THE IRISH CAR PARKING SECTOR

MARKET REPORT 2010

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Prepared For: The Irish Parking Association

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a market research study carried out by the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) Faculty of Business on behalf of the Irish Parking Association. The research sought to quantify the scale of the Irish parking sector in revenue and employment terms and to assess the overall economic contribution provided by the industry.

For the purposes of clarity, and to define the scope of the research project, the Irish parking sector was classified as on-street and off-street, non-workplace and non-residential, public car parking. In addition, the geographic scope of the research was restricted to the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland.

The research, which consisted of both secondary and primary methods, was carried out in the summer of 2010. A comprehensive review of secondary information sources was conducted and this was combined with direct contact and surveys of the operators and organisations involved, as well as interviews with leading experts, in the industry to compile an overall snapshot of the market.

The main outcome of the research was to find that the overall value, in terms of annual revenue generated by the sector, of the Irish parking industry is €360m p.a. This represents a significant market sector and its importance is further highlighted by the tax contribution the industry makes, which has been estimated at in excess of €100m p.a. from VAT, corporation taxes, rates and employment taxes. The number of people directly employed, i.e. excluding those involved in ancillary services such as cleaning, lighting, painting etc., within the Irish parking industry is approximately 1,500.

Based on the definition of the parking market sector, i.e. excluding staff and residential parking, it is estimated that there are in the region of 390,000 public parking spaces under management within the Irish parking market. The main market segments identified within the industry are local authority parking (both on-street and off-street); privately managed car parks, shopping centres, transport hubs, hotels and hospitals, and these account for the vast bulk of the annual revenue generated within the sector.

The Irish Parking Association is comprised of the major parking operators, equipment suppliers and other key stakeholders in the car park industry. The association seeks to develop best practice and acts as a point of contact for those interested in the parking industry. It has compiled this research report to highlight the significance of the parking sector and is making the information available as a resource to all of those who have an interest in the industry as this is the first time the market has been quantified in this way.

Further details of this research project, and about the Irish Parking Association and parking sector in general, is available at the association's website at www.parkingireland.ie.

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1. Introduction

The Irish Parking Association is comprised of the major parking operators, equipment suppliers and other key stakeholders in the car park industry. The association seeks to develop best practice and acts as a point of contact for those interested in the parking industry. It has compiled this research report to highlight the significance of the parking sector and is making the information available as a resource to all of those who have an interest in the industry.

This report presents the findings of the market research study, carried out by the DIT Faculty of Business, on behalf of the Irish Parking Association. The research sought to quantify the scale of the Irish parking sector in revenue and employment terms and to assess the overall economic contribution provided by the industry.

The research was commissioned to fill an information gap that previously existed in relation to this industry sector as no such market information had previously been gathered on the Irish parking industry.

1.1 Market Definition

For the purposes of the research, the Irish parking industry was defined as follows:

"On-Street and Off-Street, Non-Workplace and Non-Residential, Public Car Parking".

This definition is important as it confined the scope of the research to practical and manageable parameters and focussed purely on the commercial parking environment which was of particular interest to the research sponsors. By excluding workplace and residential parking from the study, this large range of free parking facilities was not considered as they do not generally generate any revenue and also would prove almost impossible to accurately identify and quantify. Therefore, the research confined itself to paid parking facilities that are generally open to the public.

In addition, the geographic scope of the research was restricted to the 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland.

1.2 Research Objectives

The scope and nature of the market research to be conducted was clearly defined at the outset and was governed by a small number of key objectives, as follows:

- What is the overall value of the Irish parking industry, i.e. what is the gross annual revenue generated by parking-related activities?
- What is the number of people directly employed in the Irish parking sector?
- What is the number of parking spaces under management by public and private operators?

2. Data Collection Method

The research was conducted using a combination of both secondary and primary data collection techniques. Firstly, a comprehensive review of the available secondary sources was carried out and this provided much of the background information used in compiling this report. Sources consulted at this stage included relevant websites, newspaper archives, trade journals, and annual reports of organisations involved in the sector. Given the lack of previous research specifically carried out on the parking industry in Ireland, there was a paucity of accurate, relevant figures relating to turnover and revenue. This latter information gap gave rise to the need for primary research data collection as part of the research exercise.

The primary research consisted of direct contact with the main organisations involved within the Irish parking sector, i.e. local authorities and private car park operators. This direct contact took the form of a direct survey of all contractors within the sector using a combination of methods, i.e. telephone contacts, email requests and personal interviews. The researcher was furnished with a letter of authorisation from the Irish Parking Association requesting respondents' co-operation with the study.

A significant portion of the market research exercise involved direct contact with the local authority sector in Ireland. There are 29 county councils (one for each county and three in Dublin, two in Tipperary), five city councils (Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick and Waterford) and five borough councils (Clonmel, Drogheda, Kilkenny, Sligo and Wexford), and seventy-five town councils in the Republic of Ireland. For the purposes of the research, specifically in relation to the town councils segment of the market, an arbitrary cut-off point of towns with populations in excess of 5,000 people was established to reduce the scope of information-gathering requirements. This cut-off point was chosen as it was felt that towns with less than 5,000 people would have negligible parking-related revenue given the lack of paid parking facilities for this size of centre. (This assumption was tested and proven by a random check of a number of such towns which established that these towns would not typically generate any parking revenue and were generally characterised as having free, non-structured parking provision). Within local authorities, the responsibility for parking activities is disparate and often difficult to identify, with specific personnel and roles responsible for this function, while many others allocate the responsibility for this function on an ad-hoc or part-time basis to personnel whose primary function is not specifically parking-related. This latter instance proved particularly challenging in the data collection exercise and often involved a requirement for numerous contact attempts to particular organisations before the required information could be obtained. In relation to private operators, this task was much simplified by the fact that this market segment is dominated by a small number of players. Similarly, for other market segments such as 'Transport Hubs', 'Shopping Centres', 'Hotels and Hospitals' and 'Equipment Suppliers', the task was simplified by the concentration and ease of identification of the main players in each of these areas.

As part of the research process, separate databases were established for each of the main market segments identified and this catered for a secondary objective of the project, which would provide an invaluable information resource to the Irish Parking Association for management of its future communication activities. Where possible, relevant personnel and contact information was collated in the databases for each organisation within each segment identified.

Finally, as part of the primary research activity involved in this project, interviews with key industry experts were carried out to corroborate and at times both elaborate on and correct aspects of information collected. The raw data collected was distributed to the key players involved for cross-checking and correction where necessary.

3. Main Findings

3.1 Brief History of the Irish Parking Market

The key driver for parking demand in any country is the level of vehicle ownership, which has an obvious direct relationship with the requirement for parking facilities. With scarcities in land availability in larger urban areas, a situation of demand exceeding supply is often experienced, thus creating an obvious demand for dedicated parking facilities, e.g. multi-storey car parks, and the requirement for parking controls, such as paid parking schemes and enforcement activities, which form the basis of the parking industry in Ireland.

Car ownership levels in Ireland have increased dramatically over recent years, particularly in the period which has become known as 'the Celtic Tiger' era. Official statistics have shown a 140% increase in the level of private car ownership in Ireland in the period 1990-2010, with annual increases of c. 5% being recorded in the last decade alone (see Table 1 below). This phenomenon has had a consequent impact on the market for car parking in Ireland and has seen a major growth in the sector in recent years.

1 No. of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles by Taxation Class (at 31st December, 2009).

Year	Private Cars	Goods Vehicles	Agricultural Tractors etc.	Motor Cycles	Others	Total
1985	709,546	93,369	68,552	26,025	17,266	**914,758**
1990	796,408	143,166	72,814	22,744	19,127	**1,054,259**
1995	990,384	141,785	77,925	23,452	28,957	**1,262,503**
2000	1,319,250	205,575	73,806	30,638	52,952	**1,682,221**
2005	1,662,157	286,548	76,307	34,300	79,368	**2,138,680**
2009	1,902,429	343,940	75,318	39,552	106,421	**2,467,660**

Source: Irish Bulletin of Vehicle and Driver Statistics 2009; Dept. of Transport

Table 3. 1: Vehicle Ownership Levels in Ireland 1985-2010

This increased level of private car ownership trend has been increasing in recent years, leading to the current level of c. 420 private cars per 1,000 population within Ireland, which is still below the EU average. Combined with projected future population growth and demographic trends in Ireland, it is reasonable to assume that this trend will continue upwards in the short to medium term, thereby further increasing the demand for parking facilities.

The Irish car parking market, as a commercial business sector, is relatively new in economic terms but its significance has grown rapidly in recent years. Prior to the mid-1970s there was no purpose-built paid parking facility within Ireland but the last

30 years has seen an explosion in the development and provision of commercial car parks in the country. The first such parking facilities were established in 1976 when the Irish Life Centre and Setanta Car Parks were developed. The former was originally designed as a staff and visitor car park but such was the level of usage of this convenient city centre facility that it was necessary for parking controls and charges to be implemented to control the demand and thus an industry sector was born. The early 1980s saw the development of new shopping centres such as the ILAC Centre, which featured a 1,000-space multi-storey car park. This facility proved to be extremely popular and was soon attracting close to 700,000 visitors p.a.

The major growth in the provision of parking facilities, particularly in large urban centres, was hugely influenced by favourable government intervention in the sector when tax incentives for the development of multi-storey car parks were included as part of the urban renewal schemes that were introduced for specific areas in 1986. In 1995, tax incentives were introduced for multi-storey car parks on a nationwide basis as part of the Finance Act (Section 344 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997), and which comprised capital allowances of 50% with respect to the construction of such facilities. The main reason for the introduction of these favourable tax incentives for the development of this type of parking facility was to reinforce the importance of urban centres. It was felt necessary to provide these incentives in the face of the increasing trend towards 'out of town' and 'edge of town' developments of shopping centres etc., with good road links and large surface parking facilities. The tax incentive scheme was introduced with the aim of regenerating urban centres through the provision of convenient off-street parking to encourage shoppers and other short-stay users and make these centres more attractive and user-friendly places to visit.

While the provision of favourable tax incentives was undoubtedly a significant factor in the development of commercial car parks throughout the country, the growth experienced in the Irish economy was also a major influence. A number of large shopping centres (e.g. The Square, Blanchardstown, Dundrum and Liffey Valley in Dublin, Mahon Point and Blackpool in Cork, etc.) were developed in the main cities, and there were also a number of large developments in regional centres, e.g. Whitewater in Newbridge, McDonagh Junction in Kilkenny, and Athlone Town Centre. A major feature of all of these developments was the provision of large-scale parking facilities which were an important element in the success of these developments.

The main result of these developments was to see a huge growth in the number of commercial, public car parks in the Irish market. From a situation of virtually no dedicated car parks, there are now in excess of 150 such facilities in the country. In addition, the on-street parking market also saw major growth in the last twenty years. Local authorities faced with an increasing volume of traffic, and consequent demand for convenient parking, had to introduce parking controls and charges and this led to the implementation of paid parking schemes, primarily utilising 'Pay & Display' parking meters to control parking demand in urban areas. Initially, such schemes were introduced in the main cities but were gradually introduced to virtually all urban areas throughout the country. Parking enforcement measures, e.g. Fixed Charge Notices (FCN's) and wheel clamping, were also introduced as a means to control the increasing parking demand in the larger urban centres.

3.2. Market Size

The main objective of the research was to seek to quantify, insofar as possible, the size of the Irish parking market. This study represents the first real attempt to assess the scale of the industry and to put a value on the output of the sector.

The main finding of the research is to establish that the annual revenue generated by the Irish parking industry is €360 million. This revenue figure is arrived at by combining the annual income derived from each of the market segments identified and detailed below. Based on the market definition provided earlier, a total of approximately 390,000 managed public parking spaces were covered by the study.

The following table gives an overall breakdown of these findings:

Market Segment	Annual Revenue (€m)	No. of Parking Spaces (000s)
Local Authorities	115	108
Car Park Operators	80	101
Transport Hubs	70	60
Shopping Centres	50	95
Hotels & Hospitals	25	25
Equipment Suppliers	15	N/A
Miscellaneous	5	N/A
TOTALS	**360**	**389**

Table 3.2: Market Size Statistics

(In addition to the actual parking management market segments identified during the course of the research, two additional significant segments were identified, i.e. the '*Equipment Supplier'* segment and *'Miscellaneous'* segments, which are separately described in Section 3.3 below, which contribute additional revenue figures forming part of the overall annual value of the industry sector).

In terms of international comparative figures, the value of the UK parking market has been estimated at some £5bn p.a. (source: British Parking Association, 2010) while the equivalent US sector has been valued at $25bn p.a. (source: International Parking Institute, 2009).

3.3 Market Segments

The results of the market research carried out led to the identification of a number of distinct segments within the Irish parking sector, i.e.:

- *Local Authorities*
- *Car Park Operators*
- *Transport Hubs*
- *Shopping Centres*
- *Hotels & Hospitals*
- *Equipment Suppliers*
- *Miscellaneous*

The following chart illustrates the share of the overall industry represented by each distinct segment identified:

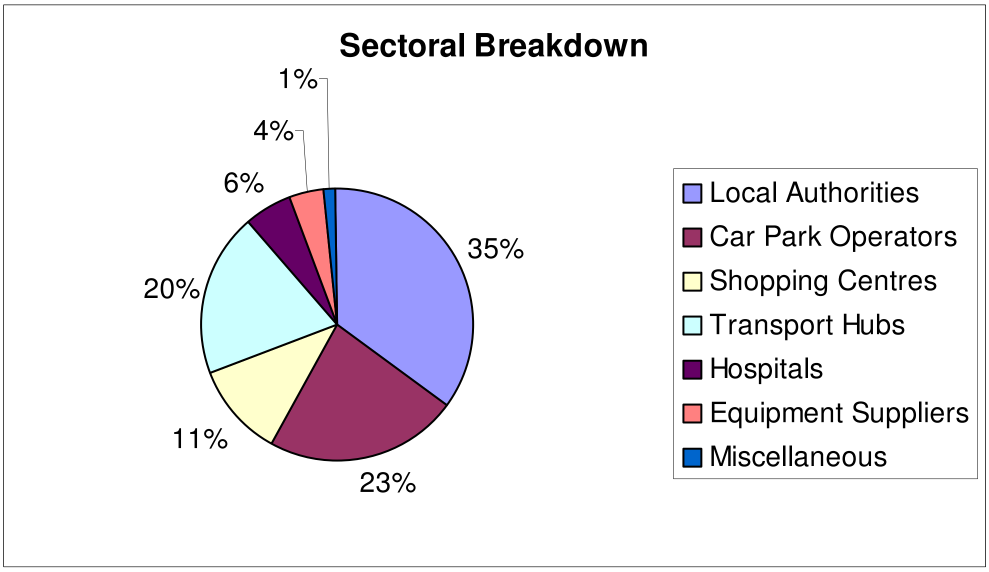

Fig. 3.1 Sectoral Breakdown by Market Value

The following section details the main findings relating to each of the individual segments within the Irish parking industry.

3.3.1 Local Authorities

As described in Section 2- Data Collection Method- above, the local authority sector in Ireland comprises some 29 county councils, 5 city councils, 5 borough councils, and 75 town councils. The research study conducted specifically excluded any town with a population figure of less than 5,000 people as it was found that these areas have negligible paid parking facilities and thus do not generate any substantial parking-related revenue.

The majority of local authority parking-related revenue is derived from town centre paid parking schemes, generally consisting of on-street Pay & Display parking charges. However, some of the larger authorities also generate additional parking revenue via the ownership and management of off-street parking facilities as well as parking enforcement activities.

Not surprisingly, the research found that the bulk of parking revenue generated in the local authority sector was derived from the main city councils and larger borough councils. It was found that Dublin City Council was by far the largest local authority in this market segment, with annual parking revenue of €36m from its on-street, off-street and parking enforcement activities. The three Dublin county councils were also found to generate in excess of €10m p.a. in parking revenue, while the other four main city councils, i.e. Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford, had combined annual parking turnover of almost €20m. Given the nature of the industry, and the concentration of parking demand in the major urban centres, it was therefore not unexpected to find that the four Dublin local authorities and the other four city councils accounted for some 57% of the overall value of this market segment.

The following chart provides a regional breakdown of the value of the local authority parking market:

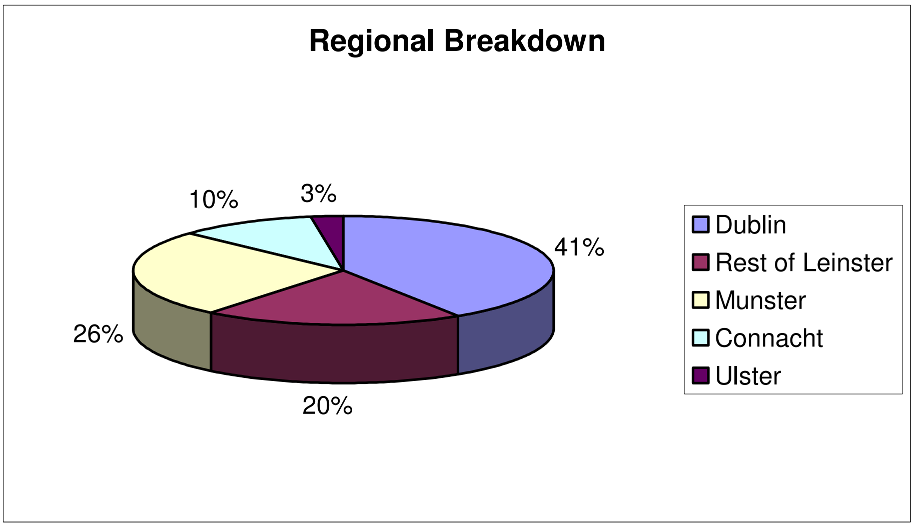

Fig. 3.2 Local Authority Regional Breakdown by Market Value

While it was anticipated that the main cities and large towns would comprise the majority of this market segment, it was found that significant revenue is being generated by some of the smaller local authority areas and that this market sub-sector is increasing in importance. It was surprising to find that the borough councils were all generating substantial revenue, in excess of €1m p.a., e.g. Clonmel ((€1.9m); Drogheda (€1.3m); Kilkenny (€3m); Sligo Borough Council (€1.7m); and Wexford Borough Council (€1.8m). In addition, some of the larger towns throughout the country are generating a large amount of parking revenue, e.g. Bray (€1.25m); Naas (€1.1m); Ennis (€1.6m) and Castlebar (€1m). These findings clearly illustrate the increasing importance of parking activities to the annual budgets of local authorities as it is seen as a valuable source of revenue for these bodies. While parking charges in various towns and cities were found to vary widely, from €0.50 per hour up to almost €3.00 per hour in some locations, the constant factor was that the implementation of parking controls and charges are being increasingly used by these organisations not just as traffic management and parking demand management tools, but also as a significant source of much-needed revenue.

3.3.2 Car Park Operators

In addition to public, local authority controlled parking facilities, the Irish parking market has seen the emergence of a small number of specialist car park management companies. This segment of the parking market is dominated by five companies, two Irish-owned and three international: APCOA, Euro Car Parks, Nationwide Controlled Parking Services (NCPS), Park-Rite, and Q-Park Ireland. Each parking operator has its own specific area of operation and specialisation within the parking management industry, e.g. some are primarily involved in enforcement activities while others focus mainly in the area of public car park management. The following section provides some basic details on the main players within this market segment.

APCOA:
APCOA Parking Ireland Ltd. is a member of one of the longest-established European parking management companies, APCOA Parking AG, which manages over 1.3m

parking spaces across 18 countries, has an annual turnover in excess of €640m and employs over 4,300 people. The Irish operation, previously a member of the Central Parking System Group, joined the APCOA group in 2007. The Irish subsidiary has an annual turnover of c. €6m, and employs approximately 100 people in its offices throughout the country (Dublin, Cork, Galway, Newbridge, Greystones). The company is responsible for the management of in excess of 50,000 on-street parking spaces and some 10,000 off-street spaces, and specialises in the provision of parking enforcement services for the three Dublin county councils and Wicklow county council, as well as managing parking facilities at diverse locations throughout Ireland, including the Luas Park & Ride facilities in Dublin, various universities, hospitals and retail parks.

Euro Car Parks:

Euro Car Parks is also an international parking management organisation operating in the UK, Irish and European markets. The organisation employs in excess of 1,000 staff and manages over 750 parking facilities in the markets which it serves. The Irish operation, headquartered in Dublin, was established in 1998 and employs over 200 people in this market. The company had annual turnover of €10.8m at year-end 2008 and specialises in the management of off-street and shopping centre parking facilities. Its main retail customers include Tesco Ireland and Dunnes Stores and it also manages a number of hospital, transport hub and airport parking facilities throughout Ireland.

Nationwide Controlled Parking Services (NCPS)

NCPS is an Irish-owned company established in 1998 and which specialises in the provision of parking enforcement services throughout the country. This is highlighted by the number of private, residential parking spaces (>50,000) the company has under management. The company has more recently expanded into the off-street public parking management sector and operates car parks on behalf of Iarnrod Eireann, University College Dublin, as well as a number of shopping centre and retail park facilities throughout Ireland. NCPS has annual parking-related turnover of €10m and its parking operations provide direct employment for some 80 staff.

Park-Rite

Established in 1975 to operate the new Irish Life Centre car park, Park-Rite is the longest established parking management company operating in the Irish market. The company has an annual turnover of c. €20m and employs some 300 people within the parking industry. Park-Rite provide both parking enforcement and car park management services to a wide range of clients and, in 2004 it took over the enforcement contract on behalf of Dublin city council where it operates under the name ‘Dublin Street Parking Services’.

Q-Park Ireland

Founded following the takeover of the Irish parking operator ‘Future Parking Services’, Q-Park Ireland is part of a large, Dutch-owned pan-European parking management company with operations in ten different countries, operating over 800,000 spaces. The Irish operation both owns and operates off-street parking facilities throughout Ireland and manages over thirty multi-storey car parks in the country. Q-Park Ireland has annual parking revenue of €35m and employs 185 staff.

3.3.3 Transport Hubs

An increasingly significant segment of the Irish parking industry is that termed 'Transport Hubs', essentially comprising car parking at the country's airports, ferry ports, rail stations and park & ride facilities. As the country's main international airport, it is not surprising to find that Dublin Airport is by far the most significant parking facility in this category. A total of in excess of 21,000 parking spaces, comprising over 2,000 'short-stay' and 19,000 'long-stay', are provided at Dublin Airport by the Dublin Airport Authority. A further c. 9,000 parking spaces are provided at Cork and Shannon airports. In 2007 it was estimated that the main airport car parks generated approximately €52m, with over 75% of this figure estimated to being accounted for by the parking facilities at Dublin Airport. In 2004, a private competing parking facility, known as Quick Park, was launched at Dublin airport, providing 6,500 parking spaces. The operating company for Quick Park, Dockstop Ltd., generated a gross profit of €6.5m in 2007. The five regional airports, i.e. Knock, Farranfore, Galway, Sligo and Waterford, account for a further 1,000 public parking spaces.

A significant number of public parking spaces can also be found at a range of other 'Transport Hubs', including e.g. over 700 parking spaces at Dun Laoghaire Harbour, 300 spaces at Rossaveal, and a further 600 at Waterford port. 'Transport Hub' parking facilities have also seen an increase in parking revenue in recent years, with the scarce parking provision at many of these locations resulting in the introduction of paid parking schemes. One recent example of this has been the introduction of parking charges at Iarnrod Eireann's mainline and suburban rail stations in 2008. A total of some 10,000 public parking spaces are provided at the main rail station car parks throughout the country, with parking charges varying from €1.50 per hour at the busier main stations (Connolly and Heuston) to €2 per day at the suburban rail station car parks. In 2005, the launch of the Luas light rail system in Dublin led to the development of a further 2,000+ public parking spaces at a number of Park & Ride Car Parks across the network. With parking charges at these sites ranging from €2 per half day to €4 per 24 hour period, it is estimated that these sites generate in excess of €1m p.a. in parking-related revenue.

3.3.4 Shopping Centres

The Shopping Centre car park segment in Ireland accounts for approximately 90,000 off-street public parking spaces. These parking facilities consist of surface, multi-storey and underground parking facilities adjacent to some 120 shopping centres throughout the country. The economic boom experienced in Ireland in the period 1995-2008 led to a dramatic increase in the development of large shopping centres and ancillary parking facilities. As stated in the earlier section charting the development of the Irish parking industry, the first commercial public shopping centre car park was developed as part of the ILAC Centre development in 1981 which included the provision of a 1,000-space multi-storey car park. This was quickly followed by the development of further large shopping centres such as Blanchardstown (c. 7,000 parking spaces), The Square (2,500 spaces) and Liffey Valley Shopping Centres (3,500 spaces) in Dublin, Mahon Point (2,000 spaces) and Douglas Village (1,000 spaces) in Cork; the Crescent Shopping Centre (2,500 spaces) in Limerick etc. This sector of the market has seen further expansion in recent years, with the development of centres such as the Dundrum Shopping Centre (3,500 spaces) in Dublin, Whitewater Shopping Centre (1,700 spaces) in Newbridge, McDonagh Junction (1,100 spaces) in Kilkenny, and Athlone Town Centre (1,300 spaces) in Westmeath.

Another significant development in this market segment has been the development of large 'out-of-town' and 'edge of town' retail parks, comprising an estimated further 20,000 parking spaces in total, which generally include large elements of surface parking provision. As these facilities generally provide free parking, it was felt that these facilities should be excluded from the analysis of this segment.

Parking charges at shopping centres vary widely from location to location, with some centres providing unlimited free customer car parking (e.g. Douglas Village, Liffey Valley); limited free parking (up to 3 hours free e.g. in Pavilions Shopping Centre); special offers (3 hours for the price of 1, e.g. in Dundrum Town Centre) up to €3 per hour for shopping centre car parks in Dublin city centre. As the annual turnover figures in the accounts of shopping centres are generally provided on an aggregated basis, without specifically detailing income earned from parking-related activities, it was not possible to identify parking revenue figures for individual centres as part of this research process. Instead, and based on input from key industry experts and generally accepted parking revenue indicators, global revenue figures were estimated for this segment of the market.

3.3.5 Hotels & Hospitals

Hospital and hotel parking facilities account for a further significant segment of the Irish parking market. While these two sub-sectors have been grouped together, for the purposes of analysis, a number of different characteristics pertain to parking facilities at these locations.

Hospital parking facilities represent a unique type of off-street parking facility, the management of which provides its own particular challenge. A key feature of hospital parking facilities is the demand for staff parking that exists at these car parks as it is estimated that up to 75% of spaces are occupied by staff working at the hospital. This, combined with the fact that there is a continuous turnover of visitors to these parking facilities as well as the fact that these sites are very often in urban centres where commuter parking needs to be discouraged, has led to the implementation of parking controls and charges at all of the main hospitals throughout Ireland. Typically, demand for parking spaces is at a premium at most major hospital car parks and this is reflected in the revenue figures generated by these facilities. Parking charges at hospitals vary throughout the country, with single per visit charges applying at some hospitals, e.g. €4 at St. Luke's Hospital in Kilkenny, to hourly charges of in excess of €2 at many of the Dublin-based hospitals. In 2009, the two main hospitals in Cork (Cork Maternity Hospital and Cork University Hospital) had combined parking-related revenue of €2.8m, while parking income at University College Hospital in Galway and Kerry General Hospital was almost €1m in both cases. Similarly, Beaumont Hospital (600 spaces) and Tallaght Hospital (500 spaces) in Dublin, generate significant income from their multi-storey car parks. This trend is likely to continue as the need to control demand at scarce parking facilities at hospital sites looks likely to continue and also while cash-strapped health authorities seek further income streams.

Hotel car parks generally exist to cater for the requirements of guests at these facilities, but again it has been found that significant revenue is being generated by some operators. While some hotels provide free parking as part of their overall customer offering, the location of the individual hotel will be a key factor in whether parking charges, and also their rates, are imposed. For example, city centre hotels, which are attractive and convenient to commuters, shoppers and other users will often charge equivalent rates to adjacent public commercial parking facilities. Also, in recent years, a trend towards hotels providing airport-related parking offers has been evident.

3.3.6 Equipment Suppliers

Given the growth in the Irish parking sector, it is not surprising that a number of specialist parking equipment suppliers have emerged to service this market. As car park facilities have become more prevalent, and parking control equipment requirements have become more sophisticated, the range of suppliers, and breadth of products that they offer, has experienced similar growth. The following is a list of some of the main players in this segment of the market and their main area of activity:

Company	***Equipment Category***
Advanced Parking Solutions	Access Control Equipment
AGK Ltd.	Parking Guidance Systems, Signage & Accessories
Alpha Vision Design	Automatic Number Plate Recognition Systems
Blue Wall Technologies	Access Control Systems; Pay & Display Equipment
Electro Automation Ltd.	Access Control Systems; Pay & Display Equipment
MF Services	Access Control Equipment
UTS Parking & Transportation	Pay & Display Equipment

*Table 3.3 Main Parking Equipment Suppliers**

* For a more comprehensive listing see IPA Trade Directory at www.parkingireland.ie

The above list of suppliers represents the main players within the Irish parking equipment sub-sector but it is by no means exhaustive. Other companies also operate, but do not necessarily specialise, within the industry and the quantification of this segment of the market does not include ancillary products and services such as printing, lighting and painting contractors, cleaning contractors, security companies etc.

3.3.7 Miscellaneous

The final market segment identified in the course of this research is termed ‘Miscellaneous’, and covers a disparate range of activities and sources of parking-related revenue. Included in this segment are items such as Special Event Parking (e.g. concerts, tourist attractions, sporting events etc.), and those ancillary products and services such as printing, lighting and painting contractors, cleaning contractors, security companies etc., referred to in Section 3.6 above.

3.4 *Employment in the Parking Sector*

As part of the research project, and a key objective of the study, was to identify the numbers of people directly employed within the parking industry, and this information was actively sought as part of the data collection exercise.

It was found that the Irish parking industry provides direct employment for at least 1,500 people, primarily in the Local Authority, Car Park Operator, and Equipment Supplier market segments. The following chart illustrates the breakdown of employment figures within the Irish parking sector.

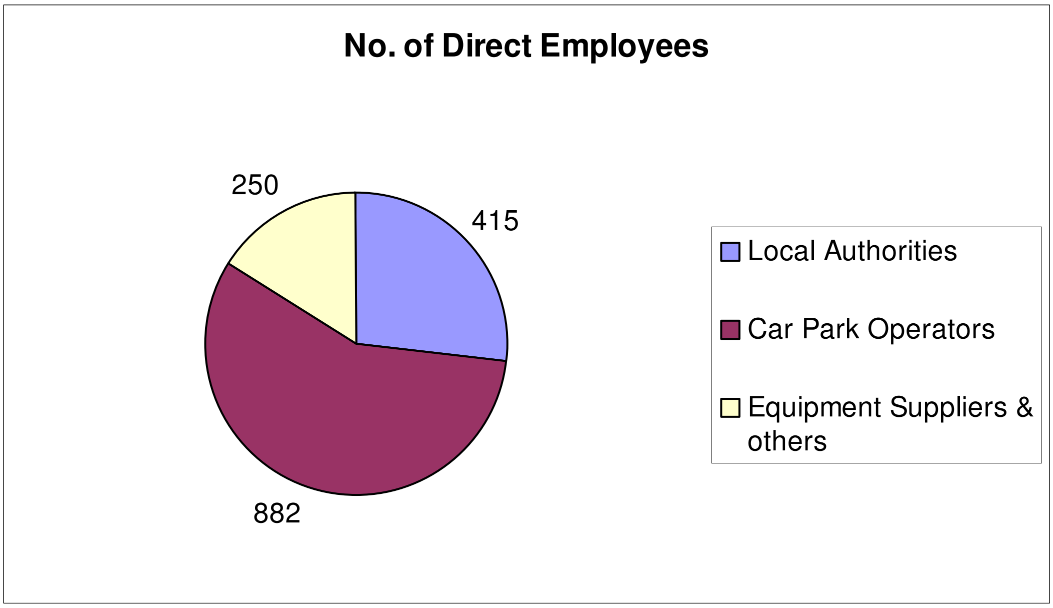

Fig. 3.5: Employment Figures

While the figure of in excess of 1,500 direct employees is in itself considerable, it is the researchers' opinion that this figure significantly underestimates the level of employment within the sector. The main basis for this opinion relates to the classification of employees within the various market segments, but particularly in the 'Local Authority', 'Shopping Centre', and 'Hotel and Hospital' categories. It has been found that, while personnel are often involved in parking-related activities in these segments, their role or job function is often not classified as 'Parking', e.g. this can be seen in the cases of 'Town Engineers', 'Traffic Managers', 'Town Clerks' within local authorities; and 'Property Managers', 'Facilities Managers' and 'Centre Managers' within shopping centres, hotels and hospitals. While these job titles do not result in such personnel being classified as being involved in the parking sector, the management and organisation of parking can often account for a substantial portion of their work. The employment figures presented above also do not account for the parking-related administrative work involved in these segments. Finally, it is reasonable to say that these employment figures do not present the full picture of the Irish parking sector as they exclude employees involved in the provision of ancillary products and services such as printing, lighting and painting, cleaning, security etc., whose employment is dependant on a vibrant parking industry.

4. Conclusions

The results of this research illustrate the significant scale of the Irish parking sector, a market which had previously not been the subject of any detailed quantitative analysis, and which has now been found to be worth €360m annually. It is very obvious from the review of the market contained within this report that this industry sector has experienced major growth in recent years, fuelled not only by favourable tax incentives for the construction of parking facilities in the 1980s and 1990s, but also as a direct consequence of the boom that the general economy underwent in the past two decades. Due to the increased urbanisation of Irish society, and the consistently increased levels of private car ownership that have been recorded, it is perhaps not surprising that parking controls and associated parking management activities have also increased substantially.

The scale of revenue generated annually by the parking sector, the numbers directly employed within the industry, and the increased provision of paid public parking facilities associated with a whole range of related commercial activities, highlight the important contribution that this sector makes to the overall Irish economy. Tax receipts, commercial rates, and VAT charges, particularly in light of the recent European Court of Justice decision and subsequent changes introduced in the 2010 Finance Bill, represent the main sources of Exchequer revenue from the parking industry.

It is anticipated that, with the general downturn currently being experienced in the Irish economy, the parking sector will also be adversely affected. However, it is reasonable to assume that the impact felt in this particular market sector may not be as large as in others as parking facility operators seek to maximise the revenue they raise through parking-related activities to compensate for loss of income streams from other sources. The introduction of charging in many of these car parks remains an effective tool in managing what is quite often a scarce resource. Similarly, it is felt that the impact of other macro economic factors directly affecting the parking industry, such as increased use of public transport and other measures seeking to reduce the over-reliance on private car use which are currently being implemented, will be tempered by the fact that such policy changes will see growth in other segments of the parking market such as the provision of more 'Park & Ride'-type facilities. Finally, it is anticipated that car parking, inextricably tied as it is to commercial activity, will experience positive growth as soon as there is any improvement in the wider economic environment.

As the parking industry continues to grow and mature, so to does its trade representative body, the Irish Parking Association. which was formed in 1995 as the parking sector started to expand rapidly. The association's membership has grown significantly since its formation, and it is gaining status and becoming the recognised source of expertise in this area. The Association comprises all of the main operators, equipment suppliers and other key stakeholders in the industry. Its main objective is to promote best practice within the parking sector and to actively encourage the highest standards of professionalism in the business of parking provision to all of its customers. The IPA seeks to achieve this objective through a range of activities which are designed to provide information and advice to both its own members and a wider public audience through ongoing activities including its regular hosting of industry seminars, networking events, quality awards schemes, publications, codes of practice, and a dedicated parking industry website.

In a wider context, parking has a major role to play in the impact of private car use on the environment. Cities and towns are becoming increasingly choked with drivers searching for 'free' parking spaces while wasting fuel and contributing to unnecessary vehicle emissions. It has been estimated that drivers searching for parking spaces can account for up to 30% traffic in urban centres. Provision of convenient, paid parking facilities is therefore an obvious and logical choice for towns and cities faced with these challenges. Enabling drivers to find parking spaces quickly and easily helps to reduce congestion, improve accessibility, and keeps traffic moving more efficiently, thereby reducing both air and noise pollution. These benefits will in turn help to promote economic growth and foster sustainable development in these urban centres. The parking industry has a key role to play in these areas and can make a valuable contribution to efforts to meet our national and international commitments to reduce our carbon footprint. Future developments in this area will focus on these increasingly important issues and will impact on the parking sector, such as the projected growth in the use of Electric Vehicles (EVs), e.g. as can be seen with the current national rollout of charging infrastructure associated with the ESB's 'ecars' initiative, in which the parking sector can play a pivotal part.

While this piece of research has served to describe the current situation within the Irish parking market, it has also highlighted areas that will require further research and analysis before additional conclusions can be drawn. Specifically, while broad segments of the parking sector have been clearly identified and their respective values estimated, it would be useful to examine each segment in more detail to evaluate the specific trends and factors important to each individual area, e.g. it would be particularly interesting to further research the parking revenue generated within the shopping centre segment, the respective value and merit of free vs. paid parking in that segment, etc. Furthermore, a more detailed and accurate analysis of the employment levels, taking into account the provisos detailed in that particular section of this report, within the parking sector which takes account of the level of indirect employment and related activity would be very worthwhile. However, it is reasonable to state that this research study and the information contained within this report is a useful starting point that not only provides a valuable overview of the market, but which should also serve to inform the development of future policy relating to this sector.

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