

Communities, Transport and Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel 4 December 2017 – Parking

Notes by Patrick Rotheram, Federation of Bath Residents' Associations

1. Let me start with a few general points on parking.
2. Parking creates traffic. This isn't rocket science. Cars are not beamed down to parking spaces, they are driven there. That is traffic. The more parking in the city, and the more short-term parking, the more traffic. The parking strategy recognises the need to use parking control to reduce traffic, and we applaud that.
3. The strategy paper speaks of reducing the *growth* of traffic in Bath and ensuring *no increase* in air pollution. In fact, air pollution is already well over the legal limit across the city and must be reduced. Traffic volumes must be reduced to achieve this.
4. Reducing traffic and pollution will contribute to the vitality and viability of Bath, not detract from it. These objectives are not in conflict, as the many historic cities in Europe that have removed traffic from their centres have shown.
5. We warmly welcome the Hierarchy of Kerb Space, which places resident parking above short-stay and long-stay parking. This should be applied in the central zone, where residents have almost no priority despite this being the most densely residential part of the city. Reducing on-street visitor parking would dramatically reduce the traffic caused by people driving round and round looking for a space. Instead they would go straight to an off-street car park, or better still, use the park-and-ride.
6. Let me now turn to the specific issue of parking in Lower Lansdown, which is the area in the Central CPZ immediately north of the city centre as it is defined in the parking strategy (and the Core Strategy). The city centre is marked in red on the map in your pack. Lower Lansdown is hatched in yellow.
7. Lower Lansdown is almost entirely residential, but unlike all the other residential parking zones, there is very little resident-only parking and residents don't have access to resident visitor tickets. We have been trying to get this injustice rectified for more than 10 years. The local residents' associations have brought the case to this Committee (or its predecessor) several times, and you gave us your support. However, our concerns have yet to be properly addressed by the Council. This makes us wonder how local democracy is meant to work.
8. Residents' parking problems were aggravated in 2011 when Parking Services began issuing visitor permits to hotels, guest houses, and B&Bs, which they did without any public consultation or even getting the approval of the Cabinet member for transport. By definition, these permits are used for long-stay parking and so belong at the bottom of the Hierarchy of Kerb Space. They should be discontinued and hotel etc visitors directed to off-street parking or P&R.
9. The introduction of this parking strategy offers the ideal opportunity to rectify the long-standing discrimination against Lower Lansdown residents, while contributing to reducing traffic congestion and pollution in the city. We hope you will support that.