

PCC Parking Review Scrutiny Panel.
PCF Evidence Submission

13th February 2017

Good afternoon, and thank you for allowing us to act as a witness to this scrutiny panel.

For those of you who are not aware of us, Portsmouth Cycle Forum is an independent campaign group attempting to improve the cycling environment and infrastructure for the residents, workers and visitors of Portsmouth.

We are interested in all aspects of cycling in Portsmouth and aim to encourage discussion among those who influence cycling in the city, and among others who may be affected by it. But our main area of focus is campaigning for the improvement of safety, convenience and practicality of cycling on and around our congested island.

With this in mind, we were challenged in 2014 by the new council leader to produce a vision for cycling in the city. Our response was 'A City To Share' an overview of how cycling has a place in a city fit for the future: a healthy, safe, sustainable, prosperous city that people want to live in, to work in and to visit. A city where we share spaces, co-operate with each other and treat one another with courtesy and respect. It was enthusiastically welcomed by councilors at its launch with the council leader calling it "a very impressive document" and she would be taking the five key points and using them as a basis to move on in the development for sustainable travel in the city. A copy of the strategy is available to download from its own website, should you wish to use and we will also supply a copy in our submitted evidence. <<http://acitytoshare.org>>

The strategy was divided up into five areas, but all focused on the way to improve congestion and dependence on the motor-car as a means of transport for the short trips around the city. There needs to be a modal shift from the private motor car to active and sustainable travel in the city that will promote better travel for all, better air quality and health.

This can only be done with a joined-up, coherent strategy that promotes walking, cycling, public & private hire transport while also dis-incentivising drivers in the city to take short journeys to work, shops and leisure activities with higher car parking prices and slower routing.

Any additional parking created in residential areas cannot remove space from, nor endanger further, vulnerable road users.

Portsmouth's mainly terraced and closely built houses does not have enough on street parking space for the even the current numbers of vehicles. Decades of squeezing more parking spaces onto congested streets has not solved the problem as people and cars get bigger and need wider and longer spaces thus reducing the number available and the widths of the roads.

The current ad-hoc resident parking zones have only encouraged people to park just outside these zones or park in ever more dangerous locations. The reduction of double yellow lines at the corner of these roads means vehicles parking closer and obscuring the sightlines required to pull out safely from junctions and blocking dropped kerbs for those requiring easy, safe access across roads.

The size of the houses and the number of residents in such locations hints at the requirement for one car per household in terms of physical parking space in these roads. They also have a 20mph speed limit now, and are the very same roads that the

forthcoming Quiet Route Cycleways scheme are utilizing to promote cycling to those less confident cyclists to either introduce or encourage back to using two wheels as a means of efficient transport.

Echelon parking as found towards the Clarence Pier end of the seafront is also inherently unsafe as vehicles that drive into the space to park find themselves needing to reverse out into the carriageway to exit the space. Inevitably they cannot see enough of the road around other parked vehicles to safely manoeuvre themselves out into the flow of traffic.

This is not the case in Baffins Road, which is one way southbound, and the angle of the echelon requires the vehicle to reverse into the space and therefore has better sightlines when leaving. However here, the length of some vehicles, especially larger vans, extend out into the marked cycle lane requiring cyclists to move into the main lane of traffic potentially putting them in conflict with faster moving traffic.

<< <https://goo.gl/maps/KLMM4juR6JM2> >>

There is also the issue of 'dooring', where those leaving a parked vehicle do not check for other road users in close proximity. This is normally cyclists who are either obstructed by larger vehicles in front of them or are tucked close to parked vehicles to allow other traffic to pass. The most recent high profile consequence of such action was when the current Secretary of State for Transport knocked a cyclist off their bike when leaving his ministerial car.

<< <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/dec/15/chris-grayling-sent-cyclist-flying-with-his-car-door-video-shows> >>

The placement of cycle lanes next to parked vehicles increases this issue as there is an expectation from drivers that cyclists should be in the cycle lane if one is marked, despite this not

actually being the case in the Highway Code. An example of this can be found on the Albert Road opposite the new Sainsburys close to the Francis Avenue junction.

<< <https://goo.gl/maps/5gBjZecNK5w> >>

or to a more dangerous extent along Stamshaw road, a faster main arterial route into the city centre where the carriageway is narrowed at points with parked vehicles on both side of the road, thereby reducing the space for traffic to move past more vulnerable cyclists.

<< <https://goo.gl/maps/C6x3QIPJBw62> >>

With regards to cycle lanes specifically, due to the lack of parking or the proliferation of cars used for short quick journeys, these can also be found to have cars parked in them, again endangering the cyclist by forcing them into the main line of traffic. This is most frequently seen on Elm Grove next to the Grove Road crossroads.

To help the modal shift to other forms of transport, there also needs to be encouragement to take it up. Those small terraced houses are often difficult to store a bicycle inside, or to access the rear garden via poorly lit and maintained alleyways. There are now a range of secure on-street parking bays that can be installed strategically in streets so residents do not have to battle with their bike. These are designed to fit into one car parking space and can store 6 bicycles securely.

<< <http://www.cyclehoop.rentals> >>

The additional benefit of more short stay, cycle parking around the city would also encourage cycle use. But it needs to be secure, for as well as being at the top of the list for cycle casualties in the country, bike thefts are also a major problem in Portsmouth, further discouraging the use of a bike for the most basic of journeys.

With regards to visitors to the city, the Park and ride, while welcome, is not big enough to make enough of a difference to the traffic coming into the city. At the same time its 663 places were being built, Oxford was extending one of its **five** park and ride sites by the around the same number.

The bus service is also limited to which parts of the city it serves. The recent reduction of the Mile End Road bus lane to allow local traffic to access it earlier to try and reduce congestion, goes to show that priority for a rapid transport option from the edge of the city has been eroded. City centre car park prices are not set high enough to discourage their use and encourage other transport options.

But could there also be a similar service on the Eastern side of the city at weekends that could utilize the empty parking spaces close to Hilsea Station next to Broad Oak Business Park? A cursory look at the current South West trains timetable shows trains stopping at Hilsea every ten to fifteen minutes in each direction on a Saturday. This would be especially useful on Pompey match days to reduce the number of vehicles travelling down into the heart of the city and trying to park around already congested residential streets.

But how do we afford such additional facilities? One possibility would be to introduce A Workplace Parking Levy as they have in Nottingham.

<< <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/transport-parking-and-streets/parking-and-permits/workplace-parking-levy/> >>

There they have introduced the levy to tackle the problems associated with traffic congestion, by both providing funding for major transport infrastructure initiatives and by acting as an

incentive for employers to manage their workplace parking provision.

Those employers that provide 11 or more liable workplace parking places pay a charge for each of those places. The employers, rather than employees, are responsible for paying any WPL charge, although employers can choose to reclaim part or all of the cost of the WPL from their employees.

The money raised from the WPL goes towards the extensions to their existing tram system, the redevelopment of Nottingham Rail Station and also supports the popular Link bus network.

In 2017/18 the charge will be £387 per place per year and the scheme raised £9.3 million in 2015/16.

<< <http://www.nottinghampost.com/workplace-parking-levy-clocks-up-9-3-million-for-nottingham-city-council/story-29708392-detail/story.html> >>

There are no easy answers to any of this. Parking isn't the biggest problem affecting transport; rather, it is the worst symptom of Portsmouth's underlying problem with traffic. There are simply too many cars in the city. Whether they are moving on the roads or parked outside homes and businesses, Portsmouth has reached capacity and there is no more physical space.

The only way to reduce the number of vehicles is to reduce the dependency on car journeys.

There are other cities, much bigger than Portsmouth – New York, Vancouver and Bogota in Colombia - that are successfully adapting to life away from a reliance on motor vehicles to improve congestion, pollution and the health of its citizens. We would hope that as well as asking for the opinion of the current road users in Portsmouth itself, that the panel would also be

referring to academic studies for evidence of how other cities have changed their approach to traffic issues over time.

A shift in transport away from the dominance of the road infrastructure by the private motor vehicle to cycling and walking and sustainable transport will deliver benefits to the whole city, not just to those who cycle. It would truly be 'A City to Share'

Gustavo Petro, former Mayor of Bogotá, Columbia

–“A developed country is not a place where the poor have cars. It's where the rich use public transportation.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPf4s2oFnp0>

Vancouver Modal shift

<http://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2016/12/9/13897078/walkable-vancouver-video>

New York 'Vision Zero'

<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/visionzero/the-plan/the-plan.page>