

Car Parking Policy Review

Purpose

1. This document summarises the objectives of the review, the findings from the engagement and the proposed changes to the University of Cambridge's Car Parking Policy. The new policy is planned to be in operation from the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year at the earliest. An additional document is available setting out the Draft Car Parking Policy [here](#).

Who has developed this policy

2. This policy has been developed by the [Transport Working Group](#) (TWG) which oversees the implementation of the University's Transport Strategy 2019-2024, chaired by Professor Ian Leslie. The policy has been developed through close working with the HR Committee. The car parks and the permit application process for most departments is managed by the Estates Division.

Who this policy is for

3. The policy will apply to all University of Cambridge managed car parks for both weekdays and weekends. It covers:
 - Parking arrangements for staff (including staff employed through contracts, staff employed through the Temporary Employment service and post docs employed by the University), in line with the University's [Workforce Policy](#). This will apply to all University staff based on the Cambridge Biomedical Campus parking within car parks that are owned by third parties.
 - Parking arrangements for Blue Badge holding students who can apply for a permit to park in University car parks.
 - Parking arrangements for departmental, contractor and visitor parking.
 - Electric vehicle charging provision for staff on the University's estate.
4. This policy will cover all University of Cambridge car parks. A webpage providing information on these car parks, data on their capacity and average utilisation will be made available when consultation on the policy is launched.
5. This policy will not apply to employees solely engaged by the Colleges, who should refer to their College car parking policy.

How you can take part in the consultation

6. Changes to the parking policy may have an impact on a large number of our staff, so we encourage all staff to read this guidance document, the Draft Car Parking Policy and respond to the consultation survey which can be accessed [here](#). A downloadable pdf version is [here](#). Locations where you obtain paper copies are [here](#). Please email your form to travel@admin.cam.ac.uk or send in the University's postal service to Greenwich House FAO of the Sustainability team.

7. The survey will be open from 9 May to 9 June 2023. A series of short webinars have been prepared, find out more online [here](#). If you have any questions, please email travel@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Why this review is being carried out

8. The University does not currently have a formal car parking policy. Information on how to apply for permits can be found online [here](#). The 2022 staff travel survey found that only 35% of respondents were satisfied with the way parking is managed. The Transport Strategy made a commitment to improve this (commitment CP3) and the Transport Working Group, in discussion with the HR Committee, agreed that the car parking policy should be updated to:
 - i. improve levels of staff satisfaction with how parking is managed.
 - ii. increase access to parking for staff who need it to conduct their work efficiently or that don't have other affordable travel options.
 - iii. enable more staff (not just permit holders) with a need to park to find a space when one is required, across all car parks.
 - iv. ensure permits are allocated to staff consistently and fairly across the University, to those with the greatest need.
 - v. better utilise the spaces provided, particularly considering more varied working patterns.
 - vi. develop a permit system which reduces the level of staff administration required and utilises future technologies.
9. We know that travelling to work at the University can be a source of stress and frustration. For many of our staff, travelling by car is currently the cheapest, quickest or most convenient option and therefore applying for a car parking permit at a University car park is an important priority.
10. Data from the staff travel survey shows that for some staff, particularly those coming from outside of Cambridge, that bus and other sustainable travel options are currently limited. Our local and regional partners are working to improve public transport and walking and cycling routes into and around Cambridge with proposals currently under consultation from the Greater Cambridge Partnership to create a Sustainable Travel Zone funded by a road user charge. The initial findings from the consultation are due to be published soon. The introduction of a car parking policy at the University will ensure that access to parking for staff is fair and consistent and may support any transitional changes the University might need to adopt in response to regional transport initiatives such as those included in the Greater Cambridge Partnership's recent Making Connections consultation.

What staff told us

11. In Michaelmas term 2022/23, we invited staff to give us feedback on the current policy through the annual travel survey and a series of focus groups. We also held some sessions with the Trade Unions, the Disabled Staff Network and the Parent and Carers (SPACE) network. We also engaged with Departmental Administrators through a separate survey and focus groups.
12. Participants told us that there were some good points to the current policy, including that parking permits are not charged for, and that in some locations there is good availability of car

parking spaces and permits. They also told us that particularly for staff who live outside of Cambridge in areas where there is limited public transport, a lot of staff rely on their parking permits to get to work.

13. Participants raised it is not fair that some University staff are required to pay for their parking at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus whereas parking in all other car parks is free.
14. Participants also raised some concerns around the administration of the policy:
 - The current system where permits are given to departments to allocate was perceived to be unfair. There is also no formal appeal process in place for staff who do not get a permit.
 - There is a perceived inconsistency across the University in how the policy is applied with some departments allowing non-permit holders to park occasionally in visitor spaces or using departmental permits, whereas others do not. Temporary workers employed via TES or contractors cannot apply for parking permits.
 - There is a perceived unfairness in how permits are allocated, with permits not always given to staff with the greatest need.
 - There is an inflexibility in the current policy with most permits being given full time and so not considering part-time employment and hybrid working arrangements.
 - There is unfairness that staff applying throughout the year might not get a permit until the next allocation window every June to October and new starters often cannot get the permit until after they have started.
15. Participants also raised some concerns around the current car parking criteria:
 - There is unfairness as the application is only scored on eligibility against one criterion rather than assessing the need across different criteria.
 - Consideration is not given to staff who are required to work from their workplace or who need access to their car to carry out their job.
 - Evidence is not required to verify the application – for example it is unclear currently how car sharing permits are monitored.
 - The restriction for staff in applying if they live within 2-miles of their workplace is perceived as not being fair as some staff within it may have mobility difficulties requiring them to drive.
16. Participants also raised some concerns around day-to-day operation of car parking:
 - Some staff members try to arrive at work early to ensure that they can secure a parking spot with those who are unable to arrive early worrying that they will not be able to access a parking space. This adversely affects a significant number of our staff, for example staff doing shift work or facilitating drop offs before work.
 - Some car parks are over capacity, whereas others frequently have spaces available.
 - Blue Badge holding staff have some issues parking on the University estate, particularly where Blue Badge parking spaces are not close to building entrances.
 - Cars without permits are often parked in car parks that do not have a barrier.
17. An Equalities Impact Assessment on the current policy has been carried out. It found that the current policy has inconsistencies, which will have a negative impact on some staff resulting in

them not being given a permit even though there is a need. Some of these staff members may have protected characteristics, relating to age, disability and gender (as women tend to have more responsibility for caring). This is in the process of being approved by the Equalities Panel and will be shared once approved.

How do we want to improve the policy

18. We have listened to staff feedback and have developed a draft policy that would apply from the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year if there is support from staff. We have spoken to other universities and the wider parking industry to gain insight into how our car parking policy could be improved. We have also carried out an options appraisal to see which options will best deliver the objectives. The draft policy provides information on the types of permits which will be available and how staff will apply. The ways we would like to change the policy are set out below.

Proposed changes to access to permits and types

Allow more staff to have permits for fewer days of the week

19. Many of our participants said that the policy needs to be more flexible as many staff no longer come into work in their workplace five days per week. Doing this would allow more permits to be made available to staff. This would be done by asking staff as part of the annual application to specify the number of days per week they would like a permit for. Permits would still be available for staff for five days per week for staff that need them.

Offer more permits for car parks with spare capacity

20. Participants felt that more permits should be offered in car parks where we know there are generally available spaces. We would do this by increasing the number of permits available for these car parks and allow staff to request permits in different car parks.

Allow non-permit holding staff to book spaces occasionally

21. Staff who do not have or require permits provided feedback that they would like to have the option to park occasionally, such as for attendance at an appointment which may not be accessible by public transport. We would do this by allocating 10% of our spaces for occasional parking bays in car parks which have available capacity on some or all of the days. Booking of the occasional bays would be managed through the booking system to ensure each member of staff has access to an equal number of spaces per year. Doing this would reduce the number of permits available for permit-holding staff by 10%, however the recommendations above would ensure that we can offer greater flexibility for those with a short-term need.

Extend to TES staff and contractors

22. In response to feedback from participants, we would like to allow all staff, including temporary staff employed via TES (the Temporary Employment Service) and staff contracted to work at the University to be entitled to apply for parking permits. As there is a high rate of turnover in temporary roles, these permits would be allocated throughout the year as requested. Due to the administration of this, only temporary staff with a duration of three months or more will be able

to apply for parking. Hiring Managers will be encouraged to apply for this before the temporary staff member joins and also terminate this at the end of contract so permits are used efficiently.

Restrict staff from University parking if they have a College parking space within 2 miles

23. In response to feedback from participants, we would like to restrict permits for staff that have a permanent College parking permit, if their University department is within two miles of their College. Blue Badge holding staff with College parking will continue to be offered permits.

Proposed changes to the administration of the policy

Central allocation of permits

24. Participants provided feedback that they think permits should be allocated consistently across the University. We are proposing to make some changes to the administration of the policy to ensure this, by no longer allocating permits to departments based on headcount or historical arrangements. Therefore, the chance of getting a permit would be the same for every member of staff and not dependent upon which department they work for.
25. We are proposing that the responsibility for permit allocation will be a central function carried out using a point-based system using parking software. A Car Parking Administration Team would be established to oversee the administration of the policy, comprised of staff from the Estates Division Facilities Management team and the Sustainability team. Permit allocation would therefore no longer be decided at a departmental level. This would ensure permits are allocated consistently across the University.
26. We are also proposing that a Car Parking Panel would be responsible for allocation of permits for the exceptional circumstances criterion, as well as managing appeals. This is required as the parking software will be unable to allocate permits to staff with exceptional circumstances. The Panel will be made up of members of the Transport Working Group and representatives from academics, researchers and professional services staff.

Require staff to provide evidence to confirm eligibility

27. We are proposing to ask staff to verify their eligibility – for example through submission of evidence, such as their child’s birth certificate to demonstrate caring responsibilities. Most staff members felt this was reasonable. GDPR obligations would ensure this data is secure. Some staff members preferred to verify their application by uploading evidence onto a secure centrally managed website, whereas others wanted to provide this information to their Departmental Administrator. We propose to allow applicants to choose from either of these options to verify their application.

Set up a central appeals process

28. Participants requested that an appeals process is set up for staff who are not allocated a permit to challenge the decision. This would be managed by the Car Parking Panel who would meet regularly to assess appeals. Appeals would only be permitted for staff who do not get offered a permit, not for staff who did not get their first-choice car park as this would create additional administration. Appeals would need to be provided within 4 weeks of the staff member being informed that they don’t have a permit.

Proposed changes to the eligibility criteria

Changes to the eligibility criteria for staff with long term and temporary health conditions

29. We have spoken to the Occupational Health team about how we confirm eligibility for staff with medical conditions. They have advised that staff with long term medical conditions should be able to apply for a Blue Badge to confirm their eligibility. We are therefore proposing that staff with long term medical conditions are asked to confirm eligibility by submission of the Blue Badge and would therefore be automatically entitled to a permit. We are aware that not all staff with long term medical conditions needing them to park at their workplace may have a Blue Badge, due to local differences in eligibility for Blue Badges and also the time required to receive a Blue Badge. Therefore, we are proposing that those without can apply through the exceptional circumstances category and will be assessed by the Car Parking Panel based on the blue badge criteria (excluding any pre-qualifying time criterion) used by all local authorities surrounding Cambridge. Evidence will be requested to verify this.
30. Participants raised that there can be temporary needs for parking permits if staff have short term medical conditions or late in pregnancy. This is currently managed at a departmental level. We are proposing that Departmental Administrators would verify eligibility for this using the parking software.

Removal of the eligibility criterion requiring a permit for travel at work purposes

31. Participants provided feedback that staff needing their car for journeys at work should not be given a permit to park every day as for most staff they only need their cars occasionally. Instead, we would like to allow these staff to book car parking in our car parks only on the occasions they need it. For these staff, alternatives such as the Universal bus, Voi for business and pool bikes will be promoted for travel between sites.
32. Staff needing to use their car at work every day as part of their role will continue to be allocated an all sites permit.

Creation of a new eligibility criterion for staff needing to be at their workplace to complete their role

33. Participants raised that staff who need to be at work to do their job everyday should be prioritised, such as cleaners, technicians and catering staff. Verification from the department would be required to confirm that the staff member needs to be at their workplace every day.

Creation of a new eligibility criterion for staff with lower earnings

34. Participants raised that staff with lower earnings should be more likely to get a permit. We are proposing this could be one of the new eligibility criteria. A threshold for this will be looked at in the future if this principle is supported. While a car journey might appear to be the lowest cost option, we encourage staff to factor in the full costs of car ownership and usage. We will be providing further guidance on this.

Removal of the unsocial hours eligibility criterion

35. Participants raised that staff members working unsocial hours may still have suitable public transport to get to work and therefore unsocial hours should not be a separate criterion. We

propose to remove the unsocial hours category and ask staff to apply under the public transport criterion.

Public transport accessibility criterion based on journey time not distance

36. In response to participant feedback, we would like to remove the two-mile exclusion zone so any staff can apply for parking. Participants raised that the current criterion for public transport access is loosely defined and open to interpretation. We would like to assess public transport accessibility by journey time using Google maps between home and the main place of work at the time the journey normally takes place, therefore giving a more accurate indicator of need. For fairness, those that travel and stay in the local area must give their local address and not their home address unless they travel from that location daily.

Changing the eligibility criterion for staff with caring responsibilities for children

37. Participants felt that staff with teenage children should not be given a permit due to caring responsibilities. To make this clearer we are proposing to limit this to staff with children in school year 8 (age 12-13) and younger who are required to make trips before, after or at work to care for a dependent for at least half of their working days. Those with caring for older children with disabilities or additional needs requiring them to make trips before, after or at work to care for a dependent for at least half of their working days related to them will be able to apply through the exceptional circumstances category.

Changing the eligibility criterion for staff with other caring responsibilities

38. Participants raised that this is loosely defined and open for interpretation. We would like to focus this so that it is clear that it applies to staff members with other caring responsibilities requiring them to make trips before, after or at work to care for a dependent for at least half of their working days.

Changes to the car sharing criterion

39. We recognise that encouraging car sharing is important to reduce the number of car journeys, and so we would like to put in place a method for staff to verify that they are car sharing. We can do this by restricting this to only staff who have found another University staff member to car share with for 50% of journeys to work or more and ask them to provide evidence of car sharing using the [Kinto Join journey sharing app](#).

Staff with exceptional circumstances

40. We recognise that changing these criteria may restrict some staff from applying for a permit during the normal application cycle. Therefore, staff will be given the opportunity to apply to the Car Parking Panel throughout the year if they have a need for a permit that arises.

Changes to criterion for staff members applying to use the West Cambridge Park and Cycle

41. Staff members working on any sites excluding West Cambridge have the option to apply for a permit for the Park and Cycle/Walk/Bus/Voi facility. Participants felt that staff members applying for this facility should be ranked by distance from the Park and Cycle facility to their workplace, with those travelling furthest using sustainable modes being given the permits first.

Proposed changes to the permit allocation

Score using a points-based system

42. Participants raised that using a points-based scoring system to allocate permits based on several criteria would be a fairer assessment of need. This would be managed through the parking software, where staff members would confirm their eligibility against all criteria, provide evidence for verification, and then would receive points. Staff with the highest number of points would then be awarded permits through the parking software for either their first or second preferred car park, without any assessment needed. The table below proposes how the allocation of points would work for the eligibility criteria.

Eligibility criteria	Points
Blue Badge holders	Automatically allocated a permit
Staff members with confirmed temporary mobility difficulties	Automatically allocated a permit
Staff needing to be at their workplace to complete their role	10 points awarded if staff member has to be on site to complete their role
Staff members needing their car at work to make journeys at work	Not offered a permit. Given access to book occasional spaces. Staff required to have a permit for emergency building checks can apply through the exceptional circumstances category.
Staff members with lower earnings	Staff members with lower earnings (threshold still to be determined) given up to 10 points
Staff members with no public transport available or public transport journey times above 45 minutes at the times the staff member normally travels to and from work	Number of points awarded based on typical drive time shown on Google journey planner. 46-55 mins – 2 points 56-65 mins – 4 points 66-75 mins – 6 points 76-85 mins – 8 points 86+ minutes – 10 points
Staff members with child(ren) up to and including year 8 of school, immediately before or after work, to/from school or childcare and cannot travel by alternative means than driving	10 points awarded if staff member has childcare responsibilities
Staff members prepared to or currently undertaking a formal car sharing arrangement with another staff member for 50% of journeys to work or more.	5 points awarded if staff member has identified another staff member to car share with through the Kinto Join app. 10 points awarded if staff member has an existing car sharing arrangement with a University staff member and can provide evidence of shared journeys using the Kinto Join app.
Exceptional circumstances	Decision to be made by the Car Parking Panel

43. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on these recommendations. This indicates that the policy change will have positive impacts by giving permits to staff that need them. Some staff members may have protected characteristics, relating to age, disability and gender (as women tend to have more responsibility for caring). This is in the process of being approved by the Equalities Panel and will be shared once approved.

Extension of the booking system

44. The booking system trial at Greenwich House and the University Library West Road car parks has been successful and will continue after September 2023. For the start of this policy, all barriered car parks will have bookable spaces open for permit holders which will be allocated out fairly in the same way as the current system. Find out more [here](#).

Charging for parking at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus

45. We are aware that some staff are still having to pay to park, and we are working closely with CUH to rectify this as soon as possible.

What happens next

46. Thank you for taking the time to read this. Please read the Draft Car Parking Policy [here](#) and then respond to the survey [here](#).

47. Feedback from the consultation will be reviewed when formulating the final policy which will then be presented to HR Committee and University Council for endorsement in Michaelmas term 2023/24.