parking and abuse of waiting limits preventing shoppers and others from easily finding a short stay space. In total there are some 375 spaces distributed around 26 streets as detailed in **Table 3**.

Subsequently, we have carried out surveys to assess the actual impact of the charges against our estimates. Surveys of vehicles parked were carried out in four zones (Areas A-D), in the streets where the charges are applied.

**Table 3 On street parking spaces**

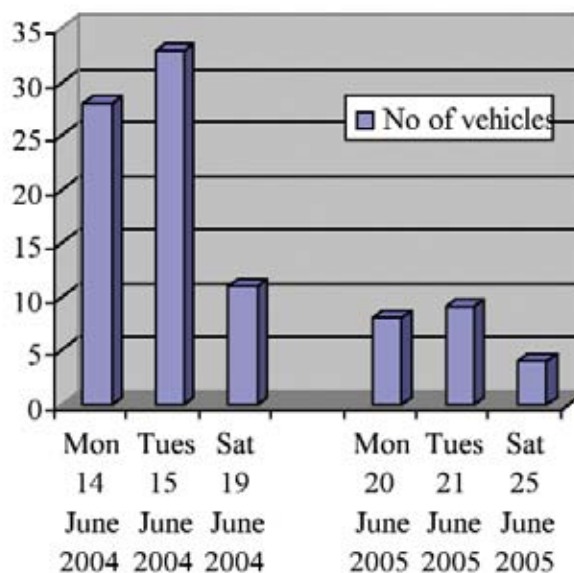
Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D
Powlett St	Elmfield Tce	Northumberland St	Victoria Emb
West Powlett St	North Lodge Tce	Grange Rd	Victoria Rd
Raby St (West)	Gladstone St	South Arden St	Hargreave Tce
East Raby St	King St	Beaumont St West	Park Place
Duke St	Kendrew St	Beaumont St	Swan St
Barnard St			North Eastern Tce
Napier St			
Winston St			
Primrose St			
Larchfield St			

These surveys were carried out in June 2004 prior to the introduction of charges and then a year later in June 2005. Comparison of the data shows that prior to the introduction of parking charges (in June 2004) there was considerable abuse of the system, in that a significant number of motorists were overstaying. Whereas, after the introduction of charging, the extent of overstaying was much reduced in all 4 areas surveyed. **Figure 1** illustrates the data for Area C, which is typical of the 4 areas surveyed.

Analysis of the data for Duke Street and Grange Road, both important commercial streets in the town, shows that before the introduction of charges there were substantially less spaces available for parking than after on all three days of the survey. The introduction of on street charging has therefore been successful in improving the turnover and availability of on street parking spaces. However, 15 months after the introduction of the on street charges, some of the peripheral streets in the scheme continue to have low occupancy rates and as a result it may be necessary to consider reductions in charges for these streets. Further surveys will be carried out in June 2006.

**Figure 1**

### Vehicles overstaying per day (Area C)



### Utilisation of car parks

Advice in PPG6 makes clear that good quality secure parking is important to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres, and to enable retail and leisure uses to flourish. The current short stay off street car parks are well used. This is important due to the safety benefits of off street parking, since there are fewer interactions between cars or people, than by the kerbside. However, we apply all relevant design standards to ensure that all our on-street parking supply meets current best practice in terms of safety issues.

### Parking Enforcement

A substantial amount of work has been carried out in terms of parking control in the Borough since publication of the first parking strategy in 2002. We employ some 16 staff dedicated to the parking service, who enforce on and off street parking provision, including that in our residents' parking zones.

The recent commencement of works to pedestrianise the town centre (the Pedestrian Heart scheme) includes for the introduction of waiting and loading bays and restrictions, the provision of parking bays for blue badge holders, bus lanes and provision for taxis. We are seeking to become a decriminalized parking enforcement area, in order to help both local people and the Police, by transferring the more day to day issues surrounding parking to a dedicated staff resource.

Enforcement aids all users by mitigating the effects of those who choose to misuse the parking system. An prime example of this, is the availability of on-street parking spaces within an enforced regime, compared to the previous situation.

### Customer Satisfaction

We are keen to know what users think of our parking stock, since without feedback, we cannot always know what local people need from a car park. Darlington's Annual Community Surveys provide useful data on satisfaction with town centre car parks. These show a decreasing level of satisfaction over the past 3 years with 55.8% of respondents being fairly or very satisfied in 2003 and only 35.7% of respondents being fairly or very satisfied in 2005. Equally 25.1% of respondents were fairly or very dissatisfied in 2003 and 39.8% were fairly or very dissatisfied in 2005.

This rising level of dissatisfaction may just be a reflection of motorists' general concerns about increasing costs of motoring, of which parking charges are just one element, or with wider issues to do with other Council services or plans. However, we are aware that it may also reflect concerns over a lack of adequate provision in the town or unfavourable comparisons with other centres. As a consequence, it highlights the need for this new strategy to have continued attention to operational detail and a sustained investment programme through the Second Local Transport Plan.

### Security

Car crime in town centre car parks covered by Darlington Council's closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras remains at a record low. There were only 8 incidents reported throughout 2005. The town's system was installed in 1994 at a cost of £750,000 when 374 incidents were recorded per year. The system's hi-tech cameras provide 24-hour coverage of town centre car parks with live pictures relayed to the Town Hall, where they are monitored by dedicated staff. Total investment in the scheme to date is £1.5million with 100 cameras now operational. Darlington's car parks are therefore some of the safest in the country and this has benefits for all people who travel by car to visit or to shop in the town, as well as those working in town centre businesses.

### Policies

Policies to deal with the issues identified above will be finalised and developed during 2006, through a consultation process.

### Programme

**Table 4** opposite illustrates the current range of our proposals and we will seek to bring more forward, as both our research further develops our understanding of the needs of the various demands for car parking within the Borough and the policies are prepared. Therefore, this list should not be taken as an exhaustive statement of our actions under this strategy, since its implementation will be developed further. Other detail of our proposals may be found in **Chapter 6** of the Second Local Transport Plan.

Table 4 Programme

Intervention	2006/07 budgets or actions	Future years	Funding
Decriminalised Parking Enforcement	100	Introduction by 2007	Local Transport Plan
Residents' Parking Zones	75	Further implementation	Local Transport Plan
Improvements to car parks, especially for vulnerable users	10	continued	Local Transport Plan
Park & Ride feasibility study	20	Implementation of one site if feasible	Local Transport Plan
Yarm Road verge hardening	100	Continued where required	Local Transport Plan
Travel Plans	20	Further implementation	Local Transport Plan Local business
Maintenance	38	continued	Local Transport Plan Council revenue
Security	CCTV Community Wardens Police	continued	Local Transport Plan Council revenue Police revenue
Land use planning & car parking	Darlington College new site car park	continued	Local business Health Service Railway Industry
Information on street	VMS	continued	Council revenue Local business
Information	2006 Parking Guide	continued	Council revenue Local business
Monitoring		2007 customer satisfaction survey and subsequently. 2007 Community Survey.	Council revenue
Monitoring	Audit of car parks	Audit of car parks	Council revenue

## Monitoring

As demonstrated in our Second Local Transport Plan, we understand the importance of monitoring and research to ensure that transport planning decisions contribute to policy outcomes. We shall, therefore, carry out the monitoring and research identified above, as well as:-

- analysing monthly figures for car park and on-street parking revenue
- analysing monthly figures for car park usage from the VMS system.
- annual surveys of on-street usage.
- examining all reported crime within our car parks.

## Indicators

We have decided not to set ourselves any targets at this stage directly relating to car parking itself, but rather to concentrate on the outcome targets to which the service relates. This is in appreciation of the wider impacts that car parking has on the local road network. As stated in the Second Local Transport Plan, we will examine our performance in terms of achieving improvements to local quality of life, in particular through :-

- Changes in peak period traffic flow
- Percent of car driver trips

## Synopsis of draft Tees Valley Demand Management Framework

The 2006 revision of the Tees Valley Demand Framework is currently in preparation to support the current thinking behind transport investment outlined in the Second Local Transport Plan. We have included a synopsis within this car parking strategy, in recognition of the links with the operation of parking supply.

Analysis of the previous framework applied during the first Local Transport Plan indicates that the target to keep town centre long stay parking at 2000 levels of supply has been achieved, with a slight decrease being recorded.

The framework provides the context and parameters within which we intend to work with our fellow local authorities – both in the Tees Valley and adjacent – and the Highways Agency to manage the demand for road space, whilst achieving our shared policy outcomes on economic regeneration, accessibility, traffic congestion, safety and air quality – in short contributing to local peoples' quality of life.

The framework is designed to avoid a situation where progress on achieving our long term outcomes is blunted by short term responses to local issues surrounding the economy. However, it is not prescriptive and leaves flexibility of response to each highway authority to implement measures that are appropriate to local needs; and to review those responses from time to time. The framework is intended to apply to all trips within the sub-region including accessing health care, employment, shopping, education and leisure. The Tees Valley multi-modal Transport Model will be used to provide appropriate evidence to inform decisions, using a "traffic light" early warning system to highlight areas and times of greatest concern via a GIS based interface.

Whilst the revised document has yet to be agreed, the current proposed policies are as follows:-

- Policy DM1 Supply of Car Parking Spaces
- Policy DM2 Long Stay Parking Charges
- Policy DM3 Decriminalised Parking Enforcement
- Policy DM4 Reallocation of Road Space
- Policy DM5 Real Time Information System
- Policy DM6 Park and Ride Facilities
- Policy DM7 Workplace Travel Plans
- Policy DM8 Joint Working
- Policy DM9 Travel Awareness Campaigns
- Policy DM10 School Travel Plans
- Policy DM11 New Development
- Policy DM12 Rail Freight
- Policy DM13 Evidence Base
- Policy DM14 Testing Potential Solutions