

Integrated Parking Strategy for Carmarthenshire

December 2005



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Forward:

The County Council submitted its Local Transport Plan (2001-2006) to the Welsh Assembly Government in 2000. Production of an Integrated Parking Strategy was identified as a target within the Local Transport Plan.

The Integrated Parking Strategy is a key element of the County Council's overall Transport Strategy, which supports Government objectives for the provision of a balanced transport policy.

This Strategy sets out the aims and objectives of the County Council to meet future travel and parking demands within the County. It is intended to balance the needs for private and commercial parking, the economic and environmental needs of the community as a whole, and the policy commitments of the County Council, Welsh Assembly and Central Government.

This Strategy is not intended to provide detailed solutions to the parking needs of the county, as that will come through the business planning process, but is a framework for the next 10-15 years, from which future parking provision decisions taken by the County Council can be made in a structured, consistent and sustainable manner.

This Strategy seeks to address the future travel and parking demands within the county through a considered and forward thinking approach to the management and provision of car parking. This includes parking spaces, facilities within car parks, alternatives to long-stay parking within town centres, integration with public transport and coordination of our policies, both internally and externally.

The parking and travel needs of the urban and rural areas of the county, together with the alternatives to car travel available within these areas, are obviously quite different. As such it will be necessary to use the flexibility the parking strategy provides to ensure that both urban and rural economies thrive.

It will be essential that we, as a County Council, work in conjunction, and coordinate our actions with, as many organisations as possible over the coming years, to ensure that implementation of the Integrated Parking Strategy is a success and that the parking and access demands within the County are effectively managed.



Cllr. Pam Palmer

Cabinet Member for
Technical Services



Richard Workman

Director of Technical
Services

Executive Summary

- 1.1 The provision, location, cost and quality of parking are major contributory factors in choice of travel mode and also on the economic prosperity of an area.
- 1.2 The Parking Strategy balances the needs of individuals (whether they rely on private or public transport), local economies and business communities with the needs of the environment.
- 1.3 The Strategy has been developed through a process of information gathering including a UK policy review of parking provision, detailed surveys on current usage of parking in urban areas and examination of recorded parking data to enable long term trends to be calculated.
- 1.4 This has been examined alongside future traffic growth, legislative and development proposals to provide a clear prediction of future parking demand.
- 1.5 The Strategy has involved extensive consultation, both internally through cross department officer working groups, but with statutory bodies like emergency services, with transport providers such as bus, rail and taxi operators and with town and community councils.
- 1.6 The consultation process identified key issues and concerns and asked participants to prioritise actions to address those concerns, thus enabling resources to be effectively targeted.
- 1.7 The aims of the Parking Strategy are:
 - To be consistent with national and regional parking objectives and with the Strategic Transport Policy in the Council's Unitary Development Plan.
 - To contribute to other corporate objectives including the Corporate Strategy, Community Plan and the Local Transport Plan.
 - To facilitate parking provision and management that maximises the use of existing parking stock.
 - To ensure that parking facilities are safe, accessible and convenient and that they comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
 - To promote more sustainable travel choices through parking provision and pricing at the same time as maintaining economic viability in the County.

1.8 The identified priorities for action to achieve the above aims are as follows:

- To **prioritise short-stay parking in town centre car parks** – this maximises the number of vehicles that can use the space in one day and thus the economic benefit to the local business community. This needs to be matched with long stay parking provision at the periphery of town centres.
- To **improve car park safety** – all car users become pedestrians once they have parked their cars and the environment within car parks needs to be user friendly and accessible.
- To **improve car park information** – this helps both regular users and visitors by indicating where car-parking provision is and for interactive displays how many vacant spaces remain. This leads to more efficient use of parking stock.
- To **provide more facilities for mobility impaired** – including appropriate levels of parking provision within car parks and through the encouragement of shop mobility schemes within town centres.
- To **provide Park and Ride** on the periphery of Carmarthen and Llanelli – as an effective means of reducing congestion at the same time as providing a pool of parking to cater for daily and seasonal peaks in demand.
- To **improve integration with public transport** services – providing car parking facilities adjacent to main bus and rail interchange points will encourage greater use of bus and rail by commuters and visitors to urban areas.
- To **apply maximum parking standards to new development** – thus ensuring that non-residential developments contribute to, and do not detract from, the parking strategy, through over or under provision of parking.
- To **provide coach and other parking** – This will help to attract more coach visitors to Carmarthenshire and the space allocated can be used by lorries or caravans during off peak periods.
- To **provide motor cycle and cycle parking facilities in car parks** – This will help to encourage more cycling and motorcycling, both of which are more sustainable forms of transport.

1.9 The Parking Strategy is intended to provide the framework to guide decisions on specific provision, location and pricing of parking over the next 15 years.

1.10 The priorities for action will be developed and delivered through the Council's business planning process for parking services and will be dependant upon securing the necessary resources.

1 Introduction

The level of parking provision within town centres is acknowledged as a major contributing factor in choice of travel mode, and the Parking Strategy will inevitably impact on levels of traffic congestion and pollution, the economic prosperity of an area and public transport patronage.

In a predominantly rural area such as Carmarthenshire, the private motorcar remains the primary means of transport for the majority of trips made within the county. A result of the increasing use of the motorcar for private and business purposes is a need to park the vehicle at the journey's destination until further use of the vehicle is required.

This parking need, particularly within town-centre areas, is placing a significant demand on existing in-town parking areas, both on-street and off-street, which in turn leads to calls for further parking provision to be made as traffic levels increase. However, as the towns of Carmarthenshire continue to develop and grow the opportunity to locate land for the provision of car parking space within the town centres becomes increasingly difficult.

It is therefore essential that the existing parking areas are managed effectively to ensure maximum use of the available space, whilst seeking to provide and promote alternative means of access to town centre and other destination areas where possible and to reduce the need to travel by car and park within the town centre areas.

The desire to manage the existing parking stock and offer alternatives to car travel must also be considered in line with the need to maintain the attractiveness of an area for people to shop, work and generally carry out their daily activities. The Parking Strategy will ensure that future changes to parking provision are both forward thinking and support the economic attractiveness and vitality of the diverse areas within the county.

2 Development of Strategy

The Parking Strategy has been developed following an extensive information gathering and consultation process, including parking policy reviews, car park surveys, car park ticket analysis, internal and external consultations and an external workshop.

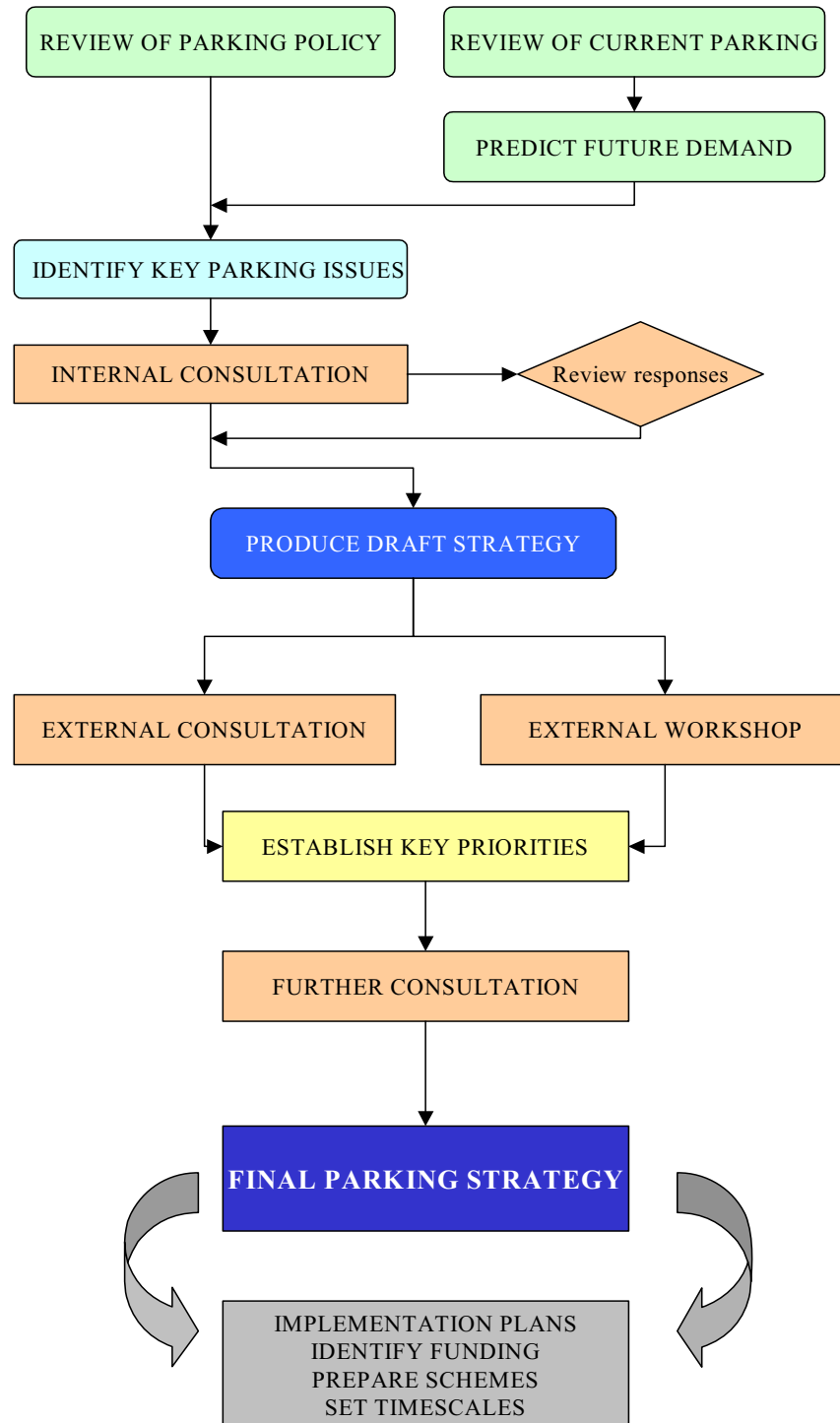


Figure 1: Strategy Development Flowchart

2.1 Parking Policy Reviews

At the start of developing this Parking Strategy a review of existing regional, Welsh Assembly and Central Government policy and guidance relating to parking, transportation and land use planning was carried out. This documentation was then compared with the current policies and guidelines in Carmarthenshire

This showed that current Carmarthenshire County Council policies are consistent with both regional and national strategies and objectives, and from this review a number of key points arose which formed the basis of the draft strategy proposals.

These include:

- Encouraging short-stay parking within town centres through parking charging policies and/or restricting long-stay provision;
- Providing for people with disabilities, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1994;
- Promoting and prioritising public transport to provide a sustainable alternative to the use of private motor vehicles;
- Applying maximum parking standards to new developments and encouragement of lower level of provision, whilst ensuring that economic viability and vitality of the towns are not compromised;
- Managing both public and private car park provision, and considering issues jointly with other local authorities.
- Considering introduction of Park & Ride schemes, where appropriate

2.2 Current Parking Provision and Demand

Car park surveys were undertaken in August 2004 at the public car parks in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford, together with the larger private car parks of the towns. The surveys undertaken on Fridays gave a snapshot of the parking profile within the three main towns of the county (Figure 2).

The survey information indicates that the total public demand did not exceed total capacity at any of the three survey towns at any time of the day, with Carmarthen and Llanelli car parks operating at a maximum capacity ratio of 83% and Ammanford operating at a peak demand of 95%.

However, at approximately 85% of its capacity a car park can **appear** full to the motorist and locating a free car parking space can prove more difficult. In this respect Ammanford was shown to be operating above the 85% capacity threshold between 10.30am and 4.30pm on the day of the survey.

The survey information also enabled duration of stay profiles to be established for each of the surveyed car parks.

A comprehensive analysis of the survey information is available as Appendix A of the Parking Strategy, on request.

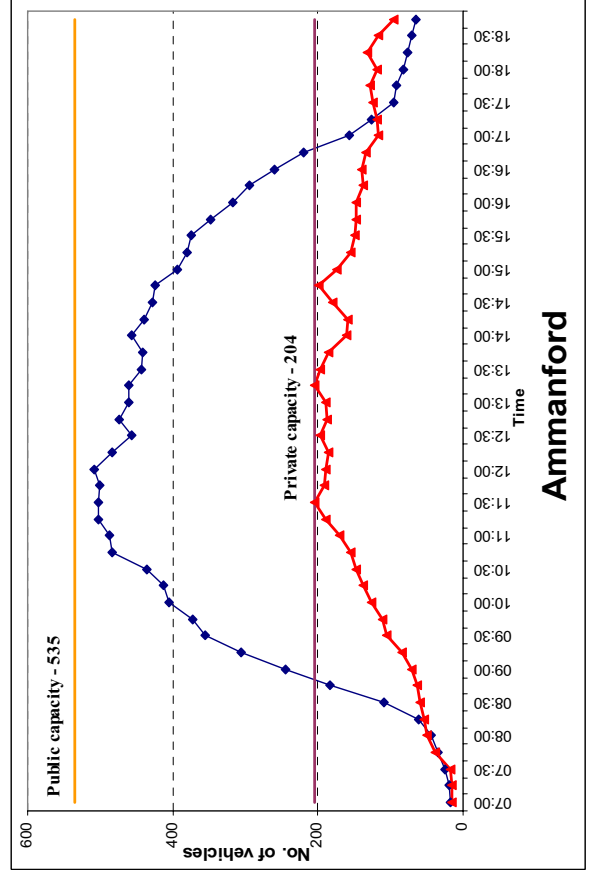
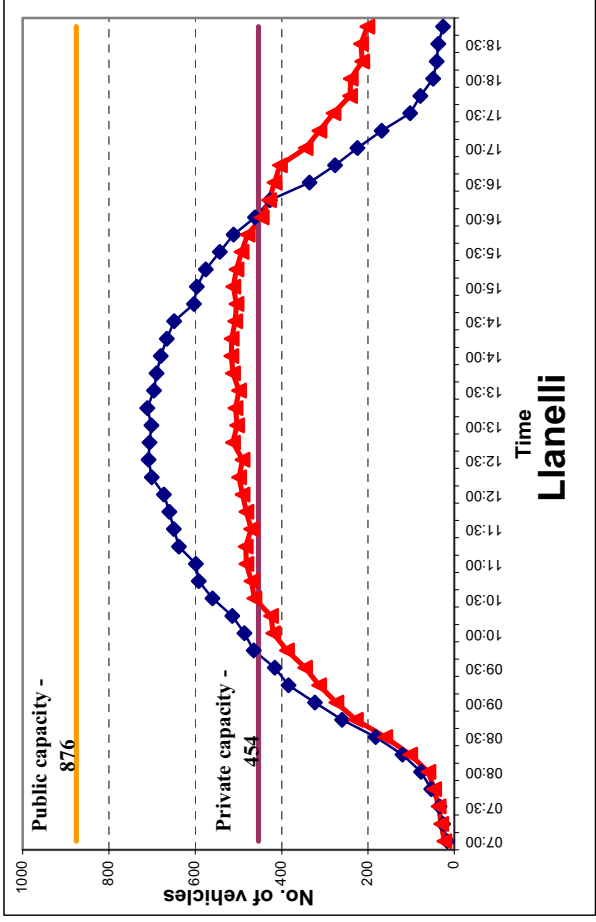
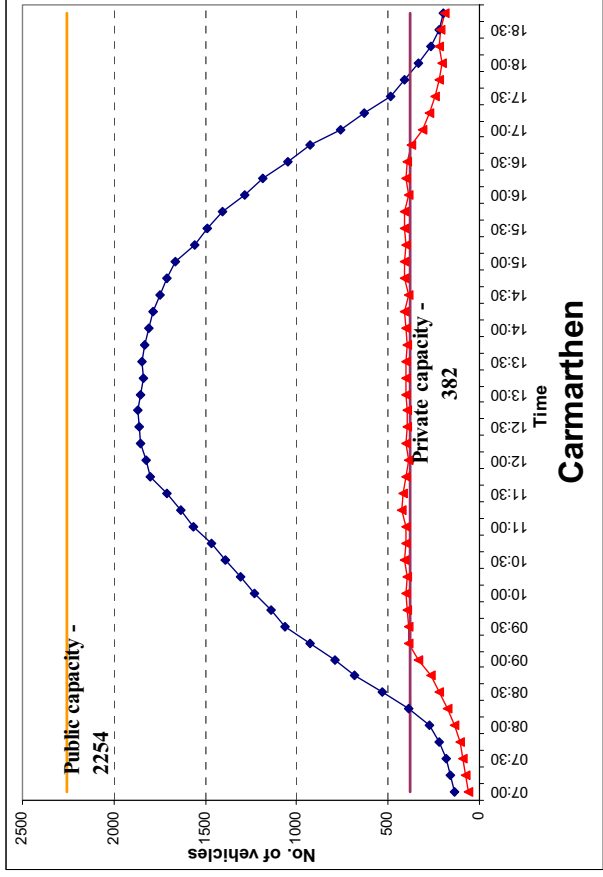


Figure 2: Parking Demand Profiles

- Public demand (Blue line with diamonds)
- Private demand (Red line with triangles)
- Public capacity (Orange horizontal line)
- Private capacity (Purple horizontal line)

To check how accurately the survey information reflected the general use of the car parks, the daily and monthly ticket sales information was analysed. This allowed a comparison to be made between the data collected during the surveys and the average and 85th percentile (85%ile) demand in August.

Similarly analysis of the monthly ticket data allowed a comparison to be made between the survey month (August) and the remainder of 2004.

By combining the daily and monthly factors an indication of the average and 85%ile parking demand throughout the year was established. From this information a baseline level of demand was estimated. A comparison of the survey data and the parking demand for 2004 is detailed as Table 1.

It is not economically viable, or indeed practical, to attempt to cater for the peak parking demand during the year, as to do so would probably require substantial car park provision that would be under utilised for the remainder of the year.

A nationally recognised value that represents the higher level of demand is the 85%ile figure. This is the value that the parking demand is at or below for 85% of the year. Correspondingly, it indicates the level of demand that is exceeded for only 15% of the time. Therefore a parking supply that is set to cater for the 85%ile demand will cater for the majority of the parking demand throughout the year

	2004 daily parking demand as percentage of data obtained on survey days:	
	Average demand	85%ile demand
Carmarthen	89%	110%
Llanelli	115%	148%
Ammanford	93%	121%

Table 1: Survey Data comparison

The above table indicates that the ticket sales on the date of the survey are similar with the average annual daily ticket sales that can be expected in Carmarthen and Ammanford, but that the average ticket sales in Llanelli are slightly higher than that those recorded on the date of the survey.

Similarly the 85%ile demand, which is an indication of the higher level of demand throughout the year, is shown to be higher than the information available for the three towns on the date of the surveys.

2.3 Future Demand

It is vitally important that the future demand for people wishing to access the towns of Carmarthenshire is met to ensure that their continued economic prosperity is not compromised. There are a number of factors that will affect the future demand for parking within the county as discussed below. Generally these can be considered to include:

- **Traffic Growth** as a consequence of predicted growth in car ownership.
- **Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** produced by the County Council. Sets out the future land use strategy for the county and provides the basis on which development control decisions are made.
- **Major Developments**, particularly within town centres can have a significant effect on travel demands, especially in relation to car parking.
- **Decriminalised Parking** introduced in Carmarthenshire in March 2004 has resulted in a transfer of prohibited on-street parking to off-street car parks.
- **Residents Parking**, implemented in Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford in December 2004 has displaced a significant number of non-resident vehicles.
- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** requires that public car parks provide an appropriate number of disabled bays and as such general pay and display spaces will be lost.

The impact of the all the factors cannot be easily forecast but the Department of Transport predicts a general increase in car journeys within Carmarthenshire of around **20%** between 2004 and 2019. An increase in car journeys implies an increase in a demand to park at final destination. This figure has been used to help establish future car parking demand.

Existing peak demand (August 2004 surveys)			Estimated future peak daily demand (2019)		In 2019 estimated 85%ile peak demand will exceed capacity by (No. of Spaces)
Town	Capacity	Demand	Average	85%ile	
Carmarthen	2254	1870	1994	2464	210
Llanelli	876	711	980	1261	385
Ammanford	535	508	566	736	201

Table 2: Estimated future parking demand

It can be seen that there is the potential for significant car parking supply and demand issues within Carmarthen, Llanelli and Ammanford unless there is a change in either the parking provision within the towns, the management of the available stock, or indeed the travel choices made to access the town centres.

The estimated excess demand figures are based on the parking provision in 2004. Detailed consideration of future in-town developments will be undertaken within the context of the Parking Strategy framework, which is flexible enough to cater for changes in parking provision as a result of development proposals.

2.4 Internal Consultation

An internal consultation was undertaken within the County Council planning, economic development and transport teams in order to establish a common set of priorities in relation to parking.

Each team was requested to rank a list of 24 possible priority options, with points being given for the priority placed on each. The subsequent list of identified key priority issues was utilised to formulate the draft parking strategy, used in the external consultation and workshop process.

Rank	Description	Percentage of Rank 1 score
=1	Only allow short stay parking in town centre public car parks	100%
=1	Provide Park & Ride facilities for long stay parking on a permanent basis	100%
3	Provide safe and convenient pedestrian access to/from and within public car parks	79%
=4	Improve public transport integration	57%
=4	Improve signing to public car parks	57%
=6	Improve facilities and environment of public car parks	50%
=6	Provide shop mobility at town centre car parks	50%
=8	Encourage use of public transport through car park pricing and parking provision	43%
=8	Enforce maximum car parking standards on all new developments	43%
=10	Provide coach parks	38%
=10	CCC to manage all parking in town centres – including new private developments	38%
=10	Provide better transport interchanges – car/bus/rail	38%

Table 3: Internal Key Priority Summary

2.5 External Consultation

2.5.1 General Consultation

Consultation on the draft strategy was undertaken in May 2005 with a number of external bodies, including all town and community councils, the Police, Ambulance and Fire Services, freight transport organisations, bus operators, surrounding local authorities and other transportation groups.

A Consultation Report was issued together with a questionnaire. Consultees were requested to prioritise the draft strategy proposals as well as confirm agreement or otherwise with each of the strategy proposals. This process resulted in the priorities shown in Figure 3.

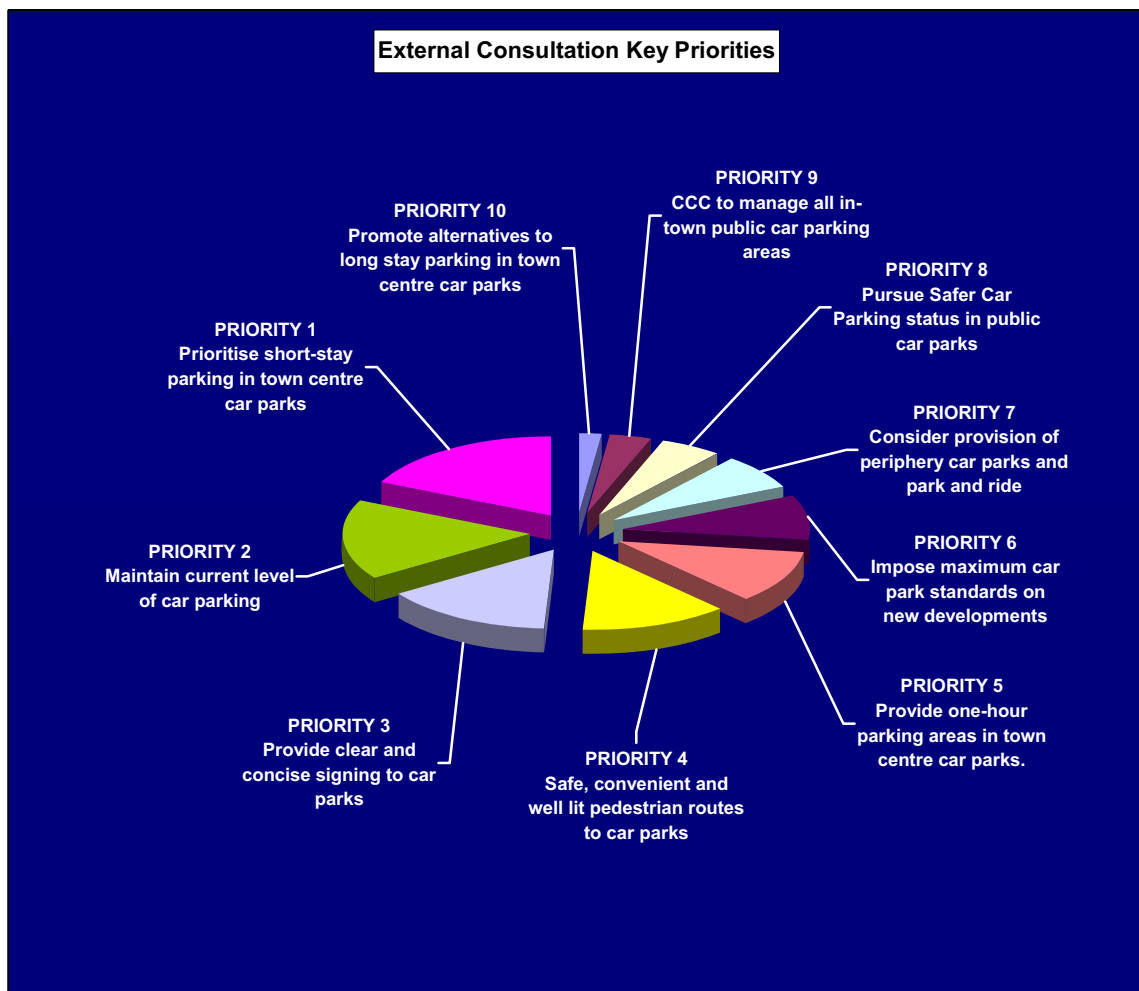


Figure 3: External Key Priority Summary

2.5.2 Key Stakeholder Consultation

Additionally a workshop was undertaken to which key stakeholders selected from the broader range of consultees were invited to discuss the draft strategy proposals and add further proposals, where necessary. Within the workshop an agreed set of key priorities were also established and these are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Workshop Key Priorities

Rank	Description			
1	Improve transport integration to encourage more use of public transport (workshop proposal)	Short-stay parking to be prioritised in town centre car parks		
2	Investigate potential of periphery car parks and park-and-ride	Provide one-hour parking areas in town centre car parks	Provide town specific parking information - variable message signs, leaflets and website (workshop proposal)	
3	Cycle and motorcycle parking facilities to be provided	Alternatives to long-stay parking in town centre car parks to be encouraged	Signing to car parks to be clear, concise and identify number of spaces etc	
4	Provide visitor coach parking at larger towns in the county	Public car parks to comply with Disability Discrimination Act	Safe, convenient and well lit pedestrian routes to public car parks	Encourage in-town developments to set parking charges as per CCC policy
5	Consider combined parking and travel tickets at transport interchanges	Consider provision of car parking areas on main bus routes	Shopmobility schemes to be provided where practical	

The key priorities identified within the external consultation and workshop process have formed the basis of the Parking Strategy.

3 Integrated Parking Strategy

3.1 Aims of the Strategy

The objective of the parking strategy is to set out a policy for parking within Carmarthenshire that promotes the provision and management of car parking within the county in a consistent, sustainable and integrated manner. The strategy will provide a framework within which future parking decisions can be made in the context of the overall transportation and land use policies of the Carmarthenshire County Council.

The principal aims of the strategy can be summarised as follows:

- To be consistent with national and regional policies and objectives relating to parking;
- To contribute to aims of the other strategies of the County Council, both transportation and non-transportation related, including the Corporate Strategy, Community Strategy and Integrated Transport Strategy;
- To be consistent with the Strategic Transport Policy of Carmarthenshire's Unitary Development Plan;
- To promote methods of car park management and provision that maximise the potential use of the existing parking stock of the County Council;
- To promote more sustainable travel choices through parking provision and pricing, whilst still maintaining the economic vitality and viability of the different areas of the county;
- To ensure that parking facilities within the county are safe, convenient and accessible for all users and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

3.2 Parking Strategy Proposals

Taking account of the policy framework, data collection results, predicted future demand and consultation to date, the following strategy is proposed. The proposals have been prioritised to enable available funding and resources to be targeted effectively.

Future action will take place within the context of the business plan for parking.

PRIORITY 1: Prioritise short-stay parking in town centre car parks



Greater utilisation of town centre car parks by short-stay parkers will result in a more efficient use of the available car parking space, and maximises the potential number of vehicles that can be accommodated within the available space during the parking day.

Encouraging long-stay parking outside of the town centre area through space allocation and/or pricing policies greatly contributes to the parking choices motorists will make.

Proposal:

- Prioritise short-stay parking in town-centre area car parks through pricing and/or allocation of short-stay parking spaces;
- Identify locations where designated 1 hour parking areas would be appropriate within town centre car parks and set pricing policy to differentiate between length of stay within short-stay parking area;
- Provide long-stay car parking areas at the periphery of the town centres that encourage long-stay parking through availability and relative cost.

PRIORITY 2: Car Park Safety



Once motorists leave their parked car they become pedestrians, who can be vulnerable within a car park environment, through their interaction with other motor vehicles and other pedestrians.

Improvements to the pedestrian routes and the general security measures can significantly increase the safety of pedestrians within the car park area.

Proposal:

- Carry out site appraisals to identify areas in public car parks where pedestrians are vulnerable and investigate appropriate safety improvements, such as CCTV, separate walkways, lighting etc.;
- Pursue Safer Car Parking status in public car parks where practical and advertise car parks where award has been achieved;
- Provide safe and secure pedestrian routes to town centre and periphery car parks.

PRIORITY 3: Car Park Information



Appropriate signing to and from the public car parking areas within the county can help manage the available parking stock more effectively.

This can also help reduce traffic congestion within town-centres as motorists are effectively directed towards their required parking destination, and directed to alternative parking locations when necessary.

Proposal:

- Consistent and clear signing to be provided to all public car parks;
- Signing to include name of car park, number of spaces available and duration of stay available where practical;
- Consideration to be given to the use of interactive signing to identify spaces available and direct motorists to an alternative;
- Provide town specific parking information to the public via leaflets and the County Council web site.

PRIORITY 4: Facilities for Mobility Impaired



The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 aims to achieve equality between the disabled and able bodied and introduces a basic duty on service providers to offer an equal service to all its customers.

The County Council is committed to providing sufficient and appropriate parking facilities for all users within public car parks.

Proposal:

- Provide appropriate level of disabled parking provision within public car parks in accordance with current parking guidelines;
- Provide on-street disabled parking bays at appropriate town centre locations, where practical;
- Promote the provision of shop mobility schemes within town centres throughout the county.
- Provide safe and convenient disabled access to and from public car parks.

PRIORITY 5: Park-and-Ride



Provision of a Park & Ride facility can prove an effective means of encouraging motorists to move away from their car into a more sustainable form of transport.

Appropriately located sites with well operated and attractive services can prove effective in reducing the number of vehicles travelling, and ultimately parking, within a town centre, thereby reducing traffic congestion and parking demand within the town.

It can also be considered that a successful Park & Ride can significantly add to the parking stock of a town, with the potential to cater for daily and seasonal peaks in demand, whilst still maintaining a satisfactory level of access to and from the town centres. It is considered that Park & Ride is only a viable option for the towns of Carmarthen and Llanelli.

Proposal:

- Identify main routes into Carmarthen and Llanelli and establish appropriate locations for Park & Ride sites where traffic flows and predicted long-stay demand justify provision;
- Identify sources of funding to assist in establishment of service;
- Set up management team to coordinate Park & Ride provision and charging with public car park provision;
- Consider co-ordination of existing bus services with periphery parking areas to provide a 'Park & Bus' service.

PRIORITY 6: Public Transport Integration



Integration between modes of transport is vital to encourage more use of sustainable transport.

Consideration of the interchange facilities between car and the bus and rail services, particularly at the larger rural stations, could encourage commuting to the larger towns, such as Carmarthen and Llanelli, by public transport.

Proposal:

- In conjunction with Network Rail, investigate potential of providing safe and convenient car parking areas at rural railway stations to encourage commuting into the larger towns of the County;
- Liaise with neighbouring local authorities to promote similar parking arrangements at transport interchanges and encourage use of public transport for inter-county travel, particularly for work purposes;
- In conjunction with bus operators, investigate potential for providing safe and convenient car parking areas adjacent to main bus routes and stopping points on the periphery of town areas to encourage transfer onto the bus service to access the town centres;
- Consider provision of a combined parking and travel ticket at the transport interchange locations to promote their use.

PRIORITY 7: Parking Standards on New Developments



The application of maximum standards is in accordance with national and regional guidelines to encourage lower levels of parking provision and greater use of more sustainable modes of transport.

It is also an objective in the authority's draft UDP, currently under consideration at public inquiry.

It is appropriate to consider the levels of parking proposed by new developments in conjunction with the parking provision strategy of the Council as a whole, thereby allowing private development and public car parking to jointly cater for the level of provision required.

Proposal:

- Impose maximum standards on new non-residential development in accordance with Council approved parking standards;
- Promote reductions on maximum standards, and contributions towards improvements to sustainable transport facilities at new developments located in areas with good public transport services;
- Only consider increases to maximum standards where non-residential in-town development parking facilities will be available to the public and can be considered to contribute to the parking requirements of the town as a whole;
- At planning stage encourage in-town developments to charge for parking provision in line with charging regime set by County Council to ensure consistent and managed provision of parking space with town centre.
- Consider charging regime for all in-town parking areas in conjunction with participating development management, chambers of commerce and other bodies at an appropriate parking forum.

PRIORITY 8: Coach and Other Parking



The provision of coach parks promotes the use of sustainable transport and can attract additional organised visitor trips to a town, as facilities are available for the coach provider to stop and rest over before preparing for the return journey.

The facility can also be used by other forms of transport, when not required by coaches.

Proposal:

- Review demand for, and provide visitor coach parking, where appropriate, at locations adjacent to the larger towns of the county;
- Consider and review level of charge to be applied to coach parking areas on a demand basis, such that the attraction of the facility is not compromised;
- Consider utilisation of coach parking areas during out-of-hours-times (i.e. 6pm to 8pm) by other forms of transport, such as lorries and caravans, to provide a safe and convenient stop over facility.

PRIORITY 9: Cycle and Motorcycle Facilities in Public Car Parks



The provision of designated cycle and motorbike parking facilities within car parks will not only encourage the use of forms of private transport less onerous than the car on parking stock but will also portray the image that these forms of transport are valued as highly as the private motorcar.

Proposal:

- Provide safe and secure cycle parking facilities within appropriate town centre car parks and at convenient locations within the larger towns of the county following discussions with cycling groups and organisations and the in accordance with the Council's cycling strategy;
- Provide safe and secure motorcycle parking within town centre car parks and at locations, or on routes, of particular attraction to motorcyclists.

4 Conclusions

The Parking Strategy has been developed through a process of research, consultation and careful deliberation. The result is a consistent framework that will guide decisions on parking provision, development and management over the next 15 years.

The priorities for action identified in the strategy will be delivered through a project plan developed as part of the Council's business planning process, but will be dependant on securing the necessary resources.

This document is available on: www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk

If you would like to receive this document in another format, or wish to offer any comments or suggestions, please contact:

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