

Public Document Pack



MID SUFFOLK CABINET	
DATE:	MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2022 10.30 AM
VENUE:	KING EDMUND CHAMBER, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH

Councillors
<u>Conservative and Independent Group</u> David Burn Julie Flatman Jessica Fleming Peter Gould Lavinia Hadingham Suzie Morley (Chair) Harry Richardson (Vice-Chair) John Whitehead Gerard Brewster

This meeting will be broadcast live to YouTube and will be capable of repeated viewing. The entirety of the meeting will be filmed except for confidential or exempt items. If you attend the meeting in person you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed and that the images and sound recordings could be used for webcasting/ training purposes.

The Council, members of the public and the press may record/film/photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded.

AGENDA

PART 1

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

Page(s)

- 1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS**
- 3 **MCa/22/20 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD
ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2022**
- 4 **TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME**
- 5 **QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS**

6 **MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR
JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

7 **FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST**

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the website:

[Forthcoming Decisions List » Mid Suffolk](#)

8 **MCa/22/21 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLKS PARKING 5 - 346
STRATEGY 2022-2042**

Cabinet Member for Environment.

9 **MCa/22/22 EXEMPTION OF RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS FOR 347 - 350
NEW COUNCIL HOUSING FROM POOLING**

Cabinet Member for Finance.

10 **MCa/22/23 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION (WORKING AGE) 351 - 364
SCHEME 2023/24 - CONSULTATION**

Cabinet Member for Finance.

Date and Time of next meeting

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 7 November 2022 at 10.30 am.

Webcasting/ Live Streaming

The Webcast of the meeting will be available to view on the Councils YouTube page:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg

For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact the Committee Officer, on: 01449 724681 or Email:
Committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

Introduction to Public Meetings

Babergh/Mid Suffolk District Councils are committed to Open Government. The proceedings of this meeting are open to the public, apart from any confidential or exempt items which may have to be considered in the absence of the press and public.

Domestic Arrangements:

- Toilets are situated opposite the meeting room.
- Cold water is also available outside opposite the room.
- Please switch off all mobile phones or turn them to silent.

Evacuating the building in an emergency: Information for Visitors:

If you hear the alarm:

1. Leave the building immediately via a Fire Exit and make your way to the Assembly Point (Ipswich Town Football Ground).
2. Follow the signs directing you to the Fire Exits at each end of the floor.
3. Do not enter the Atrium (Ground Floor area and walkways). If you are in the Atrium at the time of the Alarm, follow the signs to the nearest Fire Exit.
4. Use the stairs, not the lifts.
5. Do not re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: CABINET	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/22/21
FROM: Cabinet Member for Environment Jessica Fleming	DATE OF MEETING: 3 October 2022
OFFICER: Fiona Duhamel, Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB350

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLKS PARKING STRATEGY 2022-2042

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Developing a parking strategy is the next logical step and builds upon the Joint Area Parking Management Plan (JAPMP) and the councils' climate emergency declaration. Both of which have highlighted the increasing need to develop a parking strategy for the medium to long term.
- 1.2 Following approval by Cabinet in August 2021, the council commissioned 2020 Consultancy, experts in highways and transportation, to develop a joint parking strategy. This is essential in enabling the council to deliver on its ambition to make Mid Suffolk a great community, with a bright and healthy future that everyone is proud to call home.
- 1.3 This report outlines the work undertaken to date and highlights the recommendations that will form an integral part of the councils' parking strategy for the district for the next 20 years.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 To continue without a parking strategy – this option was not taken up due to the previous Cabinet decision in August 2021 to pursue a clear and joined-up parking strategy that looks at all elements of parking which is everything from on-street and off-street, through to the economic, environmental, and community impacts.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Note the background evidence reports provided to support the new parking strategy.
- 3.2 Approve the new parking strategy for Mid Suffolk and its proposed recommendations, accepting that some recommendations may require full business cases to be approved by Cabinet at a later date.
- 3.3 Agree delegated authority for the Director of Economic Growth and Climate Change in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment to deliver proposed recommendations through the creation of a focused implementation plan, subject to any business case approvals required as part of 3.2 above

REASON FOR DECISION

To set out the councils' ambitions for parking for the short, medium and long term, by helping to shape the future growth of the district, enhance the quality of the local environment, and provide a prospectus for investment.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The strategy at a high level needs to reflect national policy guidance as it applies to both the future of town and village centres, sustainable travel, and transport as well as patterns of demand. The parking strategy must also align with the councils' Strategic Priorities, the United Nations Sustainability Goals and the goals of Central Government e.g ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution, to ensure consistency.
- 4.2 To achieve the councils' parking ambitions, it is important to introduce measures that:
- ensure everyone has access to sufficient, good quality, safe and welcoming parking opportunities
 - will make a real difference to the way we plan for the future
 - supports economic growth aspirations
 - reduces the impact of our activities on the environment
- 4.3 Developing the parking strategy to this point has taken 14 months and involved various stages which are outlined in sections 4.4 to 4.20 of this report.

INVESTIGATION AND DATA COLLECTION

- 4.4 **Benchmarking** - an exercise was undertaken to determine how Mid Suffolk's parking offer compares to neighbouring authorities and locations that share similar characteristics such as type of town offering, size, population, and provide key trip generators at a district level.
- 4.5 **Car park condition surveys** - each car park was assessed against a list of criteria which would help inform recommendations for inclusion in the parking strategy.
- 4.6 **Vehicle occupancy surveys** were undertaken across all council operated car parks on different days of the week (including Saturday), and at different times of the day to understand parking behaviours and demand.
- 4.7 Both surveys took place during August 2021 when the impact of Covid-19 was still present. Full details are located in Appendix C of this report.
- 4.8 **Forecasting and the future of car parking** – using the parking survey data collected from council owned car parks as the baseline, it is possible to determine the growth in car parks over a 20-year period.
- 4.9 The Department for Transport has developed a programme, called TEMPro, that supports the forecasting of future transport growth. The programme is designed to estimate growth in traffic and is based on predictions which include future housing, population, car ownership, trip rates and employment levels. The software produces growth factors based on a specified baseline and future years. Further details on the TEMPro model and forecasting growth are located in Appendix C of this report.

- 4.10 **Stage one engagement** - the first phase of engagement was a fact-finding opportunity, allowing anyone with an interest in parking to comment on the councils' existing parking arrangements through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire was open for seven weeks from 31 August to 15 October 2021 and received a total of 1,248 responses.
- 4.11 In addition to the online questionnaire, key stakeholders which included district, town and parish councillors, transport and business groups, education establishments, leisure providers etc. were invited to attend virtual workshops to share their thoughts on what parking issues are important to them.

CREATION OF THE STRATEGY

- 4.12 **Stage two engagement** – outputs from the investigation and research as well as the engagement work has enabled a series of potential recommendations to be developed for inclusion in the final version of the parking strategy.
- 4.13 The recommendations, described in detail in Appendix B of this report, cover both off-street and on-street parking, can bring about real change to how we travel and how we support the wider ambition for our communities and places. The council has sought feedback on the recommendations as part of our commitment to engage at each key milestone.
- 4.14 During April and May 2022, officers from the parking service and 2020 Consultancy delivered detailed briefings to members and town and parish councils which covered the work undertaken to date as well as to seek feedback on the potential recommendations for inclusion in the parking strategy
- 4.15 A second online questionnaire, open from 13 June to 31 July 2022 aimed to establish the level of support or opposition for each recommendation. 2,004 people completed the questionnaire meaning that across both stages of engagement, 3,252 questionnaires were completed.
- 4.16 To maximise engagement and promote the second questionnaire, there were a series of in-person roadshow events held in June 2022 which 175 people attended. Analysis from both online questionnaires and the roadshow events can be found in Appendices D and E of this report.
- 4.17 The final version of the parking strategy (Appendix A) is intended to be concise, user-friendly and easily understood. This document is supported by a second more detailed parking strategy report (Appendix B) as well as a number of comprehensive research documents (Appendices C to E).
- 4.18 The parking strategy document itself will not deliver the action required to meet the councils' parking ambitions. Delivery of the proposed recommendations will require support through a comprehensive, robust and focused implementation plan as referred to in recommendation 3.3 of the report.
- 4.19 On 30 September 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny committee will review the process of developing the parking strategy. A verbal update will be provided to Cabinet on 3 October 2022.

4.20 Whilst the parking strategy covers the 20-year period, 2022 to 2042, there will be a need to review in 3–5-years dependent on local economic and global factors, technological advancements etc.

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

5.1 The Joint Corporate Plan identifies six strategic priorities as set out in the visual below. The parking service has several links to the councils' Joint Corporate Plan, namely:

- Community capacity building and engagement,
- maximising the use of our assets,
- engage with and support businesses to thrive,
- further develop the local economy and our market towns to thrive,
- to value enhance and protect our environment,
- local transport,
- community-led solutions to deliver services and manage assets
- financially sustainable councils.



6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In bringing forward the parking strategy, the costs incurred to date include officer time, consultancy expertise (£41,000), venue hire for the roadshow events (£940) and costs associated with promotional materials e.g posters, social media etc (£550). A total of £42,490 which is shared equally with Babergh District Council.

6.2 There will be financial implications in respect of delivering the recommendations included within the parking strategy. The need for a comprehensive, robust and focused implementation plan is crucial to the parking strategy's success. Where there are significant cost implications, a detailed business case will be required, and approval sought through the councils' governance process.

6.3 Approval of the parking strategy will provide the evidence framework needed to advocate for funding opportunities, whether that be internally through the councils' own budget setting and medium-term financial planning (MTFP) process or funding opportunities such as external and national grants, community infrastructure levy bids etc.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no expected legal implications linked to delivery of the parking strategy document. There are, however, recommendations in the parking strategy where it will be necessary to amend or create new Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 This report is most closely linked with the councils' Significant Risks: No. 8 - Decline in our key towns impacts upon economic prosperity of the districts; No. 13 - We may be unable to react in a timely and effective way to financial demands; Risk No. 14 -

The council may be perceived to be untrustworthy and have a poor reputation; and Risk No. 18 - The council will not be carbon neutral by 2030.

8.2 Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Imbalance in policy, paying for parking, town centre vitality, leisure, etc. impacting on visiting footfall in our towns and the economy.	1 - Highly unlikely	3 - Serious	Research has found that availability of parking, rather than charging, tends to impact town centre vitality and viability.
Inability to understand and prepare for future growth needs regarding parking provision e.g. impact of additional housing, businesses etc	1 - Highly unlikely	4 - Disaster	Work with colleagues across the organisation i.e., planning to ensure that any housing and business growth is fed into future plans for parking provision.
Insufficient engagement and leadership could have a negative impact on delivering the strategy.	2 - Unlikely	2 - Noticeable	Ensure that there is ample opportunity for engagement using various methods and that we are fair and consistent in our approach
Lack of financial support to deliver recommendations that provide meaningful improvements across the district	3 - Probable	3 - Serious	Ensure that the parking strategy is supported by a robust and comprehensive implementation plan that considers priority, timescales, costs and funding.
Unable to influence motorist behaviour into more environmentally friendly methods of transport resulting in traffic congestion and poor air quality – threatening the councils' climate emergency declaration and its aim to become carbon neutral by 2030.	1 - Highly unlikely	2 - Noticeable	Ensure that the council has a wide range of education and engagement tools and materials in place.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 There were a number of consultation exercises undertaken as part of developing the parking strategy. Full details are located in Appendices D and E of the report.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

10.1 An EQIA was undertaken in August 2021 as part of the work required to seek Cabinet approval for development a parking strategy. This has since been reviewed and updated to reflect any necessary changes.

10.2 All opportunities to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact will be taken forward as part of the detailed implementation plan. For example, those with a disability (including children with additional needs) – a review of parking space

allocation i.e. spaces are of an appropriate size, ensure adequate provision of disabled parking, consider accessibility as part of any planned improvements (e.g., surfaces, removing steps, improved signage considering all users).

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Following its Climate Emergency declaration, the council must look at ways to influence motorist behaviour. A small but simple change could make large improvements in air quality, reductions in congestion and CO₂ emissions.

11.2 To encourage drivers to consider other more environmentally friendly methods of transport, wherever possible, the council needs to take into consideration the following points:

- Traffic congestion, air quality and the availability of other modes of travel as key considerations in setting the quantities of parking available, the location, the restrictions or controls applied, and parking tariffs employed.
- Support for low-car and car-free developments, cycleway improvements, support for other Active Travel initiatives and lower provision of car parking in appropriate areas.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in shoppers and residential car parks encourage alternatives to internal combustion engine car travel, reducing air pollution at the point of use.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

MCa/18/63 Joint Area Parking Management Plan – 4 February 2019

MCa/21/15 The creation of a parking strategy for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils’ – 2 August 2021

13. APPENDICES

Title	Description	Location
APPENDIX A	Parking Strategy Summary	Attached
APPENDIX B	Parking Strategy Report 2022-2042	Attached
APPENDIX C	Parking Study Report	Attached
APPENDIX D	Phase 1 consultation feedback report	Attached
APPENDIX E	Phase 2 consultation feedback report	Attached
APPENDIX F	Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)	Attached

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS'

PARKING STRATEGY

2022-2042

Page 11



Contents Page

Introduction -----	4
Our parking strategy -----	5
- Recognition of policy	
Our parking services -----	6-8
- Parking directional signage and wayfinding	
- Enforcement and management of our car parks	
- Car park payment	
- Designated car park spaces	
- Electric vehicle charging	
- Council parking webpages	
Our research and investigations -----	8-10
- Benchmarking	
- Condition surveys	
- Vehicle occupancy surveys	
The strategy recommendations -----	10-18
Off-street parking recommendations	
- Parking capacity	
- Quality of car parks	
- Parking charges	
- Car park designation	
- Sustainable transport	
- Land use	
- Car park technology	
- Car park enforcement	
On-street recommendations	
- Parking policy	
- Parking improvement	
- Sustainable integration	
- Parking operations	
Our actions -----	19-21

Foreword

*The parking strategy is designed to help support our vision for Babergh and Mid Suffolk which is “**to build great communities with bright and healthy futures that everyone is proud to call home**” by shaping the future growth of the districts, enhancing the quality of the local environment as well as providing a prospectus for investment through regeneration of our town centres and rural villages.*

The parking strategy is a key means of enhancing our already strong and vibrant districts and reinforces the importance of everyone having access to sufficient, safe, and easy to use parking facilities for cars and other vehicle types, at suitable hours of the day (or night).

The strategy at a high level needs to identify parking demand and supply for the next 20 years, it needs to reflect national guidance as it applies to both the future of town centres and commuting patterns, reflect the changing needs of transport in so far as this is possible, anticipate patterns of demand, and most importantly, be capable of adaptation.

The detail of why, how and what we will do to make this a reality is explained in this document and we invite you to support this vision by working with us.



Councillor Elisabeth Malvisi
Cabinet Member for Environment
Babergh District Council Councillor



Councillor Jessica Fleming
Cabinet Member for Environment
Mid Suffolk District Council

1. Introduction

[2020 Consultancy](#) was commissioned by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to prepare a parking strategy covering both off-street car parks and the provision of on-street parking. We are seeking to develop a parking strategy that aligns with the councils' vision, which is designed to shape the future growth of the districts, enhance the quality of the local environment, and provide a prospectus for investment.



2. Our parking strategy

At the heart of this parking strategy is the principle that there is sufficient parking provision for all, in appropriate locations to ensure the success of our communities and the local economy and to enhance the quality of the environment.

This parking strategy contains recommendations, that we believe can bring real change to how we travel and how we help deliver the wider ambitions for our communities and places.

Parking that meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors



Recognition of policy

Parking plays an important role in providing and facilitating key economic and service functions by allowing vehicle access. Lack of parking provision can be detrimental to economic and social functions, over provision can be similarly damaging as key space may provide more effective alternative uses.

[The Suffolk Local Transport Plan 2011](#) sets out Suffolk County Council's proposals for transport provision in the county for the next 20 years. The key ambition is to support the local economy, attract world class businesses, and support and develop the local workforce, in the context of a shift towards a low carbon economy which has a direct impact on parking.

Our objectives



Understand existing parking provision, ensure that parking supports the councils' economic growth aspirations



Evaluate and interpret current parking behaviours



Provide appropriate / correct level of parking provision to meet everyone's needs giving consideration to variable seasonal demand, population growth, regeneration / development.



Identify improvements that will achieve a better parking experience for everyone.



Support the Councils aims to achieve a more sustainable provision – promote sustainable modes of travel eg LCWIP / Sustainable Travel Vision, electric vehicles etc



Ensure that on-street parking provision is utilised to protect key areas i.e. town centres, tourist hotspots, residents parking areas etc.

3. Our parking service

It is vital that the councils provide adequate provision and should consider all aspects of parking to ensure a positive first impression for everyone.

- **Parking directional signage and wayfinding**

Car park way finding and directional signage are key visual aids which assist people when deciding where they want to park.

Lack of appropriate signage does not create an efficient town centre parking experience and is likely to result in certain car parks being used regardless of the intended location.

Once the car is parked, then wayfinding signage is used to direct people to their destination. This is most commonly done using finger posts.

- **Enforcement and management of our car parks**



Civil parking enforcement (CPE) powers in Suffolk moved from the Police to [Suffolk County Council \(SCC\)](#), in April 2020. The aim of which was to decrease unlawful parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Ipswich Borough and West Suffolk Councils manage the enforcement of all council owned car parks (off-street) as well enforcing illegally parked vehicles on the highway (on-street) on behalf of Suffolk County Council (as the Highways Authority).

Management of parking falls into two broad areas: enforcement and back-office management.



Councils to consider and investigate the best and most cost-effective way of delivering enforcement whilst acknowledging that this customer facing service requires a dedicated resource.

- **Car park payment**

In car parks where payment is required, pay and display machines are in place and provide users with options on how they can pay for their parking sessions including coin, debit and credit card (chip & pin or contactless) and by mobile device via an app. Payment options do vary across the car parks.



Regular review of parking charges / benchmarking with other parking providers. Further improvements made to pay and display machines and reviewing the effectiveness of pay on exit systems



The councils' should consider developing a branding strategy that can be incorporated into signage and wayfinding eg specific use of colours and route numbers. These can be supported through monolith signs that include maps and key information.

▪ **Designated car park spaces**



There is a need to have designated spaces in car parks to offer parking for blue badge holders and those with young children. They offer a wider space to provide improved access, and will also be in closer proximity to the intended destination.

There are currently 56 blue badge holder spaces in Babergh car parks (3.5% of the total offering), and 44 blue badge holder spaces in Mid Suffolk (4.3% of the total offering).

Any charges and time constraints for Blue Badge holders are displayed on the tariff boards located within each car park. There are currently no concessions for parent and child spaces.



Carry out a detailed review of all car park designation spaces to determine where improvements can be made to accommodate everyone.

▪ **Electric vehicle charging**

There are currently 20 Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points across the districts, details below:

Car Park	Location	Total EV charge points
Station Road (Kingfisher leisure centre)	Sudbury	10
Prentice Street	Lavenham	2
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	2
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	2
TOTAL EV CHARGE POINTS - BABERGH		16
Cross Street	Eye	2
Ipswich Street	Stowmarket	2
TOTAL EV CHARGE POINTS MID SUFFOLK		4

The sale of electric vehicles is expected to rise considerably, especially with the ban of new petrol / diesel vehicles from 2030.



Councils' parking webpages



Promotion and increase of EV charge point facilities across the districts is vital. The delivery of additional EV charge points should be aligned with the sale of electric vehicles.

The councils' website may be the first port of call to understand parking arrangements and locations. This makes the website very important and so the parking pages need to be easy to interpretate, up to date, and contain key relevant information.

The councils' website currently has information about location, type and costs of parking spaces across the districts.



There is a need for further improvements as there are no interactive features i.e., opportunity to view real-time occupancy rates, and estimated usage at specific times / day of the week.

4. Our research and investigations

Benchmarking

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken to determine how the districts parking offer compares to neighbouring authorities and locations that share similar characteristics such as type of town offering, size, population, and key trip generators at a district level.

The benchmarking locations are included in the following table:

Location Centre	Population (2019 estimate)	Car Parks	
		Total No. Spaces	% of Spaces Population
Babergh	92,036	1,594	1.73%
Mid Suffolk	103,895	985	0.95%
East Suffolk	249,461	8377	3.36%
West Suffolk	179,045	6,123	3.42%
Wyre Forest	101,291	2,317	2.29%
East Northamptonshire	94,527	594	0.63%

Car park pricing policies can vary between different local authorities. The average parking tariffs within Babergh and Mid-Suffolk have been benchmarked as shown below.

Area	Average Cost of Parking (Per Hour)
Babergh	Free (for first three hours) – *30p per hour (Pin mill)
Mid-Suffolk	£1.00
East Suffolk	40p - £1.40/ Hour
Ipswich	70p - £1.80/ Hour
West Suffolk	£1.00 - £3.50/ Hour
East Anglia	£1.00 - £2.00/ Hour
North Essex	£1.20 - £2.10/ Hour
East Cambridgeshire	Free/ £3 per day

The table above demonstrates that parking charges in Babergh and Mid Suffolk compare favourably with neighbouring authorities and location with similar characteristics.

Condition surveys

An assessment of each council operated car park was undertaken. Results from this assessment inform recommendations within the strategy. Site visits took place during August 2021 when the impact of Covid-19 was still present.

Each car park was assessed against a list of criteria to provide a prioritisation list of sites that require attention.

Vehicle occupancy surveys

Vehicle occupancy surveys were undertaken across all car parks on different days of the week (including Saturday), and at different times of the day to understand parking behaviours and demand.

Private car parks for the use of specific businesses (e.g., private staff car parks, community facilities, supermarkets etc) have not been surveyed or considered within the occupancy analysis. As district councils we are unable to influence changes within private car parks but do recognise the need to understand how much provision is available.

Car park demand was split into categories.

< 60% occupancy – scope for reallocation of land use or to promote use of the car park

60-74% occupancy – scope for additional parking without impacting the ability to locate a parking space quickly.

75-84% occupancy – locating a parking space can be achieved relatively quickly.

85-94% occupancy – likely to be challenging finding a parking space. This level of occupancy can cause frustration with drivers.

> 94% occupancy – likely to locate a parking space in a larger car park or extremely challenging in a smaller car park.

Stakeholder engagement

To maximise the effectiveness of the consultation process, a two-stage engagement programme was developed.

Stage one was a fact-finding opportunity, allowing stakeholders to comment on the councils' existing parking arrangements through a public online questionnaire which was open for six weeks and received 1,248 responses. Promotion included council website updates, social media posts, posters displayed in car parks as well as [local press coverage](#)



This was achieved through stakeholder briefings, roadshow events and a second public online questionnaire, which received 2,004 responses, bringing the total of completed questionnaires to 3,252.

The future of parking

With the future adoption of the [Joint Local Plan](#), regeneration and increasing car ownership, the demand for parking is likely to increase.

The Department for Transport has developed a model, [Trip End Model Presentation Programme \(TEMPRo\)](#), that is designed to estimate growth in traffic and is based on predictions which include future housing, population, car ownership, trip rates and employment.

Key stakeholders (district, town and parish councillors, transport groups, business groups, education establishments etc.) were invited to attend virtual workshops which contained a presentation. The purpose of which was to outline the results of the condition and occupancy surveys and provide opportunity for feedback.

Stage two sought feedback on the recommendations established as part of the stage one engagement.

Page 19

Town / Village	Spaces		Weekday				Saturday			
			10am	12pm	2pm	4pm	10am	12pm	2pm	4pm
	Total	% Blue Badge	% Occ	% Occ	% Occ	% Occ	% Occ	% Occ	% Occ	% Occ
Sudbury	1,106	3.25	56	58	51	40	59	68	58	46
Hadleigh	313	5.1	61	59	56	41	71	77	53	45
Lavenham	110	3.25	48	74	71	37	61	84	67	53
Pin Mill	43	0	40	53	44	28	51	67	53	33
Holbrook	16	0	0	0	6	13	0	0	6	13
Raydon	6	0	17	33	67	50	33	17	50	17
Debenham	15	6.6	100	100	93	67	93	100	80	53
Eye	107	5.6	64	84	75	61	73	90	82	65
Needham Market	58	8.6	81	83	78	54	75	92	68	53
Stowmarket	781	4.1	74	76	67	56	77	82	75	45
Woolpit	24	0	21	46	29	17	33	42	38	17

Using the parking survey data collected from council owned car parks as the baseline, it is possible to determine the growth in car parks over a 20-year period, broken down into five-year periods to track the occupancy rates.

The results of the forecasting tool across council owned car parks between 2022 and 2042 is shown in the table below.

The baseline data used when forecasting was the peak data, and so the forecasts do not take into consideration the impact of any strategy recommendations e.g improvements to public transport and active travel infrastructure will likely reduce the amount of single occupancy journeys made.

The councils' have partnered with other Suffolk Local Authorities to create The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP). The SCCP are committed to making Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030. The parking strategy recommendations focus on supporting this goal, which aims to reduce future parking demand.

The councils' also have ambitious [regeneration plans](#) to improve town centres across the districts. The plans seek to reduce town centre traffic congestion, positively impacting future parking capacity which may result in other recommendations having greater priority.



It is recommended that the planning process for delivery of new parking sites should commence when parking occupancy rates reach 85% across an area i.e., town centre.

Car park	2022 % occupied	2027 % occupied	2032 % occupied	2037 % occupied	2042 % occupied
Sudbury	74	77	79	82	84
Lavenham	83	86	89	92	94
Hadleigh	80	83	86	88	91
Raydon	50	52	54	56	57
Pin Mill	67	70	73	75	77
Lower Holbrook	19	20	20	21	21
Debenham	100	104	108	112	115
Eye	94	98	101	105	108
Needham Market	92	96	99	103	106
Stowmarket	83	87	90	93	96
Woolpit	75	78	81	84	86

Parking demand above 85%,
 Parking demand between 50%-84
 Parking demand below 50%.

Figures above 100% mean there is more demand than capacity

5. The strategy recommendations

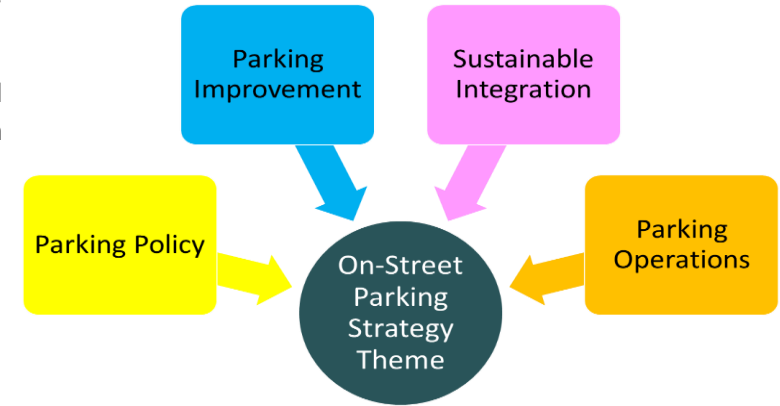
It is vital to include all potential recommendations to align and support the councils' policies, objectives, and vision. They have been grouped into a number of themes that cover both off-street and on-street parking as shown in the graphics.

Some recommendations such as EV charge points will span multiple themes e.g sustainable transport, and car park technology.

The following pages provide more detail on the recommendations

The recommendations have been assessed with reference to a series of indicators, which include:

- Economic indicators (e.g., footfall, expenditure, vacancy rates)
- Consideration of the Joint Local Plan
- Traffic movements
- Conservation and environmental
- Council parking operations.



Off-street parking recommendations

Parking Capacity

The results of the forecasting outlined on page 10, highlight the possible need to provide additional parking spaces in areas that may (or do) experience parking pressure frequently.

This could be achieved by the councils' identifying potential new sites for car park construction either existing land owned by the councils', or privately owned land that is subject to acquisition.

The councils will need to work with Suffolk County Council as the highways authority to identify areas of on-street parking that can be



utilised to provide further parking in key locations i.e., town and village centres.

Since Central Government released the [LTN 1/20 guidance to promote active travel](#), new development sites have seen a noticeable improvement in the level of active travel infrastructure provided, but a reduction to the amount of parking spaces provided. This causes displacement to occur in surrounding roads.

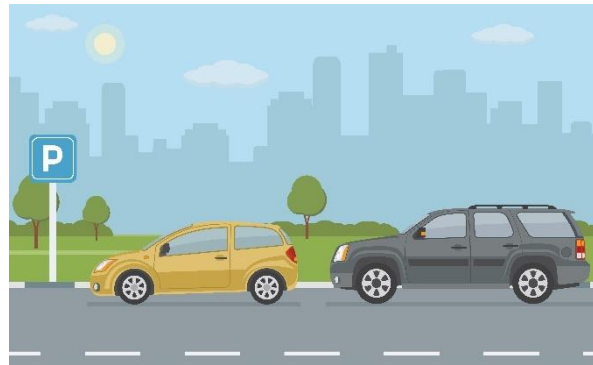
Parking Capacity recommendations:

- Increase parking provision in those locations that require it
- Utilise on-street parking for short-stay provision
- Safeguard parking provision for new development sites i.e., ensure the planning process includes the appropriate checks on parking surveys carried out for application e.g parking beat surveys,

Quality of Car Parks

Assessments undertaken across all council owned car parks highlighted the need to improve all car parks during the lifespan of this parking strategy.

There are differing requirements at each car park location, here are a few examples of areas for improvement.



Directional signage to car parks is poor and so improvements are recommended for both local road networks, and the strategic road network to provide clear guidance to visitors.



Variable Message Signs could be considered. These are digital signs that provide real time parking information i.e., the number of spaces available in car parks which will help reduce

congestion and assist the councils' carbon neutral ambitions.

Without appropriate safety measures in place, car parks can be dangerous locations, with pedestrians and vehicles sharing the same space. To safeguard all users, the strategy aims to make necessary improvements in car parks to improve safety.

A number of car parks, have old and worn machines. The aim should be to replace all machines to avoid a loss of income, which may occur if users cannot make payment and to utilise this opportunity to understand if any car park may be more effective with a pay on exit system, allowing users to pay before they leave.

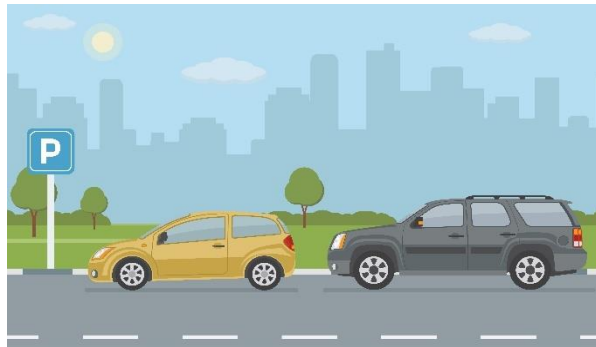
Quality of car parks recommendations:

- Car park improvement regime
- Undertake car park signage strategy
- Increase the safety provision in car parks
- Improve the appearance of car parks to create a more welcoming environment
- Upgrade Pay and Display machines in car parks that have parking charges in place

Parking Charges

The use of flexible parking tariffs is an option to be considered allowing potential implementation of relatively easy and transparent adjustment mechanisms. This approach could involve adjusting tariffs by location, over time or for specific events to achieve desirable changes in travel behaviour.

An alternative to adjusting parking tariffs could be to offer concessions within identified car parks. For example, if there is low usage in one car park, concessions are offered to increase usage.



it is recommended to carry out a regular benchmarking exercise with neighbouring local authorities and towns with similar characteristics that have parking charges in place to monitor parking tariffs. This will help to avoid a situation where visitors may be

attracted to other locations based on a better parking offer.

Parking charges recommendations:

- Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge
- Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas
- Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas

Car Parking Designation

Full or partial conversion of some long-stay car parking to provide additional short-stay capacity might be considered in some locations where existing parking supply is limited.

This recommendation could promote more efficient use of car parks by relocating long-stay commuter parking towards those in more peripheral locations and allowing shorter-stay parking and a greater turnover of parking activity, closer to key retail and trip generators.

Understanding the primary usage of each car park is key to supporting the car park designation which will link to other recommendations e.g improvements to signage

Car parking designation recommendations:

The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g., residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both.

Sustainable Transport

Providing good quality sustainable travel options can reduce the need for additional parking spaces and help reduce congestion and the associated detrimental environmental impacts of excessive car use.

Electric vehicle (EV) charging points are already provided across the districts. EV charging points help to promote sustainable transport modes and improve air quality. Increasing the number of charging spaces will almost certainly be required as EVs become more popular and technology develops further.

An EV policy will need to be developed for the charging of fees with consideration given to free parking to encourage use, if vehicles are using the charging points. Given the current number of EV charging points, it is likely that additional spaces will be required over the lifetime of the strategy to increase supply.

There are those car parks that serve public transport stations, which provides an

opportunity to integrate car parks and sustainable transport encouraging users to use public transport for onward journeys.

The councils' have recently developed a [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\)](#) and a [Sustainable Travel Vision](#), both of which can support the reduction in parking demand including walking and cycling routes, secure bicycle parking facilities and mobility hubs in key locations.

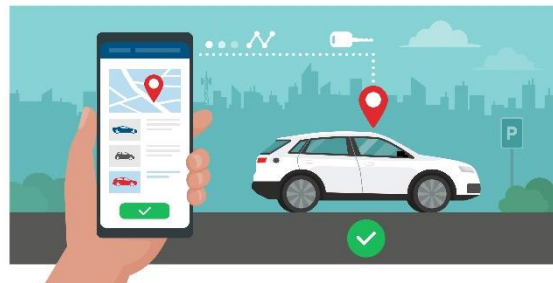
Alongside secure bicycle parking, there is also an opportunity for a Docked bike or E-Scooter schemes, with car parks providing the storage facilities.



With traffic volumes reaching all-time highs, and the cost of fuel crisis, car clubs are becoming increasingly popular. A car club enables users to create a membership with a car club provider and book a vehicle that is located in a convenient place for a period of time. The user is only charged for the time using

the car making it much more efficient for drivers who do not need to travel frequently.

The councils could consider partnering with a car club provider to allocate car club bays in some of its lower occupancy car parks. A car club bay does not require any supporting infrastructure.



Sustainable transport recommendations:

- Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand
- Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in car parks
- Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities as well as safe access to / from them
- Investigate partnerships with car club providers
- Consider the implementation of docked bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters in car parks

Land Use

By the year 2042, the forecasting of growth in car parks predicts as many as 14 car parks will be at or over capacity. A further 10 will be at or over the 85% threshold meaning that, 24 out of the 35 (66%) of car parks may need increasing in size. For many of these car parks, expansion will not be possible.

Consideration should be given to identifying parcels of land that could be acquired to provide new parking sites. The location would be critical to the ideal size.

As a popular tourist destination, the districts are likely to be subject to higher usage at peak periods. This will be one of the reasons for the parking pressure shown in the parking surveys already undertaken.

A way to maintain and potentially increase visitors to our districts is to improve coach parking facilities within car parks. This requirement should be assessed on location, and suitability of the car park.

Car parks are often empty overnight with no parking charges in place, which means utilising the car park for alternative uses is not going to impact occupancy and income generation. Enabling motorhomes to park overnight in car parks provides the opportunity for additional

income to then be reinvested into the parking service to improve the car parks.



Other alternative uses for car parks in the evening, such as specific events i.e., drive-in cinemas should also be investigated.

Land use recommendations:

- Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g. new car park, Park & Ride and /or Park & Cycle
- Review and understand local coach parking requirements
- Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks or alternative evening events.

Car Park Technology

Mobile and digital technology is increasingly important in the operation and use of car parking systems. New pay machines have the ability to accept card and contactless payments and a pay by phone facility i.e. parking apps. Improving mobile payment

methods can help to reduce the need for users to return to their vehicle to extend the length of stay. A Pay on exit system would also support extended stays, both methods could lead to increased dwell times and increased expenditure in the local economy.

New technology can also help back-office operations, particularly in relation to the use of intelligent, targeted tariffs and variable message signs.

Variable Message Signs (VMS) provides drivers with information relating to the availability of car park spaces, which will help to save time, reduce congestion and use the parking assets more efficiently.

Investigating the use of VMS across the districts is recommended to start immediately as one of



the most important short-term actions. This will provide information

Consideration should be given to how technology impacts the councils' parking webpages, such as live car parking information, the ability to setup parking accounts that can automatically pay for parking when visiting a car park, and more detail on EV charging points.

New technology has the potential to improve the efficiency and management of car parks by automating various operations i.e. virtual permits, and providing more information to the back office.

Car park technology recommendations:

- Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks
- Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management (e.g. priority parking spaces)
- Investigate using variable message signs (e.g. signs which could display the number of spaces available in real time)
- Make further improvements to the councils' parking webpages
- Consider smart parking integration e.g., parking apps and virtual permits.

Car Park Enforcement

The replacement of Pay & Display machines and the transfer of all car parking permits to a virtual system would improve the parking management function and make the enforcement operation more straight forward i.e. removing issues such as lost/damaged permits or how permits are displayed as well as the pay & display machines providing real-time information to the enforcement operation through targeted staff resources.

It is recommended to carry out a detailed assessment of the existing car park enforcement and management arrangements to identify the most effective model moving forward.

Any assessment work undertaken should consider all financial implications – costs and savings, of any potential model.

On-Street Parking Recommendations

On-Street parking supports the commercial needs of businesses and key trip generators that are located within the area e.g town and village centres, amenities, and outdoor environments such as walking routes.

To help increase the attractiveness of a location, the provision of both on-street and off-street parking is important.



On-street parking is also required for residents that do not have access to off-street parking. This means it is important to ensure that on-street parking locations are functional and enhance the destination overall, for everyone. There are instances where on-street parking capacity and specific areas can increase congestion in keys areas.

As part of the research and investigation phase of the parking strategy, 2020 Consultancy investigated the current on-street parking provision across both districts. High-level

assessments were carried out to evaluate on-street parking.

Parking policy

Updating or creating parking policy provides greater flexibility for recommendations to be developed and integrated. Parking policy can provide a framework to support improvements to on-street parking. Without policy there is a risk that recommendations implemented will not be successful or there will be inconsistencies.

A Resident Parking Scheme (RPS) is a street or area where parking controls are introduced with an exemption for permit holders, traditionally residents or local businesses. This is often implemented in areas that have high volumes of vehicles parking that are not residents of that area or street such as commuters. Parking in residential streets without restriction allows all-day parking without charge.

An RPS provides priority to permit holders during times of operation and prevents vehicles without a parking permit from parking all day. There are a number of methods to achieving a successful RPS e.g some schemes prevent parking all-day without a permit or restrict parking for short periods.

Schemes require a policy to illustrate the criteria for such a scheme. For instance, how many permits each house is entitled to, the cost of the permits, and how many visitor permits are allowed.



In contrast to the development of an RPS, which aims to mitigate residential parking demand during the day, there are areas where parking demand is much higher in the evening. This can cause parking pressure in residential streets with limited on-street parking available. There are few interventions to mitigate against this. RPS schemes will not work as there will be no enforcement, and it's likely that all vehicles will be residential.

There are locations where residential roads are close to an off-street car park. As they are often empty or subject to low occupancy rates overnight, consideration could be given to enabling residents to park overnight, which will help minimise on-street pressure.

On-street parking capacity is an issue in a number of locations. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a need to create new homes and developments, it is important to ensure that the impact of creating them does not adversely impact the existing on-street parking provision.

Parking policy recommendations:

- Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations
- Allow residents to park in council owned car parks overnight
- Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking.



Parking improvement

Whilst it is not possible for the councils to have a full understanding of all parking issues across the districts, especially given the size and that we have both urban and rural areas. This parking strategy has provided the opportunity

identify improvement for those areas of parking that require intervention.

There are two very noticeable opportunities for improvement. They are:

1. Mitigating verge, pavement and open space parking, in residential areas.
2. Ensuring the most appropriate parking restrictions are in place to support parking acts, both off-street, and on-street.

The most effective solutions to mitigate verge, pavement and open space parking also falls into two categories:

1. Provide additional parking capacity that removes the need to park on grass verges and open spaces.
2. Implement measures to protect grass verges and open spaces.

An initial assessment will determine very quickly, what is causing verge, pavement and open space parking to occur. Assessments could be based on individual locations, or specific areas such as housing association sites.

There are various on-street waiting restrictions in place that suit the specific area in which they are located. They either restrict the length of time vehicles can wait or restrict vehicles

parking in specific areas either at any time or at certain times.

Parking improvement recommendations:

- Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem
- Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant.

Sustainable integration

Sustainable integration with on-street parking can be achieved using a multi-modal approach to transport e.g car club schemes which focus on the use of vehicles as a mode of transport but having a scheme in place is likely to reduce the number of vehicles in the region, especially those making infrequent trips.

Providing a good taxi service with taxi ranks located in all key areas, including those near public transport stations and bus stops will also reduce the need for vehicle trips.

If there is sufficient parking capacity within car parks and in nearby streets, it may be possible to reduce the areas of on-street parking to allow segregated active travel routes. Installing on-street EV charge points will help to encourage the purchasing of electric vehicles in all locations.

Sustainable integration recommendations:

- Investigate the introduction of car club schemes
- Undertake taxi demand studies to determine if the appropriate number of taxi ranks are in place across the districts
- Undertake study to determine the requirements for on-street EV charge points
- Determine any areas where on-street parking can be removed to support cycling routes contained in the LCWIP.

Parking operations

It is acknowledged that in many instances, on-street parking provides premium parking places which are often located close to the key trip generators i.e., town / village centres, tourist hotspots etc.

It is not unusual to see parking charges in operation in these types of locations due to the benefits these parking places bring. With this in mind, charging for these parking spaces is recommended.

These type of premium parking places along with other locations outside of the core area should be part of an improvement regime to ensure good quality signage and road markings are in place, to reduce the possibility of appeals against Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).



It is recommended to develop an asset register of all locations and when signs and road markings were replaced. This record will be a useful resource over the lifetime of the parking strategy.

Parking operations recommendations:

- Ensure that all traffic regulation orders are up to date and relevant.
- Consider the introduction of parking charges in core / premium on-street locations in town and village centres
- Undertake a signage and road marking improvement review to avoid any issues with PCN issue.

6. Our actions

There is a crucial need to understand when the parking strategy recommendations should be delivered through the creation of a prioritised action and implementation plan. The next few pages outline the recommendations broken down into early interventions as well as short, medium and long-term actions.

Early interventions

There are a number of recommendations that can be delivered within 12 months following approval of the parking strategy.

Page 29

Recommendation Theme	Type	Recommendation	Lead Authority	Stakeholder support BDC	Stakeholder support MSDC
Quality of car parks	off-street	Car park improvement maintenance programme	BMSDC	81%	85%
		Carry out car park signage review and develop and implementation plan	BMSDC	64%	69%
Sustainable transport	off-street	Promote active travel to reduce parking demand	SCC	76%	70%
Land use development	off-street	Understand coach parking requirement	BMSDC	65%	42%
		Allow overnight parking for motorhomes in car parks	BMSDC	54%	49%
Car park technology	off-street	Improve Council's parking website	BMSDC	51%	52%

Short Term Actions

Short-term actions should include the highest priority recommendations based on the level of stakeholder support (stage two online questionnaire), the approximate cost to deliver and the lead authority, and deliver actions within a five-year period.

Recommendation Theme	Type	Recommendation	Lead Authority	Stakeholder support BDC	Stakeholder support MSDC
Quality of car parks	off-street	Increase safety within car parks	BMSDC	63%	68%
		Upgrade the pay and display machines	BMSDC	50%	63%
Sustainable transport	off-street	Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in their car parks	BMSDC	63%	62%
		Investigate partnerships with car club providers	BMSDC	29%	28%
Sustainable highways	on-street	Investigate partnerships with car club providers	BMSDC	27%	25%
		Understand taxi demand in key locations	SCC	63%	59%
Car Park Technology	off-street	Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks	BMSDC	38%	46%
		Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management (e.g. priority parking spaces)	BMSDC	49%	54%
		Investigate using variable message signs (e.g. signs which could display the number of spaces available in real time) Signs	SCC	46%	54%
		Consider smart parking integration e.g. parking apps and virtual permits	BMSDC	47%	53%
Parking Capacity	off-street	Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible	SCC	63%	67%
		Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	BMSDC	98%	96%
Parking Improvement	on-street	Undertake verge, pavement and open spaces parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	SCC	84%	87%
		Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	SCC	90%	92%
Parking Charges	off-street	Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	BMSDC	58%	75%
		Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas	BMSDC	49%	59%
Car Parking Designation	off-street	The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	BMSDC	78%	80%
Enforcement	off-street	Increase efficiency of enforcement operation	BMSDC	-	-

Medium / Long-Term Actions

Some of these recommendations may not be required due to short or medium-term recommendations reducing the parking pressure. However, it is important they are acknowledged and actioned if and when required.

The priority should be more focused on the need for action as opposed to stakeholder support, although this is still an important consideration. It also means that there will be longer for the councils to prepare for implementation.

Recommendation Theme	Type	Recommendation	Lead Authority	Stakeholder support BDC	Stakeholder support MSDC
Quality of car parks	off-street	Improve the public realm	BMSDC		
Sustainable transport	off-street	Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	BMSDC	80%	81%
		Consider implementing docked bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters in car parks	BMSDC	41%	38%
Sustainable highways	on-street	Investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points	BMSDC / SCC	54%	56%
		Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	SCC	75%	74%
Parking Capacity	off-street	Capacity shortfalls may need to be considered where demand for parking outweighs supply	BMSDC	65%	65%
Parking Charges	off-street	Review parking charges every other year to reflect surrounding area	BMSDC	55%	67%
Parking operations	on-street	Consider the introduction of parking charges for key on-street provision such as core town centre areas to manage demand and increase turnover of spaces.	SCC	31%	36%
		Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	BMSDC / SCC	63%	64%
Land use development	off-street	Identify locations where there is support for additional parking supply	BMSDC	76%	79%
Enforcement	off-street	Review enforcement management procedures	BMSDC	-	-

This page is intentionally left blank



Parking Strategy 2022 - 2042

Contents

1.0	PREPARING THE PARKING STRATEGY	3
1.1	INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.2	RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARKING AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY	3
2.0	CAR PARK STRATEGY OPTIONS	5
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.2	PARKING STRATEGY ASSESSMENT.....	6
2.3	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING CAPACITY.....	6
2.3.1	INCREASE PARKING PROVISION IN SPECIFIC TOWNS AND VILLAGES..	6
2.3.11	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	8
2.3.4	UTILISE ON-STREET PARKING FOR SHORT-STAY PARKING ACTS.....	9
2.3.41	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	10
2.3.5	SAFEGUARD PARKING PROVISION FOR DEVELOPMENT SITES	11
2.3.51	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	12
2.4	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: QUALITY OF CAR PARKS.....	12
2.4.1	CAR PARK IMPROVEMENT REGIME.....	12
2.4.11	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	13
2.4.2	CAR PARK SIGNAGE STRATEGY	14
2.4.21	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	14
2.4.3	INCREASE SAFETY PROVISION IN CAR PARKS.....	16
2.4.31	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	17
2.4.4	PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS IN CAR PARKS	17
2.4.41	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	18
2.4.5	UPGRADE PAY & DISPLAY TO PAY ON EXIT IN SUITABLE CAR PARKS	18
2.4.51	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	21
2.5	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING CHARGES	21
2.5.1	ADJUSTING THE PARKING TARIFF.....	22
2.5.2	BENCHMARKING WITH NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES	26
2.6	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARK DESIGNATION (SHORT / LONG-STAY PROVISION)	28
2.7	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT	29
2.7.1	ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS.....	30
2.7.2	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	31
2.7.3	INTEGRATING CAR PARKS AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT	32
2.7.31	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	33
2.7.4	PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL TO REDUCE DEMAND ON PARKING	33

2.7.41	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	34
2.7.5	CAR SHARING CLUB SCHEME	35
2.8	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: LAND USE DEVELOPMENT	37
2.8.1	IDENTIFICATION OF NEW CAR PARK SITES IN KEY AREAS	37
2.8.2	PROVISION OF COACH PARKING WITHIN CAR PARKS	38
2.8.21	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	40
2.8.22	OVERNIGHT MOTORHOME PARKING	40
2.9	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY	43
2.9.1	TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE DEMAND	43
2.9.2	VEHICLE PROPULSION TECHNOLOGY	45
2.9.3	OPERATIONAL IMPACTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY	45
2.10	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARKING ENFORCEMENT	47
2.11	RECOMMENDATION COST AND TIMESCALE SUMMARY – OFF STREET PARKING	47
3.0	ON-STREET PARKING PROVISION IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK.....	51
4.0	ON-STREET PARKING STRATEGY OPTIONS	54
4.1	INTRODUCTION	54
4.2	PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING POLICY	54
4.2.1	INTRODUCTION OF RESIDENT PARKING SCHEMES.....	55
4.2.11	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	57
4.2.2	ALLOW RESIDENTS TO PARK IN OFF-STREET CAR PARKS OVERNIGHT 58	
4.2.21	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	59
4.2.3	UNDERTAKE PARKING BEAT SURVEYS WITHIN VICINITY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES.....	59
4.3	PARKING INTERVENTION: PARKING IMPROVEMENT.....	60
4.3.1	PREVENTING VERGE AND OPEN SPACE PARKING	61
4.3.11	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	62
4.3.2	ON STREET WAITING RESTRICTION REVIEW PROGRAMME	63
4.3.21	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	63
4.4	PARKING INTERVENTION: SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION.....	64
4.4.1	INTRODUCTION OF CAR SHARING CLUB SCHEMES	64
4.4.11	COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION	65
4.4.2	UNDERTAKE UNMET TAXI DEMAND	65
4.4.21	COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION	66
4.4.3	INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL FOR ON-STREET EV CHARGING POINTS	66
4.4.31	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	67

4.4.4	REMOVE ON-STREET PARKING TO SUPPORT WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES THAT ARE PRIORITISED IN THE LCWIP	68
4.5	PARKING INTEVENTION: PARKING OPERATIONS	68
4.5.1	RELOCATE DISABLED BAYS FROM ON-STREET TO OFF STREET	69
4.5.11	COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	70
4.5.2	INTRODUCTION OF PAY & DISPLAY PARKING IN KEY ON-STREET AREAS	71
4.5.21	COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION	72
4.5.3	ON-STREET PARKING SIGNAGE AND ROAD MARKING IMPROVEMENT REGIME	72
4.5.31	COST INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION	73
4.5.4	RESIDENTIAL CONCESSIONS FOR DROPPED KERBS AND DRIVEWAYS	74
4.5.41	COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION	75
4.6	RECOMMENDATION COST AND TIMESCALE SUMMARY – ON STREET PARKING	75

1.0 PREPARING THE PARKING STRATEGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A successful parking strategy is one that supports other initiatives to achieve the objectives of a local authority, stakeholders and the public. A parking strategy can have an impact in isolation but is far more effective when used in parallel with other recommendations.

The British Parking Association (BPA) carried out a user survey and ranked the top 10 factors that dictate a driver's choice of car park:

- Location
- Personal safety
- Safe environment
- Tariffs
- Ease of access
- Congestion / queues
- Number of spaces
- Effective surveillance
- Size of parking spaces
- Appropriate lighting

All factors have been considered as part of this parking strategy, with a focus on those that are related to supporting the future Joint Local Plan. Factors related to safety and security need to be as high a quality as possible, but they have a limited impact on decisions about location, size and cost of parking which have a closer relationship with the local economy.

1.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARKING AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Town and village economic prosperity is driven by a wide range of factors that are interlinked in many complex ways. Population and demographics, the health of the local and regional economies, the size of the centre and its retail and leisure offer, and the proximity of competing towns are just a few of the many important factors.

Town and village centres can be considered as an ecosystem where retail is an important element, but it may not be the most important. Many urban centres including towns have seen a reduction in the number of shopping outlets, but the most

successful town centres have found a way to respond to this change by tapping into new sources of income from leisure, food and drink uses and residential development.

Accessibility and transport options to towns and villages are just one factor that users consider in their decision making about where to shop and the price and availability of parking is just one element of the whole travel experience. The link between parking and prosperity is difficult to isolate from amongst all these other factors and there is not much quantitative evidence beyond the anecdotal.

The Association of Town and City Management and the British Parking Association produced guidance on parking provision called "[Re-Think! Parking on the High Street](#)". This showed that there is a clear link between the number of parking spaces and town and village footfall, but the report warns against the conclusion that the provision of more spaces causes increased footfall. The report shows the link between the cost of parking and footfall is less obvious and linear, suggesting that other factors are at work.

A major study was produced for the Welsh Government in 2015 titled "[Assessing the Impact of Car Parking Charges on Town Centre Footfall](#)". Although most of the examples in the study are from Wales, the results and principles are still applicable to England and the Suffolk region. Key findings from the study include:

- There is a lack of robust evidence to link car park strategies with town centre footfall. It is difficult to separate the impacts of parking charges from all the other factors in a robust and convincing way
- Businesses and workers are convinced that parking charges have an impact on the number of people coming to town centres, but there is little published evidence to support this assertion beyond the anecdotal. There is a relationship, but it may be weaker than expected
- Town centre visitors do take account of parking charges and the availability of spaces, but they are just two of many other transport and non-transport factors
- Free parking was often found to not benefit target visitors but was used by town centre workers rather than shoppers and had little impact on footfall
- Town centre economies are highly localised and very specific to local conditions and town centre strategies should be tailored to local areas to maximise footfall.

Studies and reports by business organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses often link town and village vitality with parking charges but provide little hard evidence to prove the link. [Sustrans research](#) found that traders over estimate the amount of income from car users and under estimate the importance of pedestrians.

In 2016, [a major study](#) investigating the links between parking and economic performance was undertaken on behalf of London Councils to research questions relating to the correlation between the amount of free / low-cost parking and commercial activity (if any), how people travel to towns and villages and what they spend. The key findings drawn from the study that could equally apply to Babergh and Mid Suffolk were that:

- More parking does not necessarily mean greater commercial success
- There is no such thing as free parking - Councils must pay for developing, maintaining and enforcing parking
- Shopkeepers consistently overestimate the share of their customers arriving by car
- Car drivers spend more during a single trip whilst walkers and bus users spend more during the course of a week or month (due to the fact that they visit more frequently)

2.0 CAR PARK STRATEGY OPTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A wide range of parking recommendations exist to enable the parking strategy to support other policies and key documents within Babergh and Mid Suffolk such as the Joint Local Plan to achieve their objectives. Consultation with stakeholders plus research and experience from other parking strategies and measures implemented in the UK have been used to develop a list of possible changes and improvements to the provision of parking within council car parks.

The recommendations have been assessed on an independent basis without any preconceptions. An assessment of the impacts of these recommendations in other places and their appropriateness to the districts is presented in the following section. The recommendations fall within eight themes, which are presented in Table 1.

Car Park Strategy Theme	
1	Parking Capacity
2	Quality of Car Parks
3	Parking Charges
4	Car Park Designation
5	Sustainable Transport
6	Land Use Development
7	Car Park Technology
8	Car Parking Enforcement

Table 1 – parking strategy recommendation themes

2.2 PARKING STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Each of the recommendations has been assessed in the following section to demonstrate their likely effects in the context of the districts and the councils parking operations. Many of the recommendations are linked, for instance parking charges has a direct relationship with demand and many other factors affect demand, so these factors must be considered together.

The recommendations have been assessed with reference to a series of indicators, including:

- Economic indicators (e.g., footfall, expenditure, vacancy rates)
- Consideration of the Joint Local Plan
- Traffic movements
- Conservation and environmental
- Council parking operations

2.3 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING CAPACITY

The parking study report sets out the forecast requirements for potential new parking capacity in the future. The key conclusions are that growth of parking demand in specific areas such as Stowmarket, Debenham, Eye, and Needham Market reveal the possibility of a parking capacity shortfall through the life of the parking strategy, whereas other locations such as Sudbury should have sufficient capacity over the next 20 years to 2042. It is therefore essential that parking occupancy surveys are carried out and forecasting is updated on a regular basis to ensure parking occupancy rates are monitored to determine if and when additional parking supply is needed.

2.3.1 INCREASE PARKING PROVISION IN SPECIFIC TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Taking the results from the peak survey periods undertaken as part of the parking strategy development, there is an argument that increased parking provision is required in some locations already. Examples include Debenham, which only has one small car park that is regularly full, Eye, which demonstrates an average occupancy rate of 94%, and Needham Market, which demonstrates an average occupancy rate of 92%. An increase in parking supply may also be required in Stowmarket by 2027. Based on this future demand forecasting, it is highly likely that additional parking will be required in some locations within the next 20 years, and more likely within the next 10 years.

Whilst the results of the TEMPPro forecasting suggests that several locations, particularly within Mid Suffolk will require additional parking capacity in the future, the model has not taken into account any scenarios around strategy interventions that may reduce the impact of parking in these locations. For example: improvements to sustainable transport provision, which will reduce dependency on vehicles or consideration of a parking supply on the outskirts of the area, which may have more land use opportunities.

Delivery of new / additional car parks is generally achieved through either a surface level car park or a multi-storey car park. A surface level car park will be less expensive to deliver as it requires little if any structural engineering and does not require the infrastructure that multi-storey car parks do. However, the number of spaces that can be achieved within a specific footprint will be severely limited in comparison to a multi-storey car park, as only one level can be constructed.

The decision on the type of new parking supply should be made based on the number of parking spaces required and the amount of funding available. There are currently no multi-storey car parks within the districts. Stowmarket has been identified as the only suitable location for a multi-storey car park, based on those locations that have been identified as having parking pressure now or in the future.

2.3.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

It is difficult to estimate potential costs for the provision of additional car parking spaces across the districts as further work will be required to establish the requirements. The costs involved are also dependent on the approach taken by the Councils. Increasing the occupancy of car parks can be achieved through the expansion of existing car parks or the implementation of new car parks. Obviously, the costs of implementation for a new car park will be higher compared to the expansion of an existing car park.

When considering the cost of a Multi-Storey car park, the general approach is to estimate the cost per space i.e., a 400-capacity car park will cost substantially more than a 200-capacity car park. The average Multi-Storey car park is likely to cost between £15,000 and £20,000 per bay to build. A 200 capacity Multi-Storey car park is likely to cost in the region of **£3m - £4m**. This cost does not include any land acquisition costs as this will be dependent on the individual site.

These costs only represent an average construction cost, there are many circumstances that can impact the cost of a Multi-Storey car park such as location, cost of land, nature of the ground and buried utilities, type of material used for construction, and access and egress design. A further **£200,000-£250,000** is likely to be required for the pre-construction works including feasibility and design works, project management fees, and costs involved in the planning application. It is possible to implement car parks that are lower in cost than Multi-Storey car parks, achieving similar parking capacities.

A common example is a decked car park which is designed using steel frame structures. This type of car park can save up to 25% of the cost of a traditional Multi-Storey car park. However, the appearance is not as aesthetically pleasing, and they are more commonly found in locations such as train stations where public realm is not as important factor as town centres. In a location with the historic nature and characteristics such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk, it's highly unlikely there would be an appetite from stakeholders for a decked car park.

Figure 1 provides an example of a traditional Multi-Storey and a decked car park.



Figure 1 – Example of traditional Multi-Storey car park and decked car park

A surface level car park will be substantially lower cost to deliver as there will be no (or very little) structural requirements and ground stabilisation works that can be high cost on Multi-Storey car parks. They provide lower capacities unless a large parcel of land can be located. In the vast majority of locations where additional parking supply may be required, this is highly unlikely.

The cost of a surface level car park will be dependent on the level of infrastructure included. For instance, having pay on exit systems with barrier control will result in higher costs than Pay & Display. As recommended in this strategy, the aim should be to move towards pay on exit. As the main cost for a surface car park will be the land acquisition, it is not considered feasible to provide an accurate cost estimate, as there are so many variables involved but construction works will likely cost in the region of **£100,000**. This is likely to be the preferred approach for stakeholders based on the environment of the locations that may require additional parking.

2.3.4 UTILISE ON-STREET PARKING FOR SHORT-STAY PARKING ACTS

On-street parking is recognised as providing an essential service in enabling short-stay visits to take place close to many town centre destinations, which is provided free of charge through limited waiting. Most of these on-street spaces in the town centre are likely to be very well used. It is not envisaged that on-street parking is likely to change significantly enough to reduce capacity in the future and so has not been included in the calculations of future demand and capacity. Minor changes may be necessary for traffic management or public realm reasons and consideration should be given to increasing the on-street provision where possible to encourage short-stay visits without impacting key car parks.

This recommendation would only be applicable to those locations where parking charges are in place as there will be little benefit for visitors to use short-term parking bays when there are free long-stay parking opportunities available. The exception to this rule is if short-term parking bays can be provided in core areas such as High Streets. These locations may save time in comparison to journeys from the car parks, and would be desirable for some visitors, even with free parking available in car parks.

It is acknowledged that in some locations there is existing on-street parking provision in place, without restriction, which would make this recommendation redundant. To mitigate against this, consideration should be given to implementing limited waiting bays in these locations to restrict the length of stay. This would generate a higher rate of parking space turnover and positively impact the local economy. With no restriction, vehicles parking on-street may not be short-term visitors. The more desirable the location, the more important the parking bays are for short-term trips.



Figure 2 – Example of on-street parking location limited waiting could be implemented

2.3.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

This is one of the lowest cost recommendations included within the parking strategy. As the recommendation is looking at providing free short-term parking bays, there are no associated infrastructure required such as payment machines. Therefore, the only cost is officer time to produce designs, the legal costs for advertising Traffic Regulation Orders, consultation with stakeholders, and minimal implementation costs.

The implementation costs will involve signage and road markings only. The overall cost will be dependent on the number of locations that are included within the Traffic Regulation Order. The signage cost per site is likely to be no more than **£1,000** (based

on installation of two signs and posts). The road marking cost is likely to be **£500 per site**.

The higher cost will be the non-implementation costs of this recommendation. Although the design, consultation, and legal costs can be incorporated together, it will still cost more than the delivery costs. Working on the assumption that the work will be carried out by the local highway authority (Suffolk County Council), the design cost will be in the region of **£5,000**. Carrying out consultation with stakeholders will cost in the region of **£2,500**. Carrying out the legal work, which includes advertising the Traffic Regulation Order will cost in the region of **£5,000**.

If a decision was made to use an external consultant to carry out the work as opposed to the local highway authority, this may increase the cost slightly. **£20,000** should be sufficient for the work.

2.3.5 SAFEGUARD PARKING PROVISION FOR DEVELOPMENT SITES

Development sites, especially those noticeable in size are likely to impact the demand on car parks. In some cases, this may result in the loss of a car park if the decision is made to use the land for alternative use. This is only likely to occur at car park sites where the car park is underutilised and subject to low occupancy rates. Development sites can have a significant impact on car parks that remain depending on the intended use of the site. Many new development sites do not have the parking supply to cater for the demand, which results in vehicles displacing to alternative nearby car parks adding pressure to existing car parks.

To help mitigate against this, it is vital that appropriate measures and processes are put in place to reduce the likelihood of this issue occurring. If the development site is likely to result in high parking demand, planning teams should specify that a higher number of parking places are supplied, potentially at the expense of the development site. Alternatively, the planning team should ensure that the appropriate sustainable transport provisions are in place to achieve an element of modal shift. With the introduction of the [LTN 1/20 guidance](#) from Central Government, along with the work the Councils are undertaking with the [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\)](#), it should be possible to reduce the demand on parking.

Where mitigation is not possible, every effort should be made to insist that parking surveys of nearby off-street and on-street parking provision are undertaken to identify if the development site may add further stress to those car parks at or close to capacity. Allowing this to occur may severely impact the local economy as visitors may be unable to locate a parking space. If parking surveys demonstrate high parking occupancy rates, serious consideration must be given to whether the proposed development site should be allowed to proceed.

2.3.51 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

This is a recommendation that has no associated costs

2.4 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: QUALITY OF CAR PARKS

As referred to in section 4, the quality of the council owned car parks is generally below the required standard to maximise the visitor experience. Perhaps apart from Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre) car park in Stowmarket, which has recently undergone improvement works. Each car park has the scope for improvement, which may make certain car parks more appealing. For instance, Magdalen Road car park in Hadleigh is located in a good position. However, the condition of the car park is poor in places and potentially confusing with the separation of long-stay and short-stay parking spaces. Improving this car park will likely result in greater usage.

2.4.1 CAR PARK IMPROVEMENT REGIME

Although there is no charge for short-term parking in Babergh car parks, a number of car parks in more urban environments such as Sudbury and Hadleigh, do require payment after a 3-hour period. This does generate income for the parking service. Reviewing the [Civil Parking Enforcement \(off street\) Annual report - 2020/21](#) produced by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council demonstrates that over £30,000 was made through the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices alone. Whilst this is less than the expenditure such as staff costs, once income from those who need to pay for parking (after the 3-hour free period), there should be some surplus revenue available for the Councils.

Within Mid Suffolk there are parking charges in place in Stowmarket car parks resulting in surplus income that the council can reinvest into the parking service. Allocating a

proportion of this income to create an improvement regime will result in each car park improving over the coming years. Utilising the income generated by the car parks means no capital funding will be required to address the issues.

The British Parking Association offers Life Care Plans, which use investment to prolong the life span of car parks. This leads to a better customer experience and provides a more sustained investment than an ad-hoc approach to maintenance.

Using the information contained in section 4, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will be able to build up an inventory of required improvements for each car park. These can be filtered into short-term and medium-term actions based on the severity of works required and the recommendations. The inventory should prioritise both car parks and recommendations. For instance, Magdalen Road car park would benefit from improvements to the car park layout and a new payment system to cover parking acts over the 3-hour period. A short-term action could be to prepare a new layout for the car park (and resurface) and a medium-term measure could be to implement a new payment system.

Building an inventory for each car park with costed recommendations will enable robust financial planning. The number of improvements delivered would be largely based on the level of income generated from car parks, especially if the allocation for the improvement regime was a percentage of turnover e.g £1m turnover in year one and £2m turnover in year two, more interventions would be delivered in the second year.

2.4.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

It is not possible to provide a realistic cost estimate for this recommendation as there are too many variables involved. It would be for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to identify the improvements, as well as which car park is addressed each year. The cost is likely to vary significantly for each car park.

As a guide, it is recommended to consider a fixed percentage of turnover as the budget to address car park improvements. A percentage in the region of **5%** should be sufficient to achieve improvements across all car parks within a five-year period, assuming turnover remains consistent and taking into consideration income levels before Covid-19.

2.4.2 CAR PARK SIGNAGE STRATEGY

As outlined in the study report, there is a clear need to improve signage relating to car parks across all locations in both districts. The study report provides sufficient detail to understand the most effective approach to improving the car park experience by delivering various levels of car park signage, both static signs, and Variable Message Signs.

To provide a structure around this, and ensure a consistent approach is taken with signage to and from car parks, it is recommended to produce a separate car park signage strategy. This document will outline the required parking signage for each level i.e., strategic, specific car park etc, and can provide sign face designs that can be used to create schedules for delivery. Specific locations can be determined to allow quick installation. Erecting signage (most notably static signs) is a low-cost item and may be subject to quick wins either at the start or end of financial years if funds require spending. Therefore, the aim of the car park signage strategy should be to provide Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils with a catalogue of signs that can be delivered in a short timeframe.

Costs should be allocated to each type of sign as the number of signs required make it unlikely this recommendation can be delivered across one year. A delivery programme should be developed to prioritise the signs that are delivered first. Based on the high-level work done as part of the car park strategy, it is recommended to focus on strategic level parking signs initially to assist direct traffic onto the local roads. As an interim measure, static signs can then provide further direction, with an aim to replace some of these with VMS.

2.4.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

The cost for the signage improvements across the two districts will be dependent on the signage strategy. If the signage strategy outlines 10 Variable Message Signs and 10 standard signs this will have a much higher implementation cost compared to an alternative recommendation, which could be five Variable Message Signs and 15 standard signs. Therefore, it is not feasible at this stage to provide an overall cost estimate.

It is possible to provide a cost estimate for individual signs, which can provide an indication on likely funding required. A standard static parking sign will cost in the region of **£500-£2,000** depending on the size and the information contained. Some parking signs can be large junction style signs that are located on the strategic road network and require two reinforced posts whereas other parking signs can be small directional signs that can be located on existing posts.

Similarly with Variable Message Signs, the cost will be dependent on the type of sign with large and small sign options available. A large Variable Message Sign is likely to cost in the region of **£15,000-£20,000** depending on the detail and location. A medium size sign is likely to cost in the region of **£10,000-£15,000**, and a small size sign is likely to cost in the region of **£5,000-£10,000**. These costs include the work required to link the signs to central Intelligent Transport Systems that can control the signs.

Based on the initial work undertaken as part of this car park strategy, three strategic Variable Message Signs and six specific car park Variable Message Signs have been recommended. Working the assumption, the strategic VMS would be large signs this would require **£45,000-£60,000** of funding. Assuming the six specific VMS may be small or medium an approximate budget of **£60,000** would be required. This means in total in the region of **£105,000-£120,000** would be required for a district wide Variable Message Sign system.

It is unlikely that this level of funding will be immediately available. Therefore, VMS will need prioritising based on what is considered the most critical sites to deliver in year 1. The signage strategy will likely demonstrate that static signage can be used in conjunction with the VMS. The cost of static signage will be minimal in comparison to the VMS. A budget of approximately **£10,000-£20,000** will be sufficient to provide accompanying signage to the VMS.

As outlined above, it is recommended to develop a car park signage strategy, which will provide more detail and context around what is required for car parking signage in the towns and villages. A signage strategy can be carried out internally, although it may be more effective to use external consultants who will consider sites based on driver needs rather than any local knowledge that may impact the effectiveness of the signage. A budget of **£20,000** would be sufficient for a district wide signage strategy.

2.4.3 INCREASE SAFETY PROVISION IN CAR PARKS

Although there are no major concerns with pedestrian safety across the Babergh and Mid Suffolk car parks, it is felt that increasing the safety provision for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) should be taken forward as part of the car park improvement regime. The level of safety provision will need to be taken on a car park by car park basis as the size and location of car parks will be an important consideration. For instance, the safety provision for a large car park such as Meadow Centre (Asda) car park in Stowmarket will be considerably different to the safety provision in Cross Street car park in Eye.

In the larger car parks, the aim, where possible should be to incorporate pedestrian walkways that are coloured or segregated (i.e., kerb) from the main traffic flow and pedestrian crossing points to give pedestrians priority over traffic. Some car parks such as Union Street West car park in Stowmarket have this provision in place already and provide a good example of the safety provision that can be achieved. Figure 3 provides an example of the pedestrian provision in place within the car park.



Figure 3 – Example of pedestrian provision in The Friary Multi-Storey

A list of potential safety improvements should be developed for each car park, with costs for delivery. Again, these will fall into short and medium-term actions based on the potential funding that may be available. The safety recommendations should be prioritised based on what is required first. Car parks with the highest occupancy rates

would benefit from additional safety provision for pedestrians and as the most popular car parks across the districts, this would provide a strong justification for priority.

2.4.31 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

The costs involved with this recommendation would need to be decided on a car park need basis. For instance, what would be effective in The Station (Railway) car park in Sudbury may not be effective in Pin Mill car park. It is not envisaged that high levels of funding will be required, and the works would be carried out over a multi-year funding programme, similar to the car park improvement programme. A budget of **£10,000-£15,000** per year would be sufficient to allow pedestrian safety improvements to be made to at least three or four car parks each time.

2.4.4 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS IN CAR PARKS

Alongside the safety improvements, it is recommended that consideration be given to public realm improvements to improve the appearance of the car parks and to create a more welcoming environment for visitors.

The public realm improvements and safety improvements are directly linked, and there is opportunity to integrate these as one deliverable if required. Figure 4 provides an example of public realm improvements within a town centre car park in the North-West of England. The work was a result of a need to resurface the car park. It also provided the opportunity to install greenery such as trees and vegetation alongside new pedestrian walkways and crossing points that achieved a far better environment for NMUs alongside a better parking experience. This is an example of what can be achieved within a town centre surface car park.



Figure 4 – Example of public realm improvements in surface car park

There are various types of public realm improvements to consider as part of improvements in the district's town and village locations including:

- Improved surface and use of different materials
- Coloured surfacing within car parks to provide greater distinction of spaces
- Incorporation of greenery such as trees and vegetation
- Bespoke way-finding that has linkages to the historic nature of the region
- Lighting improvements
- The creation of additional facilities such as open spaces, and active travel hubs.

As part of the public realm improvements, consideration should be given to the upgrading of street lighting. LED lighting offers sustainability improvements as it is more energy efficient compared to older style lighting and generally provides greater illumination resulting in a better experience for users, especially during hours of darkness. Whilst LEDs can be more energy efficient, use across the districts would be in line with both council motions i.e., that LEDs are not so powerful as to disturb nature's patterns, e.g by using timers, filters etc There are also likely to cost savings due to energy efficiency.

2.4.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

Providing a cost estimate at this stage is not viable as understandably further work would be required to develop a comprehensive list of all potential improvements to each car park. It is recommended to develop a list of public realm improvements that are costed over the short-term action plan before determining which sites should be delivered.

2.4.5 UPGRADE PAY & DISPLAY TO PAY ON EXIT IN SUITABLE CAR PARKS

Pay on exit is widely regarded as the preferred method of paying for parking. It is likely to be a positive inclusion for some car parks in Stowmarket (as the only town centre with short-stay and long-stay parking charges in place) as research shows that visitors spend longer in locations when pay on exit systems are in place as there is no concern on the expiry of tickets that may lead to the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices.

Drivers take a ticket (or token/chip coin) on entry at a barrier system before locating a space. The ticket or token is then kept in their possession for the duration over which the vehicle is parked. On returning to the car park, the driver pays for their parking

stay at a centrally located payment machine before returning to their car and exiting via a barrier system within a grace period (e.g., 10-15 minutes) using their validated ticket or token. A flat rate can apply, therefore eliminating the need to take a ticket on entry or to have an entry barrier.

Advantages

- the system is considered effective in that payment is made for actual parking stay, rather than based on a predicted stay as with Pay & Display
- the system can be fully automated and dispenses with the need for manned booths at entry/exit points
- duplicating machines (in parallel or series) can provide backup in the case of mechanical failure
- a charging system can be used to designate the length of stay
- the system is seen as a deterrent to thieves as a ticket is required for exit.

Disadvantages

- Equipment and maintenance costs are relatively high and technical support is required
- It is essential that prior to arriving at the exit point drivers have made the payment or they will not be able to get through the barrier and will cause delay
- A contingency plan is necessary in the event of equipment malfunction. Mechanical failure to barriers and payment machines can cause delay and congestion and loss of revenue is a problem if barrier or ticketing machines are out of order.

Pay & Display will be appropriate in smaller car parks or where parking charges are low. Typically, one P&D unit might serve 30 – 70 car park spaces and collect several hundred pounds of revenue per week.

Pay & Display requires the driver to initially locate a space and then purchase a ticket from a machine within the car park. The ticket is displayed in the vehicle. It is a tried and tested system which the public understand and are familiar with.

Advantages

- The system eliminates the requirement for entry/exit barriers and so eliminates delays at entrances and exits to the car park. A single-entry lane can admit up to 15 vehicles per minute
- In the terms of the equipment that is required, there are no barriers needed, but at least one Pay & Display machine is required on each floor
- The use of enforcement to ensure short stay can increase turnover, as users are wary of receiving a penalty charge notice

- The presence of Civil Enforcement Officers can act as a deterrent to crime.

Disadvantages

- The system requires regular monitoring or enforcement by staff to ensure that users firstly have a ticket and secondly do not exceed their length of stay
- In cases where parking is permitted for more than one fixed period, the driver must decide how much time to purchase before leaving the vehicle
- With the risk of a penalty charge most users will tend to err on the side of caution and pay to stay for longer than they actually need to, which can increase revenue and so is perceived as unfair
- There are safety concerns, as display of ticket indicates the length of time the owner is likely to be away from the vehicle

User's Value for Money

Pay on exit is often perceived as a fairer system, charging for the actual time of stay. The tariff is often broken down into time bands (as they would be in a Pay and Display system). The user has to pay for the entirety of the band, even if they only stayed for a minute within that band (e.g., the user pays for two hours if the system is set in hourly bands even if he or she only stayed for one hour and one minute). Also, the user starts to pay for 'parked' time as soon as they have taken a ticket on entry, even whilst searching for and occupying a space which is not the case with Pay and Display. On the other hand, users do not face a steep penalty charge if they misjudge how long they will be away for their vehicle, as they do in a Pay and Display system.

Enforcement

Pay and Display does have higher enforcement costs, but all systems still require some enforcement of contraventions such as parking in a disabled bay without a Blue Badge or parking outside the marked bays in the car park. In terms of enforcing length of stay in a Pay on exit car park, this is usually built into the charging system so that for example, those who stay over 4 hours in a short stay car park might be charged £10 or £20 at the machines when they go to validate their tickets. Without a validated ticket or token, they will not be able to exit the car park. Therefore, the charges can be used to enforce a length of stay designation. Although the majority of revenue from penalty charges would be lost in a Pay on exit car park, this is balanced by the reduced

enforcement needs, and therefore the systems have relatively neutral enforcement cost/revenue implications.

Revenue

With comparable maintenance /operational costs it is difficult to say which system will collect higher revenue and this would vary depending on a number of conditions (e.g., size, complexity, level of use) from one car park to the next and depending on whether there were economies of scale. Although many users over pay in a Pay and Display system because they have overestimated their length of stay, this often only offsets those who under pay or do not pay at all and manage to escape a penalty charge. A Pay on exit system means users always pay the correct amount for their parking.

2.4.51 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

There are numerous suppliers of parking management systems and equipment on the market, responsible for sales, project management and installation. The type of service and quality of equipment available can vary considerably between suppliers and the level of parking system required. A parking system can be tailored to suit the individual car park and its needs, from the very basic to a high-tech, state of the art system.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of the key equipment and general costings associated with a Pay on exit system. The range of costs detailed below depends on the manufacturer and the complexity of the equipment. For example, the machinery that uses tokens rather than tickets tends to be at the higher end of the cost range, although it can be more reliable and cost less in operation.

MACHINE / EQUIPMENT	PURCHASE COST
Entry / Exit Barrier	£1,000 - £3,000 (per barrier)
Entry Ticket Dispenser	£3,000 - £6,000 (per dispenser)
Exit Ticket Reader	£3,000 - £5,000 (per reader)
Pay on Foot Machine	£10,000 - £20,000 (per machine)
Operating/Control System & Connection	£75,000 - £150,000

Table 2 – Typical costs for a pay on exit system

2.5 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING CHARGES

Whilst this parking strategy has been produced to cover both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts, there are some differences with the parking operation that require focus on one district more than the other. Parking charges is an example where this is the case.

It is acknowledged that across the Babergh district there are some car parks that provide free short and long-stay parking. There are those car parks, key town centre car parks in Sudbury and Hadleigh, that provide a 3-hour free parking tariff before long-stay parking charges come into operation. Within Mid Suffolk there are again both short and long-stay parking charges in operation in Stowmarket car parks. Elsewhere across the district, there are no parking charges.

2.5.1 ADJUSTING THE PARKING TARIFF

An effective way to manage the use of car parks is to change the cost of parking by adjusting the tariff. The effectiveness of alterations to the car parks that currently charge for parking across Babergh and Mid Suffolk will be constrained by the cost of parking in nearby towns that may provide competition to the districts for visitors. If district parking charges are changed too much it could just cause people to transfer to neighbouring areas where the cost of parking may be lower.

As referred to in section 3.2 of the study report, the cost of parking across the districts is generally lower than all neighbouring areas and towns that have similar characteristics, especially within Babergh with the free short-stay parking tariff. Therefore, it is unlikely that increasing parking charges would result in a significant reduction in footfall as there will be no cheaper alternative.

Another important consideration when adjusting car parking tariffs is to ensure there are no alternative parking operators that would benefit from the councils parking tariffs increasing e.g a private operator within the area who has separate parking tariffs. Increasing the charges may cause displacement to this car park as visitors seek better value for money. That said, there are currently no alternative parking operators within Babergh and Mid Suffolk apart from those car parks for specific designations i.e., supermarkets. Visitors to these car parks usually only use the car park for that purpose.

Based on the above, there is scope for parking charges to be increased within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Informed by research by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) for the Department for Transport, Table 3 summarises the key advantages and disadvantages of increasing or reducing parking tariffs.

Increasing Charges	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Increases turnover of the most convenient parking spaces, improving consumer convenience, facilitating deliveries, and reducing cruising for parking (searching for an unoccupied space)	May discourage people from visiting the area and reduce economic viability
Reduces the number of spaces needed to meet demand, reducing the total parking costs and allowing more compact development	May reduce accessibility for less well-off users and prove politically and socially unpopular
Encourages long-stay parkers to use less convenient spaces, and encourages travellers (particularly commuters) to use alternative modes when possible	May not provide sufficient funds to facilitate delivery of viable alternative forms of travel
May reduce total vehicle traffic and therefore problems such as traffic congestion, accidents, energy consumption and pollution emissions	If poorly managed and implemented congestion, accidents, energy consumption and emissions could increase as a result of redirection of traffic into inappropriate alternative areas
Generates revenue; ensuring that users pay a greater share of municipal road and parking costs	Only if overall demand for parking is maintained and policy does not divert users to alternative locations
	May discourage people from visiting or returning to the area
	May shorten stays in the area
	May encourage 'searching' traffic which would increase congestion and air pollution, and possibly illegal or inappropriate parking
	May reduce the image of the region as a retail and leisure destination
Decreasing Charges	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Cheaper parking may boost demand for travel into the area, supporting economic activity	Cheaper parking may contribute to an overreliance upon car-based travel into the area and undermine efforts to support adoption of sustainable travel patterns
Decreased charges would likely be a popular move and would be socially easy to implement	Reduced tariffs may lead to reduced income to the Council to invest in wider transport infrastructure
	Reduced tariffs may boost demand for parking leading to issues with supply of parking spaces

Table 3 - Altering Parking Tariffs Key Advantages / Disadvantages

Although the following section should not be considered a detailed evaluation of the likely impact of increasing or reducing charges across the districts, an outline consideration of the broad merits of each has been undertaken.

Operational Impacts of Different Tariffs

The advantages of increasing or reducing parking tariffs in our car parks can be summarised as follows:

- Increasing parking tariffs is most effective as a policy used to manage demand in locations where demand is high, capacity is limited and where specific location and environmental constraints / sensitivities require careful consideration. Where it is anticipated that parking demand will remain high, it might be concluded that increased charges would increase the overall parking income received. In such circumstances, it would be reasonable to conclude that increasing parking charges would support the economic performance of local businesses by increasing the turnover of parking spaces, helping to ensure a healthy amount of parking remains freely available at any given time for visitors arriving, and reducing unnecessary vehicle circulation and associated congestion and delay.
- A policy to decrease parking tariffs might be best employed to improve usage and make use of existing spare capacity. It is popularly considered to be the most effective means of stimulating local economic activity by increasing the attractiveness of the area to “new” visitors and increasing the dwell time of existing car borne visitors to the local areas. In general terms, it might be considered unusual for such a policy to be specifically selected as a mechanism to boost associated income. However, if the effect of lowering tariffs were to boost demand, it may be the case that growth in demand might be sufficient to boost overall income and therefore offset any losses implied as a result of reducing individual tariffs.

Existing tariffs in place across Babergh (long-stay) and Mid Suffolk (Stowmarket) car parks are relatively low when compared to many nearby local authorities and towns with similar characteristics. This includes both short and long-stay and all-day parking as highlighted within the benchmarking exercise. None of the locations chosen for the benchmarking exercise provided a complete lower parking tariff.

Based on the available evidence that existing parking demand remains broadly within capacity, there is no immediate justification for raising charges across the board. There

may however be some limited justification for amendment of tariffs in individual car parks to encourage the relocation of longer-stay parking activity towards more peripheral car parks thereby freeing up space in more central car parks for shorter-stay parking activity.

It may also be the case that charges for short and long-stay and all-day parking could be increased to a rate more in line with nearby competitor towns as set out within table 15 of the study report, the implications of doing so would need to be considered closely to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck between the associated costs and benefits.

If future parking demand increases in line with the forecasting shown in tables 30-33 of the study report, one response could be to increase the charges in the car parks with the highest occupancy rates. This could help manage the demand and increase income, but the risks of this policy are that people could reduce their length of stay or not visit the area at all. One positive impact would be if more people chose to use sustainable travel in response to higher charges.

These are complex travel decisions that take many variables into account, with the cost of parking being just one of them. For some individuals, it could be the deciding factor that triggers a significant change in behaviour while others would not place much importance on it.

Adjusting Hours of Charging

Parking charges applicable in Babergh and Mid Suffolk car parks could be changed to stimulate activity at the times of the day or week that are considered a priority. For example, evening tariffs, where there is currently no charge, to help manage parking for the night time economy. Car parks that operate an evening tariff, usually provide a level of incentives to generate demand by refunding parking charges for customers and reducing their rates if criteria is met.

More Flexible Parking Tariffs

The use of flexible parking tariffs is an option that could be considered as a short-term or medium-term action, particularly given the emergence of new technologies allowing relatively easy and transparent adjustment mechanisms. This approach could involve

adjusting tariffs more frequently by location, over time or for specific events to achieve desirable changes in travel behaviour.

Where car parks are under or over-used, incremental changes to tariffs could be used to attract more users or to reduce demand where car parks are at capacity. Increases should be largely balanced by decreases in charge, so the scheme is not seen as a mechanism for increasing charges. New technology may help to communicate changes in tariff and the ability to make short term changes. Variable signs, improved pay station equipment and increased use of online and mobile technology can be used to enable more flexibility in adjusting tariffs to match demand. Examples of car parks where this may be applicable include the key town centre car parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket, which are subject to high demand on a frequent basis.

An alternative to physically adjusting parking tariffs could be to offer concessions within identified car parks. For example, due to the low usage of North Street car park in Sudbury, this car park could be subject to business permit parking, where concessions are offered to increase usage and allow all-day parking at a lower rate.

2.5.2 BENCHMARKING WITH NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

As the districts do not have any private parking operators, any impact of adjusting parking charges within the key town locations will be unlikely to result in visitors relocating to other locations as there is no alternative parking solution (unless on-street spaces are located). Therefore, one of the greatest barriers to increasing parking charges would be if neighbouring local authorities were providing a better parking offer.

Currently, this is not the case, as Babergh and Mid Suffolk parking tariffs offer the most value for money across all areas included within the benchmarking exercise. Whilst it is unlikely local authorities will reduce their parking tariffs, it is important that their parking tariffs are monitored regularly to ensure there isn't a point where neighbouring authorities are providing a better value for money as this will have a detrimental impact on local economies.

It is therefore recommended to carry out a regular parking charges benchmarking exercise with neighbouring local authorities and towns with similar characteristics to

those within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, to monitor parking tariffs to avoid a situation where visitors may be attracted to other locations based on a better parking offer.

Recommendations – Parking Charges

Where existing parking demand is comfortably met by supply, existing tariffs should be retained in the short term. However, some car parks are overcapacity now or will be in future, so an increase in charges is a viable option to help manage this demand and make more use of quieter car parks. Any targeted increase would need to be limited to ensure that parking remains affordable for all people and to prevent a major transfer to other locations.

Regular monitoring of parking occupancy within car parks should be undertaken to ensure the overall parking provision across all car parks does not reach 85%, which is a point where parking demand may compromise the local economy as locating a parking space can be challenging.

A review of existing tariffs in neighbouring local authorities and towns with similar characteristics to Babergh and Mid Suffolk suggest that parking charges are higher, and in some cases substantially more so. This suggests that there may be scope for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to increase charges within its car parks without necessarily significantly reducing demand, particularly where the location and quality of parking supply is appropriate.

Although altering (increasing) parking charges could be justified in the simplest economic terms, the impact of doing so needs to be understood and assessed in the wider context of how the parking strategy fits with wider transport, movement and economic policy objectives for the local area. Measures to increase parking charges should only be undertaken as part of a wider town centre strategy to manage parking resources, deliver environmental and operational improvements to the area and deliver sustainable travel objectives. It would be helpful to the overall narrative and politically more expedient if it were possible to ring-fence income derived from parking for specific investment in transport and movement infrastructure.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils should engage with stakeholders to investigate the scope for reviewing parking charges in off-street car parks. This would provide an initial understanding for the appetite and briefing stakeholders will provide

the opportunity to outline the benefits and drawbacks for doing so. Increasing parking tariffs should be tied into an increase in parking demand, most notably in the future. The increase in charges should not be excessive to avoid a significant impact on the local economy.

To support the monitoring of car park occupancy to identify if and when the overall parking demand reaches or exceeds 85%, it is recommended to programme a biennial (once every two years) tariff review to determine whether an increase or decrease in parking charges may be necessary.

2.6 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARK DESIGNATION (SHORT / LONG-STAY PROVISION)

Full or partial conversion of some long-stay car parking to provide additional short-stay capacity might be considered within some areas of Sudbury; Hadleigh; and Stowmarket, where existing parking supply is limited. Currently there is limited use of short-stay and long-stay provision such as Magdalen Road car park in Hadleigh.

This recommendation could promote more efficient use of car parks by relocating long-stay commuter parking towards more peripheral locations, allowing shorter-stay parking and a greater turnover of parking activity, closer to key retail and trip generators. This links to the parking charges recommendation where concessions can be offered to long-stay users to encourage more use of those car parks that are underutilised such as North Street car park in Sudbury.

Increasing the provision of short stay in the core town centre car parks, will increase the turnover of spaces as there will be more opportunity to park. Having more short stay spaces will likely reduce the burden on those car parks with the greatest occupancy rates e.g., Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre), and Union Street West car parks in Stowmarket.

Understanding the primary usage of each car park will support the car park designation and link to other recommendations such as improvements to signage. It should also be possible to determine likely destinations based on the car park location e.g Station Road car park in Sudbury will primarily be used by visitors that wish to visit the Kingfisher leisure centre.

Understanding the primary usage will allow consideration of the number of short and long-stay spaces and will support the introduction of signage and Variable Message Signs (VMS). Based on occupancy, VMS can be used to encourage use of alternative car parks. For instance, if the High Street car park in Hadleigh was full, the VMS could direct drivers to other car parks i.e. the VMS could read “High Street car park full, use Magdalen Road for town centre”.

2.7 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The provision of a sustainable travel strategy is clearly a much wider issue than parking but there is a relationship between the volume and cost of parking and successful adoption and promotion of measures to support sustainable travel (i.e., walking, cycling, and public transport). Greater sustainable transport will support the objectives to improve air quality and tackle congestion.

Over-provision or poor management of parking can damage efforts to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes by increasing reliance on car use in preference to other forms of travel and in operational terms by increasing congestion, delay and severance of sustainable routes and services. Conversely, the provision of good quality sustainable travel options can reduce the need for additional parking spaces and help reduce congestion and the associated detrimental environmental impacts of excessive car use.

Whilst the increased use of sustainable modes can be expected to offset and reduce the need to build additional parking capacity there are clearly limitations on the effectiveness of such a strategy. This is particularly true in the case of Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts that serves a very rural and widespread catchment area and where its size restricts the effective market supporting public transport services. In such circumstances, convenient accessibility by car (part of which is a suitable supply of car parking) will continue to provide vital support to the local economic and social prosperity for the foreseeable future.

Car parks can play a role in the improvement of sustainable transport by providing a secure location for cycle and motorcycle parking. Car parks also provide ideal locations for mobility hubs to allow visitors from further afield that need to travel by car to use sustainable forms of transport for the latter part of their journey. Integrating

mobility hubs into car parks may increase usage in those car parks that are in less desirable locations as there will be attractive facilities in place i.e., docked bikes, electric bikes and push bikes.

2.7.1 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS

Electric vehicle (EV) charging points are already provided across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk as shown in section 8.4 of the study report, although usage appears to be low based on the surveys and feedback from stakeholders. This is likely due to the relatively low number of EVs in comparison to petrol and diesel vehicles, as well as visitors that make shorter trips not needing to charge their vehicles. There is currently little information on the council's website regarding location and type of EV charging points. It is recommended that updates are made as quickly as possible ensuring the information is clear and accessible.

EV charging points help to promote sustainable transport modes and improve air quality. Expansion of the number of charging spaces will almost certainly be required as EVs become more popular, and the technology develops further. Increasing the number of EV charging spaces would have cost impacts in terms of the cost of delivering the infrastructure and the loss of income associated with the loss of a standard parking space. In time, it is anticipated that the use of these bays will increase, and they would be used as intensively as standard spaces. An EV policy will need to be developed for the charging of fees and consideration should be given to free parking if vehicles are using the charging points to encourage usage.

As there are currently 20 EV charging points across both district car parks, it's likely that additional spaces will be required as short, medium, and long-term measures to increase supply at a steady rate to avoid a situation where there are insufficient charge points across district car parks to service the demand. As highlighted with the example of Lavenham, urban and rural locations should be considered for delivery of charge points. Lavenham is likely to be the only location across Babergh and Mid Suffolk where there isn't a need for additional EV charge points as a short-term measure. Attention will be required to manage the impact of the loss of spaces, especially in smaller car parks.

As a short-term measure it is recommended to implement a combination of fast and rapid charging points taking into account the likely demand and technology. In the medium and longer term it may be necessary to concentrate more on rapid charging points only. These are more expensive to implement and have some integration issues, which is why they should be limited initially until technology improves and there is a greater demand.

There are several frameworks for vehicle charging infrastructure currently in place across the country, which provide a straightforward route for local authorities to procure charge points for EVs. These frameworks mean that a lengthy and complicated tender process need not be undertaken by each individual council. Using the frameworks currently in place, suppliers and installers that are already approved by each scheme can be contacted directly and the evaluation and implementation process commenced quickly. The framework that is most appropriate for a public sector body will depend on a number of factors that can be identified through market engagement.

Depending on the framework used and the type of EV charge points required, there may be government funding available for EV charge point installation by the councils.



Figure 5 – Example of EV charge points in our car parks

2.7.2 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

EV charge points have had technological enhancements over the last 12-24 months which has enabled more straight forward implementation, resulting in lower delivery costs.

The cost to deliver EV charge points will be dependent on the number and type implemented. Installing one EV charge point will not be as cost effective as installing 10. However, it is important that the installation of EV charge points is split over the short, medium and long-term action plan as the demand for these spaces increases.

Installing one EV charge point in a car park that has the infrastructure in place is likely to cost in the region of **£5,000-£10,000** depending on the type of charge point purchased and the facilities it offers i.e., fast charging, rapid charging etc. If the identified car park does not have the infrastructure in place to enable an EV charge point to be installed without additional civils work, there is likely to be a further cost, of up to **£10,000** depending on the type of procurement.

As there is currently 20 EV charge points across the districts, it is recommended to extend this provision as part of the short-term action plan. Providing an additional six to eight EV charge points across both districts would not be considered excessive at this stage. This would result in a required budget of **£30,000-£60,000** if the sites had the correct infrastructure or a further **£10,000-£80,000** if the sites do not have the appropriate infrastructure.

2.7.3 INTEGRATING CAR PARKS AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

There are car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk that serve public transport stations and stops such as the train station in Sudbury and bus stops throughout the two districts. This provides an opportunity to integrate car parks and sustainable transport. These car parks can be utilised by those who need to make longer journeys which may not be achievable using active travel. Currently, the train station car park in Sudbury is below average in its condition and is subject to low usage based on the parking occupancy surveys. This may discourage users from using the train for longer journeys due to concerns with the car park i.e., safety and security.

Those car parks that are located near bus stops are generally in a better condition, which is expected as bus stops are more frequent and closer to key destinations. However, bus journeys tend to be shorter distances than train journeys, which is likely to restrict users from using a bus for an onward journey. It is likely that the car park is being used as parking charges are lower than those in neighbouring areas making it more cost effective to use the car park than purchase a bus ticket to travel direct to the required destination. As the car parks are not designed primarily for onward bus

journeys, the majority of car park users will use the car park as a traditional car park with no onward journey.

Improving car parks that are close to public transport stations and stops should be considered a priority for the councils to encourage public transport use for onward journeys. Improvements to the train station car park in Sudbury could include:

- Public realm improvements
- Safety improvements for NMUs
- Access improvements towards the town centre
- Additional payment facilities to make the car park more attractive including contactless payment
- Additional signage on the local road network to direct drivers to the car park
- Secure bicycle parking facilities to encourage active travel

2.7.31 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

The cost involved for this recommendation is very much dependent on the type of improvements progressed. For instance, integrating secure bicycle parking in car parks is likely to cost in the region of **£5,00-£20,000** per site, depending on the type of provision purchased. The cost is related to the size and offering of the provision. Alternatively, this recommendation could involve the provision of some segregated NMU facilities that could cost no more than **£1,000-£2,000** per site.

2.7.4 PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL TO REDUCE DEMAND ON PARKING

Suffolk County Council is the local highway authority and will take ownership of active travel infrastructure across the county including Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. However, the councils should be and are working with the Suffolk County Council to identify active travel improvements that can be made within the districts through the implementation of an LCWIP, which can support the reduction in parking demand. This includes infrastructure such as walking and cycling routes as well as secure bicycle parking facilities and mobility hubs in key locations.

The LCWIP, should outline the most suitable locations for bicycle parking and mobility hubs. Car parks provide an opportunity to supply bicycle parking and mobility hubs that avoids facilities within key areas such as the High Street, where space can be limited.

Car parks that are suitable for secure bicycle parking and/or mobility hubs include:

Babergh

- North Street, Sudbury
- Great Eastern Road, Sudbury
- Station Road (Kingfisher), Sudbury
- The Station (Railway Station), Sudbury
- The Cock Horse Inn, Lavenham
- Magdalen Road, Hadleigh
- Railway Walk – North, Hadleigh
- Pin Mill

Mid Suffolk

- Cross Street, Eye
- Station Yard, Needham Market
- Iliffe Way, Stowmarket
- Milton Road, Stowmarket
- Union Street West, Stowmarket.

Along with secure bicycle parking, these car parks will provide opportunity for a Docked bike or E-Scooter scheme, with the car park providing the storage facilities. This could be seen as a ‘draw’ for car parks that are located further away from the core areas such as town centres, amenities, and outside landscapes, as visitors may welcome the opportunity to travel actively. All those car parks mentioned above should enable this provision, albeit it will take up more space, which may impact some car parks.

The benefit of these schemes would be:

- the potential to reduce congestion within core areas as well as those car parks with higher occupancy rates,
- improvements to air quality.
- support a healthier lifestyle choice

2.7.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

Similarly, to the recommendation for integrating car parks and sustainable transport, the costs involved is largely related to work that will fall outside of this parking strategy, making cost estimates difficult due to the potential variables. It is recommended to use the LCWIP as a starting point for potential investment in active travel.

Figure 6 provides an example of secure bike storage that incorporates ‘share bikes’ in a car park. As outlined in section 2.7.31 integrating secure bicycle parking in car parks is likely to cost in the region of **£5,00-£20,000** per site, depending on the type of provision purchased.



Figure 6 – Example of secure bike parking in a car park

2.7.5 CAR SHARING CLUB SCHEME

With traffic volumes reaching an all-time high prior to Covid-19, there has been a significant increase in memberships to car clubs. A car club enables the user to create a membership with a provider and book a vehicle that is located in a convenient place for a period of time such as 1 hour or 1 day. If a member has made a booking, they will be able to access the vehicle, usually by a card that is placed on the windscreen that opens the vehicle. The user is only charged for the time using the car which can work out to be much more efficient for those who do not travel much.

Car club vehicles are usually located on-street or within car parks. The councils should consider partnering with a car club provider to allocate car club bays in some of its lower occupancy car parks. A car club bay does not need any supporting infrastructure, so any car park would be suitable. Often surface car parks work better as they are easier to access. Examples of car parks across the two districts that would be ideal for car club bays include:

Babergh

- Great Eastern Road (Roys), Sudbury
- The Station (Railway Station), Sudbury
- Magdalen Road, Hadleigh

Mid Suffolk

- Iliffe Way, Stowmarket
- Milton Road, Stowmarket

More rural locations such as Lavenham, Eye, and Needham Market would be suitable for car club schemes, but this would impact already congested car parks. However, one or two car club bays may reduce the impact on demand.

Recommendations – Sustainable Transport

Seek to manage parking supply as a resource through appropriate pricing and as a policy tool to deliver transition towards use of more sustainable modes of travel behaviour both by encouraging use of walking, cycling and public transport and by supporting a transition towards new propulsion technologies e.g., implementing electric vehicle charging points across districts in various locations.

Provide greater emphasis and promotion of active travel and public transport use for journeys within the districts, to reduce the parking pressure in car parks, including investment in these sustainable modes of transport to improve facilities and make usage more attractive.

Consider the prioritisation of car parks that serve public transport nodes such as rail station and bus stops for improvement to encourage use of public transport for longer journeys.

Consider the implementation of docked bikes and e-bikes within car parks across the districts to provide the opportunity for visitors to use bikes to travel around the region, reducing congestion and improving air quality.

Investigate the partnership of car clubs for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council with parking spaces provided in town centre car parks for these vehicles.

2.8 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: LAND USE DEVELOPMENT

Due to the need for car parks to be located in areas that are close to the intended destinations, the value and importance of the land is high. This is usually one of the most common reasons for car parks that are underutilised being sold as land or converted to alternative uses. Across the districts, there is not one single example where an underutilised car park could be used for alternative land use. Whilst there are some car parks that are currently subject to lower occupancy rates, this is likely to increase in the future, especially when more popular car parks reach capacity.

As shown in the forecasting future growth table in section 7.3 of the parking study report, there is every possibility that parking occupancy will reach a level where recommendation is required over the course of this parking strategy. Whilst every effort should be made to reduce the demand on parking through sustainable transport, there may become a need for additional parking supply, particularly in Mid Suffolk. Identifying land in the appropriate location for the required use is always a difficult task. Car parks are generally located within close proximity to key trip generators such as town centres, amenities, and leisure facilities.

2.8.1 IDENTIFICATION OF NEW CAR PARK SITES IN KEY AREAS

By the year 2042, the forecasting of growth in car parks across the districts predicts as many as 14 car parks will be at or over capacity, using the growth figures contained in TEMPro 7.2. A further 10 will be at or over the 85% threshold where locating a parking space can become challenging, and this point the councils should start the planning process of identifying new car park sites. 25 out of the 35 (71%) car parks may need increasing in size. However, for many of these car parks expansion will not be possible, for a variety of reasons.

Consideration should be given to identifying parcels of land that could be acquired to provide new parking sites. The location would be critical to the ideal size. The location would need to connect into likely trip generators to be effective. Integrating active travel facilities such as docked bikes and e-scooters may provide an opportunity for a location to be chosen slightly further afield, especially if high-quality routes can be incorporated, such as those included within the LCWIP.



Figure 7 – Example of new parking site

When, it becomes apparent that new car parking sites are required in areas across the districts, it is recommended that the councils identify parcels of land that may be suitable for development. It will be necessary to prepare a specification in terms of requirements, such as the need for a site to be close to trip generators. There may also be an opportunity for further afield sites to be allocated, to allow a Park & Ride type system to be included, which has many benefits including a reduction of traffic into the key areas.

There are a number of critical aspects to allocating a site for parking that is outside the core area. Examples include the importance to have a good public transport and active travel provision to encourage visitors to use the facilities and ensuring there are benefits for visitors to use the site. If parking charges are the same and there are no infrastructure improvements, many visitors will avoid the site as there is no benefit. Parking sites outside the core area are traditionally more effective in urban environments, meaning Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket would be more effective.

2.8.2 PROVISION OF COACH PARKING WITHIN CAR PARKS

As a popular tourist destination, Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts are likely to be subject to higher usage in peak periods. There are many locations across the districts that will attract a high number of visitors. This is one of the reasons for the parking pressure shown in the parking surveys in certain locations. Towns and villages will want the demand to support local economies. Insufficient coach and motorhome parking may jeopardise visitors coming into the towns and villages.

A way to maintain and potentially increase visitors to towns and villages is to improve coach parking facilities within car parks. One coach can transport up to 60 passengers to a destination. Therefore, supplying 2-3 coach parking spaces can bring in the region of 120-180 visitors. This is the equivalent of a medium size car park. Naturally, a coach bay will take up more room than one parking place. Depending on the layout of the car park it may take up to four spaces, which will still result in significantly more tourists being able to visit.

Not all car parks will be suitable for coach parking bays as there needs to be sufficient room for the vehicle to manoeuvre and park safely without risking collisions with other vehicles or pedestrians. Small car parks will not be suitable, meaning some locations cannot be considered. In locations where there is more than one car park i.e., town centres, the location becomes an important aspect in determining the most appropriate sites. Car parks closet to the key trip generators such as shops and amenities will likely have high usage with a high turnover of spaces. In this instance, coach parking should be located in car parks with less demand as it is usually possible for a coach to drop passengers in a key area and then relocate to the car park.

Reviewing the location, size, and layout of all 37 car parks across both districts allows us to recommend car parks that may be fit for purpose. It should be noted that there are existing coach parking facilities within the Cock Horse Inn car park in Lavenham. Figure 8 provides an example of the coach parking bays in the car park.



Figure 8 – Example of coach bays in The Cock Horse Inn car park, Lavenham

The most suitable car parks for consideration include:

Babergh

- Great Eastern Road, Sudbury
- The Station (Railway), Sudbury
- Magdalen Road, Hadleigh

Mid Suffolk

- Cross Street, Eye
- Station Yard, Needham Market
- Bury Street, Stowmarket
- Iliffe Way, Stowmarket.

To facilitate coach parking in those car parks listed above, it will be necessary to modify the existing layout including location of bays, pedestrian walkways, and access lanes. The requirement to modify the layout provides an opportunity to make further improvements within the car park, which may link to the improvement's regime mentioned at section 2.41 of this strategy.

2.8.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

The costs involved are low and there is no cost associated with allowing coaches to park within car parks. Consideration could be given to having a charge in place to supplement the loss of parking bays (although it should be acknowledged the additional increase in footfall that coaches can bring). It may be necessary for the councils to liaise with the relevant companies to determine if the locations can be included as tourist routes.

There will be a cost to modify the layout of the car park, before installing the coach parking bays. This is minimal and likely to be in the region of £5,000 per car park. There is a possibility that additional work may be required to facilitate the coaches entering car parks such as access improvements and safety improvements. This would be very much dependent on each car park. Larger car parks are less likely to need further improvements as current access and safety is likely to be adequate.

2.8.22 OVERNIGHT MOTORHOME PARKING

During the first phase of stakeholder engagement a request was made to investigate the viability of overnight motorhome parking in car parks. More often than not, car

parks are empty overnight and there are no parking charges in place, which means utilising the car park for alternative uses is not going to impact occupancy and income. As discussed above, car parks are often located in core areas where there will be a high demand for tourists to stay.

Enabling motorhomes to park overnight in car parks provides the opportunity for additional income generation, which can be utilised by the parking service to improve the car parks. i.e., income generated from overnight parking for motorhomes could support the improvement regime as mentioned in section 2.41.

Similarly, to the consideration for coach parking bays, not all car parks would be effective for overnight motorhome parking. Small car parks wouldn't provide the required space, whereas other car parks may be located in an area that is more appealing. Considering all car parks across the two districts, there are several car parks that could be considered. They include:

Babergh

- North Street, Sudbury
- The Station (Railway), Sudbury
- The Cock Horse Inn, Lavenham
- Magdalen Road, Hadleigh
- Stonehouse Road, Hadleigh
- Pin Mill, Chelmondiston
- Lower Holbrook, Holbrook

Mid Suffolk

- Cross Street, Eye
- Needham Lake, Needham Market
- Bury Street, Stowmarket
- Iliffe Way, Stowmarket
- The Street, Woolpit

The car parks listed above are both rural and urban locations. It is unknown at this stage where the demand for overnight motorhome parking would be. It would be worthwhile identifying a few sites to conduct a trial on to determine the appetite for such an offering. This could involve selecting both an urban and rural location. It would be necessary to agree a time that motorhomes could enter the car park. This shouldn't

be during a time where the car park is still at an effective operation level. Therefore, 6pm should be the earliest time considered to avoid any conflict.



Figure 9 – Example of motorhome parking

Internal consultation would be required to identify a charging regime. Allowing motorhomes to park overnight without charge isn't recommended as this may cause conflict with businesses that offer this facility. It may also be necessary for the councils to invest funding to facilitate this recommendation such as additional security, and rubbish collection. The charges would cover these costs as well as generating income to improve the parking offering across both districts.

Recommendations – Land use development

Review the forecasting data in section 7 of the study report, to identify locations the councils would like to explore further with regards to additional parking supply. This should be mainly focused within Mid Suffolk as there is greater parking pressure. The councils may wish to procure the services of a land agent to act on their behalf when investigating and possibly acquiring land parcels for new parking sites. This should include areas outside the core area in town centres that may support a Park & Ride system where sustainable transport is used to transport visitors for last part of the journey, with sites close to the Strategic Road Network more preferable.

Engage with coach providers to better understand the appetite for coaches visiting towns and villages across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Where there is an appetite, it is recommended to review the layout of those car parks that would be suitable for coach parking to determine what changes are required. The car parks listed in section 2.82

will be the most suitable based on an initial assessment for existing access and location to trip generators.

Consider the introduction of an overnight charge for motorhomes in certain car parks across the districts. Internal engagement should be undertaken with relevant departments and officers such as parking services, waste and recycling, and leisure services to better understand the complexities, challenges, and opportunities for overnight motorhome parking. This should include the measures needed to facilitate the change. A trial to be considered in one or two car parks to understand the appetite, usage, and potential issues that need resolving prior to rolling out the measure across more car parks. Motorhomes should not be permitted to enter the car park until after the peak hours of operation i.e., 6pm.

2.9 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY

A significant number of local authorities have employed existing technologies to help manage parking activity, overcome various operational problems, and use capacity more efficiently. As more advanced telecommunications and software systems become more commonplace, flexible and affordable it is anticipated that their application will become increasingly feasible. There are two key areas where technology might be expected to play an emerging role over the course of the parking strategy period, namely:

- Systems that improve flexible management of car parking spaces through managing / directing demand, pricing / payment mechanisms and disseminating real-time information concerning travel opportunities.
- Vehicle propulsion technology that is likely to see the phased implementation of vehicles powered by alternative fuel systems, including EV charging points and may see the advent of some form of driverless technology.

2.9.1 TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE DEMAND

Mobile and digital technology is increasingly important in the operation and use of car parking systems. New pay machines have the ability to accept card and contactless payments and a pay by phone facility is commonplace in many towns and villages across the country. Improving mobile payment methods can help to reduce the need

for users to return to a vehicle parked in a pay and display car park to extend the length of stay and this could lead to increased dwell times and expenditure in the towns and villages. New payment methods reduce the need for users to carry cash and for operators to collect cash from the machines.

The councils have invested in new machines with technology that allows more flexible payment options. Babergh's new machines were installed in February 2021, with Mid Suffolk's due in the Autumn 2022., New pay & display technology has helped increase the flexibility of systems for both customers and operators and it provides more information for management to keep improving the service. It should be noted the use of card payment methods could incur a small bank charge for the authority per transaction but there would also be a saving on the cash collection costs.

Pay on exit is a key technological aspect within car parks, with more local authorities using this type of technology. The benefits and drawbacks for this are outlined in section 2.45 of this strategy

New technology can also support back-office operations, particularly in relation to the use of intelligent, targeted tariffs and the co-ordination of different car parks and variable message signs. This could be significant across Babergh and Mid Suffolk with the number of car parks, different towns and villages with car parks in operation, and the number of improvements needed as outlined within this document.

Variable message signs (VMS) are used in many towns to provide drivers with information about the location of spare parking capacity. Procurement of a new VMS system for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is recommended to start immediately as one of the most important short-term actions. This will provide information relating to the availability of car park spaces, which will help to save time, reduce congestion and use the parking assets more efficiently. The scheme will need to be monitored and improved if necessary.

Consideration should be given to how technology can impact the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils parking webpages. Although the webpages have recently been updated, there is scope for improvement such as live car parking information contained, the ability to setup parking accounts that can automatically pay for parking when visiting a car park, and more detail on electric vehicle charging points including registering for an account.

2.9.2 VEHICLE PROPULSION TECHNOLOGY

Over recent years, the profile of electric vehicles has increased markedly with the launch of various hybrid and electric vehicles and expansion of the charging and refuelling networks. This, coupled with various policy announcements concerning plans to phase out sales of petrol and diesel-powered vehicles in the foreseeable future, indicates the EV market may be approaching the point where large-scale sales become more likely.

Whilst the EV market remains in its infancy it is difficult to predict the precise operational and system requirements that should be planned and provided for however, in developing the parking strategy further, care should be taken to ensure significant flexibility is in-built within infrastructural design to allow for pro-active installation and / or reactive, retrofitting of electric vehicle charging points. Such measures should be considered both as a practical requirement supporting the switchover to EV technology, as and when it occurs but it should also be employed to encourage and support transition and switchover where appropriate and feasible.

Longer-term, the emergence of new driverless technology has the potential to have a transformational effect on the scale and location of both short and long-stay parking activity. Whilst the advent of fully automated, driverless cars remains some time away, some driverless functions are likely to be fitted as standard to the next generation of vehicles and well within the medium-term planning horizon.

2.9.3 OPERATIONAL IMPACTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

New technology has the potential to improve the management of car parks by automating various operations and by providing more information to the back office. However, there would need to be initial capital outlay and an expectation that costs would be recovered in the long term. The back-office function should also incorporate virtual permits, as this will make the management of permits more succinct and easier to manage. This will reduce the staff resource required to manage the process. With ambitions to increase usage in underutilised car parks, permits could become a key driver for the District Council where concessions are offered.

Investing in the existing car parks to improve their use is a valid policy option however it is recommended that this would be best undertaken at the time when considering possible replacement and renewal of existing car park management technologies.

However, there is a limit to the impact that physical improvements to car parks will have in the absence of other changes. Safety and security are important features that often appear as a high priority for users, linked to the provision of CCTV and lighting but some more rural locations may not want this due to environmental concerns.

Equipment will need to be replaced at regular intervals which would be the appropriate time to consider the merits of different technologies and new methods of payment. These can create savings in some cases i.e., payment via mobile phone can reduce the cost of cash collection and generate more income through increased durations of stay.

Recommendations – Car park technology

Consider the costs and benefits of employing new technology and equipment for mobile payment, ticket machines, security and barrier control when procurement decisions are being made. New technology has the potential to reduce costs as well as improving the user experience.

Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management (e.g., EV charging, priority parking spaces for car clubs and car share schemes).

Assess options for improving information about parking for the public through the increased use of online and mobile information and monitoring and development of the Variable Message Sign network.

Improve the car park information on the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council website, with an aim to provide better integration with car parks including the possibility of automatically paying for parking based on accounts setup with vehicle registration plate included.

Migrate to virtual permits only, with opportunities for permits to be purchased online such as season tickets for businesses.

2.10 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARKING ENFORCEMENT

As outlined in section 2.93 of the strategy, there should be the aim to transfer all car parking permits to a virtual system to assist with the management and back-office parking function. This will make the enforcement operation more straight forward and remove the issues around lost/damaged permits or how permits are displayed.

Replacement of Pay & Display machines has provided improved connectivity to back-office systems including real-time information and supports the enforcement operation i.e. reduced staff resource as the information will be available 24-7.

With the aim to implement pay on exit systems in suitable car parks along with the technology improvements including virtual permits, it will be possible to review enforcement management procedures to identify any improvements in service operation that may reduce revenue costs. This should be considered a medium-term action to provide sufficient time for work to be undertaken before commencing the review. Based on the outcome of the review, it should be possible to develop a new parking enforcement policy that outlines procedures and processes that are designed to reduce staff resource, which will reduce revenue costs.

It is recommended to carry out a more detailed assessment into the existing car park enforcement and management arrangements along with consideration of alternative models such as bringing enforcement in-house, to determine the most cost-effective approach for the Councils. A business case model could be used to present each cost implication, benefits and risks etc and provide an overall recommendation based on the best approach for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

2.11 RECOMMENDATION COST AND TIMESCALE SUMMARY – OFF STREET PARKING

Table 4 provides a summary of the recommendation costs as detailed within the above sections and indicative timescales, which are based on the short, medium, and long-term actions.

RECOMMENDATION	APPROXIMATE COST	TIMESCALE
Parking capacity		
Capacity shortfalls may need to be considered where demand for car parking across the districts outweighs available supply. The provision of more parking spaces will be required either through the expansion of existing car parks or the design of new car parks.	For a new multi-storey £3m - £4m Circa £100,000 for surface car park without land acquisition	2027-2032
Consider utilising any areas of suitable on-street parking to provide a small amount of additional capacity, which can be achieved through free short-term parking such as 30-60 minutes.	£20,000	2022-2027
Ensure any potential development includes appropriate car parking for the proposed surrounding development uses and where necessary specify the need for parking surveys to be undertaken by developers to demonstrate limited impacts on parking outside the development site. This should include the promotion of sustainable transport and recommending developers to follow LTN 1/20 guidance.	N/A	2022-2027
Quality of car parks		
Develop a car park improvement regime with an aim to improve the condition of each car park across both districts over the duration of the car park strategy.	5% of car parking turnover per annum	2022-2027
Undertake a detailed car parking signage strategy to identify most suitable locations for parking signage throughout the districts to provide guidance to visitors on each car park based on the intended use. This needs to include wayfinding for pedestrians.	£105,000 - £120,000 for VMS. £15,000-£20,000 for static signs. £20,000 for signage strategy	2022-2027
Where possible increase safety within car parks including the aspiration to join the British Parking Association Safer Parking scheme (for those not already accredited).	£10,000-£15,000 per year for regime	2022-2027
Improve the public realm within car parks to create a more welcoming environment that will provide a greater experience to visitors.	Unknown	2027-2032

Upgrade Pay & Display machines to facilitate payment by card in sites that may not be suitable for pay on exit systems.	£20,000 - £100,000 based on system per site	2022-2027
Parking charges		
Create a flexible tariff structure that promotes an even spread of parking throughout town and village car parks, with more popular and central car parks being charged at a premium to those which are more peripheral and subject to lower demand.	N/A	2022-2027
Carry out a regular benchmarking exercise to determine how parking charges compare to neighbouring cities and towns.	N/A	2022-2027
Programme a bi-annual parking tariff review to ensure parking charges (or no charges) reflect the current economic standing of the local area and are comparable to neighbouring cities/towns to maximise tourism and visitors to the districts to enjoy the culture.	N/A	2027-2032
Car parking designation		
Ensure car parks closest to core town / village areas have highest turnover of spaces, to make more efficient use of valuable land and boost the local economies.	N/A	2022-2027
Identify the most likely destinations for each car park to ensure ratio of short/long stay parking is appropriate.	N/A	2022-2027
Sustainable transport		
Implement additional Electric Vehicle charge points in car parks across both districts, at a rate proportionate to demand identified through regular parking surveys and stakeholder consultation.	£60,000-£140,000 for approximately 6-8 EV charge points	2022-2032+
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities in car parks to encourage use of active travel for journeys made to key trip generators if safe segregated facilities can be identified.	£5,000-£20,000 based on provision per site	2027-2032
Work with partners to provide greater emphasis and promotion of active travel and public transport use for journeys, to reduce the parking pressure in car parks, including investment in these sustainable modes of transport to improve facilities and make usage more attractive.	£5,000-£20,000 per site	2022-2027

Investigate the partnership of car clubs for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council with parking spaces provided in specific car parks for these vehicles.	N/A	2027-2032
Consider the implementation of docked bikes e-bikes, and e-scooters within car parks to provide the opportunity for visitors to areas across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to use bikes to travel around the area, reducing congestion and improving air quality.	£5,000-£20,000 per site	2027-2032
Land use development		
Identify locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk where there is support for additional parking supply and identify possible land parcels for acquisition. Procure a land agent to support the Council with this process. This should include core areas and areas on the outskirts for a Park & Ride type of operation.	£50,000 - £100,000 for land acquisition fees	2027-2032
Engage with coach providers to better understand the appetite for coaches visiting towns and villages across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Review car park layouts and make modifications to determine most suitable car parks for inclusion of coach parking bays.	£5,000 - £100,000 per site dependent on changes required	2022-2027
Consider the introduction of an overnight charge for motorhomes in certain car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. A trial is recommended in one or two car parks to understand the appetite, usage, and potential issues that need resolving prior to rolling out the measure across more car parks.	£5,000 - £10,000 per site	2022-2027
Car park technology		
Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This should be prioritised based on need i.e., those with parking charges all day.	£90,000 - £180,000 depending on system	2022-2027
Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management (e.g., EV charging, priority parking spaces for car clubs schemes).	£5,000-£20,000 per site	2022-2027
Consider smart parking integration such as parking apps to facilitate contactless parking that may provide opportunities to pay for	N/A	2027-2032

parking before journeys into towns with parking charges		
Develop a strategy and investigate the delivery of Variable Message Signs, both free text signs and specific car parking signs located on the outskirts of towns and villages and within the centre of these areas.	£105,000 - £120,000 for VMS	2022-2027
Make further improvements to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council website, with an aim to provide better integration with car parks including the possibility of pre-booking parking spaces.	N/A	2022-2027
Migrate to virtual permits only, with opportunities for permits to be purchased online such as season tickets for businesses.	N/A	2022-2027
Car parking enforcement		
Increase efficiency of enforcement operation by virtualising permits and connecting P&D machines to back-office systems to gather real time data.	N/A	2022-2027
Review enforcement management procedures to identify any improvements in service operation that may reduce revenue costs.	N/A	2027-2032

Table 4 – Recommendation costs and timescales

3.0 ON-STREET PARKING PROVISION IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK

Across Babergh and Mid Suffolk there are numerous areas that provide on-street parking. In each location, there is an overall parking offer that includes both off-street car parks and focal on-street areas that serve the parking needs of residents and visitors. On-street parking supports the commercial needs of businesses and key trip generators that are located within the area such as town and village centres, amenities, and outdoor environments e.g walking routes. It is important for the area that there is on-street parking and where possible off-street parking to increase the locations attractiveness.

On-street parking is also required for residents wishing to either park directly outside their residence or within close proximity meaning that it is important to ensure on-street

parking locations are functional and enhance the destination overall, again both for visitors and residents alike. There are instances where on-street parking can increase congestion in keys areas, cause safety risks and negatively influence emergency vehicles and bus routes.



Figure 10 – Example of on-street parking

All these factors can increase negative feeling and potentially impact revenue generation in the key areas. It is important to strike the balance between providing adequate facility for on-street parking without detriment to other facilities i.e., car parks. This can be controlled by investigation into the most ideal waiting time restrictions which best promotes possible turnover of spaces.

As part of the parking strategy development work, 2020 Consultancy carried out high-level assessments of on-street parking provision compared to off-street across both districts. The results from this assessment demonstrate that demand for on-street is generally higher than that of the off-street. In particular, the key smaller areas including Needham Market, Lavenham and Debenham where there is limited off-street parking available.

The findings also show that in the larger towns i.e., Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket, surveys show higher rates of occupancy on-street during the day than at night. This would indicate that vehicles from outside the area are parking for work or using transport to a further destination. A Residents Parking Scheme (RPS) would help alleviate this issue and any issues or worries that local residents have regarding their ability to park. In this situation, efforts should be made to encourage drivers to

park in off-street locations to help reduce high occupancy levels in those areas which require a regular turnover of spaces.

On-street parking in town centres that are situated within the core area seem to be the most desired location for drivers to park. This was reaffirmed when the site assessments were completed. In some cases, it appeared that the thought process for visitors when not having a good understanding of the area was to seek to get as close to the destination as possible avoiding any confusion in an area they do not know well. This supports the fact that on-street central parking allocation is the most desired facility.

In particular, the data collected from site visits to Market Hill, and North Street in Sudbury confirms this. It is recommended that on-street parking in these locations be limited to no more than two hours to increase the turnover of spaces and to condition the understanding that the central on street parking facility is extremely coveted. As recommended in section 2.3.4, a district wide review of all on-street waiting restrictions be undertaken to see if and what improvements can be made.



Figure 11 – Example of on-street parking

From the assessments carried out, it is apparent that on-street parking demand far outweighs the supply meaning that issues such as parking near junctions, on pavements, verges and nearby open spaces, is occurring creating damage that is unsightly to the local area. There is scope to improve public transport facilities and increase the taxi offering, which would meet transport sustainability targets. In some instances, if parking on-street was decreased this would allow buses to operate better in the more centralised areas as they have more room to pass.

The increase and improvement of active travel infrastructure is becoming more popular. The development of the Councils Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) provides the opportunity to reassess the road space, including on-street parking. The introduction of active travel hubs and increase in active travel routes could lead to the decrease in requirement for on-street parking as nationally low traffic areas become increasingly popular.

4.0 ON-STREET PARKING STRATEGY OPTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This parking strategy has taken into consideration the existing on-street parking provision and the existing situation across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to identify potential recommendations that can be considered to enhance or improve parking on-street. This strategy is identifying recommendations that may be suitable, subject to either additional feasibility work, or whether a situation across the districts requires the recommendation.

The recommendations may be focused on specific areas only, or measures that can be implemented anywhere across the two districts. The recommendations for on-street parking can be classified into four themes, which are presented in Table 5.

On-Street Parking Strategy Theme	
1	Parking Policy
2	Parking Improvement
3	Sustainable Integration
4	Parking Operations

Table 5 – On-street parking strategy themes

4.2 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING POLICY

Updating or creating parking policy provides greater flexibility for recommendations to be developed and integrated into the councils parking service helping to provide a framework to bring about improvements to on-street parking. Without the policy there is a risk that recommendations implemented will be unsuccessful or there will be inconsistencies across towns, villages, and districts. An example of where parking policy is crucial is the introduction of Resident Parking Schemes. Without a policy one

road may be chosen for a scheme but another road elsewhere with similar characteristics is not chosen.

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION OF RESIDENT PARKING SCHEMES

A Resident Parking Scheme (RPS) is a street or area where parking controls are introduced with an exemption for permit holders – traditionally residents or local businesses. This is often implemented in areas that have high volumes of vehicles parking that are not residents of that area or street i.e., commuters. The reason for this increase of non-resident parking is usually focused on nearby trip generators such as public transport stations, town centres, and popular amenities. Parking in residential streets without restriction allows all-day parking without charge.

There is only a limited amount of space for parking in residential streets. The amount of parking possible is largely due to the width and length of the road. Roads with wider carriageways enable parking on both sides of the carriageway, which increases capacity by 50%. Narrow roads do not allow for this due to the potential traffic flow and/or safety issues, especially with larger vehicles including emergency vehicles and refuse vehicles. Whilst the public highway does not provide any right to park, it is acknowledged that many properties do not have off-street parking, and vehicles need to park somewhere.

An RPS provides priority to residents and local businesses during times of operation and prevents vehicles without a parking permit from parking all day. There are a number of methods to achieving a successful RPS i.e., schemes that prevent parking all-day without a permit i.e. 9am-5pm Monday to Saturday or schemes that restrict parking for short periods i.e. 10am-11am Monday to Saturday which allows parking at all times apart from this period. Commuter parking that is likely to occur for all-day periods will be discouraged from parking due to the possibility of enforcement.

Schemes require a policy to illustrate the criteria for permit parking schemes including

- how many permits each house is entitled to,
- the cost of the permits,
- how many visitor permits are allowed?

It also provides the opportunity for the councils to refer to qualification principles. An example would be the number of vehicles with off-street parking. If a street has too many households with off-street parking available, there is a risk that a scheme will be supported, but no permits purchased, to restrict others from parking. This can have a negative impact on the scheme.



Figure 12 – Example of on-street parking restriction signage

As this parking strategy has been produced at a strategic level, it is not possible to identify specific streets or areas within towns and villages across the districts where an RPS should be developed. This is because there is a need for detailed assessments, surveys, and consultations with stakeholders. However, sample streets were selected across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to understand if there are potential areas that may benefit from investigating an RPS in more detail.

To determine if an area may be suitable for an RPS, the most important discovery would be daytime parking illustrating higher occupancy rates than the evening. It is assumed that a number of vehicles will not be present during weekdays due to work, and educational requirements. It can also be assumed that late in the evening or early in the morning i.e., between 11pm and 5am, there should be a high percentage of residential traffic within the street. Therefore, if there are more vehicles parking in residential roads during the day, and the vehicles are not present at night, it is highly likely that the vehicles are not residential and may be commuter parking.

Those locations where sample streets were chosen to identify if this parking issue was occurring are listed below:

Babergh

- Sudbury
- Hadleigh
- Lavenham

Mid Suffolk

- Needham Market
- Stowmarket
- Eye

As part of the survey process, each sample street was visited on a number of occasions between 10am and 4pm, when it can be expected that commuter parking is occurring, and revisited between 11pm and 2pm, when it can be assumed all vehicles parking on-street is residential. Some sample streets in Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket illustrated higher daytime parking compared to evening parking, which suggests commuter parking may be an issue. On-street parking in Lavenham, Needham Market, and Eye was either at similar levels during day and evening, or evening was higher. This suggests that commuter parking is not a major issue.

Therefore, it is recommended that feasibility studies are progressed within the towns of Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket, to understand if streets and areas for a RPS can be established, and if so, what is the level of support from stakeholders including residents and local businesses. The studies should include more detailed surveys, and a specific consultation exercise. Prior to undertaking any feasibility studies, it is recommended that the councils develop an RPS policy, as any scheme will be dependent on support from Suffolk County Council. It is important to engage early with key officers to gain appropriate support and identify any requirements for the policy such as the process for prioritisation.

4.2.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

costs are moderate in comparison to others included within the strategy. The bulk of the cost is the creation of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), which involves a statutory process. In addition, substantial work needs to be undertaken to produce a feasibility study for each major area, which will establish the specific locations that will benefit from this recommendation. There will be additional tasks such as signage location and purchase, along with the roll-out of an online permit application system.

The overall cost will be dependent on the number of locations and size of area for which the feasibility study will outline. In general, the cost of an RPS feasibility study is in the region of **£20,000** per site and the cost of implementing a scheme including the TRO is approximately **£30,000** per site.

4.2.2 ALLOW RESIDENTS TO PARK IN OFF-STREET CAR PARKS OVERNIGHT

In contrast to the development of an RPS, which aims to mitigate residential parking demand during the day, there are areas across Babergh and Mid Suffolk where parking demand was much higher in the evening. This is more common as higher numbers of residents are at home. This can cause parking pressure in residential streets with limited on-street parking available. There are limited recommendations that can mitigate against this. RPS schemes will not work as there will be no enforcement, and it is likely that all vehicles will be residential.

For some areas across the districts, residential roads are in close proximity to off-street car parks. Apart from a few likely car parks in town centres that serve the evening economy, off-street car parks are often empty or subject to low occupancy rates overnight. Therefore, consideration could be given to enable residents to park overnight in the car parks.

For those car parks where parking charges do not take place, this can and most likely does occur already. However, car parks with restrictions in place could be considered for use. Examples of such locations include car parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket. Other car parks such as those within Lavenham, Needham Market, and Eye, do not permit parking for more than 24 hours, making overnight parking unachievable.

It is recommended to utilise off-street car parks for areas across the districts where on-street parking capacity is a concern overnight. Due to the size of the districts, it would not be feasible to be proactive in undertaking this task. Therefore, the most effective method to identify areas this may be possible, is to assess requests or concerns raised by residents that contact the councils.

Although it is only expected that a small percentage of residents would make contact, it can still positively contribute to the improvement of parking in an area within the short term. The frequency with which new development sites are occurring is likely to

exacerbate the problem, especially those development sites that promote low parking facilities within the planning application. It is important that areas that may be suitable for this recommendation are considered and approved as a short-term action.



Figure 13 – example of overnight parking in council owned car parks

4.2.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

This is likely to be one of the lower-cost recommendations within the strategy. The only substantial cost will be the consultation and possible changes to insurance costs around the car parks being accessible overnight. Carrying out consultation with stakeholders will cost in the region of **£2,500**. Changes to insurance policies and any cost implications are unknown at present and would be dependent on many factors including number of off-street car park locations and estimated numbers of overnight occupancy.

4.2.3 UNDERTAKE PARKING BEAT SURVEYS WITHIN VICINITY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES

There are clear issues with the parking capacity on-street in many locations across the districts. However, it is acknowledged that there is a need for the delivery of new homes. It is vitally important to ensure that the impact of creating new development sites does not adversely impact the existing on-street parking provision, as this would cause issues such as congestion, safety, and damaging grass verges.

Since the introduction of the LTN 1/20 guidance from Central Government, which is designed to encourage the use of active travel infrastructure and modal shift, local planning authorities have begun to integrate the need for this within planning application advice. Developers are putting forward masterplans that have fewer

parking places in a bid to encourage modal shift. Whilst this is welcomed and encouraged, it is having an impact on the existing parking provision.

Without consideration of the impact this will have on existing parking supply, both off-street and on-street, it is highly likely that parking demand will increase further which will cause on-street provision in many places to become over capacitated. To mitigate this, it is important to ensure the appropriate processes are in place within the councils when considering planning applications.

The most effective solution to ensure proposed development sites are unlikely to impact on-street parking provision is to ensure that each planning application requires a parking survey to be undertaken, regardless of size. The survey should involve inspecting streets near to the proposed development site at various times of the day and between 11pm and 5am, to understand available kerb space. Streets with a lot of parking available are unlikely to be impacted, however, if there is limited parking available, any overspill will have a major impact. In these instances, the councils should consider whether car free developments or a low parking provision will be suitable for that specific location.

4.3 PARKING INTEVENTION: PARKING IMPROVEMENT

Whilst it is not possible for the councils to have a full understanding of all parking issues across the districts, especially given the size and that we have both urban and rural areas. This parking strategy has provided the opportunity to identify improvement for those areas of parking that require intervention.

There are two noticeable opportunities for improvement:

- mitigating verge parking in residential areas.
- ensuring the most appropriate parking restrictions are in place to support parking acts, both off-street, and on-street, whilst removing risks such as congestion, access, and safety.

4.3.1 PREVENTING VERGE AND OPEN SPACE PARKING

In many residential areas high parking occupancy can lead to parking inappropriately such as near junctions, across driveways on established verges and even nearby open spaces. Once verge parking and parking on open spaces occurs, particularly in the winter months, it can lead to unsightly destruction of grass areas or planted features. To combat this there has been some innovative solutions developed to mitigate the issue.

The most effective solutions to mitigating verge parking falls into two categories, based on the circumstances of a location. One solution is to provide additional parking capacity that removes the need to park on grass verges and/or open spaces, whereas the other solution is to implement measures to protect grassed area. The solution taken should be based on the parking demand in the area. If there is limited parking available, parking on a grass verge or open space is likely occurring as there is no other alternative. Introducing protection measures, is therefore unlikely to be effective and may result in damage to the protection measure itself. Additional parking where there is sufficient supply within the area is unlikely to stop verge and open space parking.

Depending on the size of the grass verge, it may be possible to remove the verge and replace it with parking bays. Whilst this may cause objection from those that wish to retain green spaces, damaged verges are unsightly and cause a major maintenance issue through repair. It can also cause a significant road safety risk, as mud brought onto the carriageway can become slippery, especially during cold weather. Introducing parking bays within existing grass verge can be achieved in a more sustainable way such as using grasscrete, which allows for vehicles to park over it without the destruction that normally occurs with standard grass verges.

Grass verge protection is usually achieved by placing bollards periodically along the verge line. There are various types of bollards that range from standard plastic through to more aesthetically pleasing wooden bollards. Generally, the more aesthetically pleasing the bollard, the higher the cost to deliver and maintain. Locations where bollards may get damaged more frequently will be more suited to standard bollards. Again, there are more sustainable methods to protecting grass verges including trees, shrubs and flower beds which can also be a good deterrent.



Figure 14 – example of damage to grass verges

In developing this parking strategy, there have been locations identified where vehicles have been noted parking on grass verges and nearby open spaces. It is recommended to undertake more detailed feasibility studies at either district level or town/village level where parking on grass verges and open spaces has raised concerns. This would involve surveying all affected grass areas in each location to evaluate if there is any enhancement that can be implemented to help alleviate the issue.

Following on from the feasibility studies, an action plan could be developed that prioritises the sites with the most severe issues. To assist this process, the feasibility study should incorporate the development of an assessment criteria to score each site. Funding would also need to be addressed over a number of years e.g., 10 sites addressed per year

4.3.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation will require an overall review of those verge areas that have been highlighted as a concern. As the two districts cover such a large area, this task could be separated into either district studies or town/village studies. The cost involved is dependent on the study area, the locations that require intervention, and the type of intervention. A district level study is likely to cost **£20,000-£25,000** due to the area involved. Studies at town or village level is likely to be **£8,000-£10,000**.

Focusing on increasing parking provision, the cost of progressing 10 sites to convert areas of grass verge to bay parking would be in the region of **£100,000-£300,000**. Some sites may cost more due to buried services or being larger areas.

Focusing on protecting grass verges, the cost of progressing 10 sites would be in the region of **£10,000-£50,000** using standard protection such as bollards, grasscrete, or tree lines, shrubs, and flower beds. The cost does not include any required repair work to the verge, which could add an additional **£1,000-£5,000** per site, depending on the existing damage.

4.3.2 ON STREET WAITING RESTRICTION REVIEW PROGRAMME

Within Babergh and Mid Suffolk there are various on-street waiting restrictions in place in core areas that either restrict the length of time vehicles can wait or restrict vehicles parking in specific areas either at any time or at certain times. These have a range of differing time constraints that suit the specific area for which they are located. It is recommended to review all waiting time restrictions on-street to explore improvements or if changes can be made to help alleviate some of the extra need for on-street parking e.g reviewing the time restrictions, implementing small time windows to increase parking turnover or create extra availability for drivers requiring short-term parking.

This recommendation would be a review that encompasses both districts and is also dependent on the need required by the location. If there is an issue that exists with parking capacity issues and overall parking functionality, then there is an opportunity to change that to help serve the overall needs of the area.

4.3.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

It is expected that the waiting time review would be delivered by the local highway authority (Suffolk County Council) or an external provider. The main cost would be officer time to undertake the review, and to carry out the legal work, which would include advertising the TRO. The review cost is likely to be in the region of **£5,000** per town or village and preparing new/modified TROs is expected to be in the region of **£10,000** including the statutory requirements.

In addition, there is a low-cost facet for the implementation which would be the changing of existing signage to state new waiting times. An approximate cost would be **£1,000 - £2,000** per region and is dependent on the condition of the existing sign and the possibility of replacement or re-positioning. The total cost involved for the councils would be established on completion of the review program.

4.4 PARKING INTERVENTION: SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION

As outlined in the car park recommendations, there is a relationship between parking and successful adoption and promotion of measures to support sustainable travel (i.e., walking, cycling, and public transport) which also includes on-street parking. Whilst there are less opportunities to integrate sustainable transport and on-street parking compared to off-street parking, there are opportunities to promote active travel through adjustments to on-street parking or schemes.

Sustainable integration with on-street parking can be achieved using a multi-modal approach to transport. For example, car club schemes focus on the use of vehicles as a mode of transport but having a scheme in place is likely to reduce the number of vehicles, especially those making infrequent trips. Providing a good taxi service with taxi ranks located in all key areas, including those near public transport stations and stops will also reduce the need for vehicle trips. If there is sufficient parking capacity within car parks and in nearby streets, it may be possible to remove areas of on-street parking to allow segregated active travel routes. Installing on-street EV charge points may encourage residents without off-street parking to consider purchasing EV vehicles.

4.4.1 INTRODUCTION OF CAR SHARING CLUB SCHEMES

This recommendation is similar to the one proposed in section 2.75 (Car Club Scheme). The main difference being that this would be a measure for on-street locations rather than off-street car parks.

It is feasible at this stage to propose that more densely populated core areas could benefit greatly from this recommendation, as they will have access to a vehicle, but not have to worry about parking near their residence. The viability of this intervention is inclusive of all areas across the districts, and it sits well with sustainability policies

and creating a move towards low-traffic central areas. The councils could consider partnering with a car club provider to allocate car club bays in some key roads. A car club bay does not require any supporting infrastructure, so any on-street designated parking location is sufficient.

As mentioned previously, there is provisional scope to provide this recommendation in various locations across both districts. Although this option would need to be fully investigated to assess its viability. Those destinations within Babergh and Mid Suffolk that are currently experiencing issues surrounding on-street parking capacity or residential parking issues that could benefit from this recommendation include Eye, Stowmarket, Sudbury, and Hadleigh.



Figure 15 – Example of an on-street car club only parking bay

4.4.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

As there are a number of unknown variables that are attached to the implementation of this intervention an estimated cost is unclear. It is recommended to undertake a feasibility study into the delivery of car club schemes, which should involve reaching out to the market to determine costs. This can inform the amount of funding required on a location-by-location basis. The feasibility study itself is estimated to cost in the region of **£15,000-£20,000**.

4.4.2 UNDERTAKE UNMET TAXI DEMAND

There is opportunity to explore and evaluate the unmet taxi demand in some key areas across the districts i.e. investigate whether there is any demand for taxi's in key destinations that are not currently receiving provision. If there are any destinations

identified that require an increase or supply of provision, then this can be arranged through the councils' increasing permits.

In theory once established, a taxi supply would decrease key parking occupancy over time, as users would trust that the service was swift and efficient and therefore not use their own vehicle as frequently. Another opportunity could be to consult with key partners and contributors such as hospitals and supermarkets to discuss the possibility of offering taxi rank services on their designated sites. This would again contribute positively to parking congestion.

As is the case for many of the recommendations, an overall review of unmet taxi demand throughout both districts is recommended. This would entail drafting a list of key stakeholders that have the capacity and the need to explore offering an increased taxi service. Larger destinations within both districts that have a higher population and specifically a denser central area are likely to be more impacted, meaning priority should be given to these locations.

4.4.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

To undertake an unmet taxi demand study is estimated to cost in the region of **£30,000** per district based on the assumption that all areas are investigated. This cost can be reduced to a region of **£20,000** if the study focuses on the core areas i.e., town centres.

4.4.3 INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL FOR ON-STREET EV CHARGING POINTS

Section 2.7.1 of the parking strategy outlines the recommendation to increase EV charge points across all off-street car parks in the districts over the duration of the strategy. There is scope to deliver on-street EV charge points across the districts, although it is acknowledged it is more complex to deliver compared to off-street locations due to the availability of power supply. The primary focus of this recommendation is not to serve visitors to the districts as this provision would be in the council's car parks, but to serve residents who do not have access to off-street parking.

There are some logistical challenges with ensuring power supply can be provided without compromising safety i.e., cables across pavements and reducing the widths of footways. There are also challenges if the power source comes from lamp columns due to the electric rates available.

As this recommendation is primarily focused on providing EV charge points for residents, all locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk are viable. Those locations without street lighting such as out rural villages may be more of a challenge. This recommendation is designed to supplement off-street charge points rather than be an alternative.



Figure 16 – Example of an on-street electric vehicle charging point

4.4.31 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

Installing one on-street EV charge point in a residential street with street lighting is estimated to cost in the region of **£5,000-£7,000** depending on the type of charge point purchased and the facilities offered i.e., fast charging etc. If the infrastructure in place within the public highway is not to the required standard, it may be necessary to make further improvements such as supply feeder pillars which will increase costs.

It is recommended that prior to the delivery of on-street EV charge points, a feasibility study is undertaken to determine the provision that can be delivered within the districts, as well as understanding all constraints and opportunities. It should be possible for this study to be undertaken at a strategic level, which can then be applied to specific areas meaning that it should be possible to undertake one study to cover both districts. The estimated costs would be approximately **£10,000-£15,000**.

4.4.4 REMOVE ON-STREET PARKING TO SUPPORT WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES THAT ARE PRIORITISED IN THE LCWIP

Whilst this parking strategy is focused on improvements to the parking provision across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, it is acknowledged that parking and sustainable transport including active travel need to be closely integrated.

In some locations it is not feasible to deliver walking and cycling routes in more urban locations within the existing road layout. A typical cross section of an urban street is often a footway (usually 1.8m wide), and two-lane carriageway (with on-street parking on one or both sides depending on width of the carriageway). This does not provide opportunity for segregated active travel facilities that meet the LTN 1/20 guidance. It is not possible to remove footways or reduce carriageway widths (much), which means the area where on-street parking occurs is the only opportunity.

Therefore, the councils should consider where on-street parking can be removed to support routes contained within the LCWIP. The most important consideration for this recommendation is to understand on-street parking capacity, and how close alternative parking locations may be, both on and off-street. If a route within the LCWIP requires the removal of on-street parking, but there are suitable alternatives nearby, this provides greater justification for progressing with the route contained within the LCWIP.

It is recommended that parking surveys are undertaken as part of the development of any LCWIP routes that will see a reduction or loss to on-street parking. Streets with limited parking capacity with no viable alternative will likely result in considerable objection to active travel schemes, which will likely impact delivery. Parking surveys undertaken early in the delivery process will identify the level of risk.

4.5 PARKING INTERVENTION: PARKING OPERATIONS

The parking operation is often focused on the decisions that provide the parking service and ensures parking within towns and villages is undertaken successfully. Improving the parking operation can have a positive impact on the overall parking service, and potentially reduce revenue costs. Re-investing cost savings back into the service will provide the opportunity to improve the service for everyone.

There is close link between on-street and off-street parking operations. Adjusting one can have a positive impact on the other. For instance, allocating additional disabled parking bays in a car park may enable restrictions to prevent disabled parking (no loading orders) within streets where it is not considered appropriate for parking i.e., near junctions or arterial routes.

There are also opportunities to implement restrictions on-street that result in a high turnover of spaces such as short-term limited waiting. This provides the opportunity for short-stay visitors to park near to the destination, complete their business and leave. Without these parking bays, visitors may need to park in off-street car parks reducing available supply, which may impact those visitors wishing to stay for longer periods.

It is acknowledged that in many instances, on-street parking provides premium parking often located closer to the key trip generators than car parks. Visitors are more likely to accept parking charges, or higher parking charges in these locations compared to off-street car parks due to the location benefits these parking places bring. Therefore, charging for these parking spaces could be considered. These parking places along with other locations outside of the core area could be part of an improvement regime to ensure good quality signage and road markings are in place, to reduce the possibility of appeals against Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).

4.5.1 RELOCATE DISABLED BAYS FROM ON-STREET TO OFF STREET

From the initial site assessment undertaken when developing the parking strategy, it was apparent that there is a need to explore the changing of on-street parking bays to no loading bays to alleviate high congestion areas on roads that have width and capacity constraints including safety i.e. visibility. This would entail an assessment of strategic areas within all locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to evaluate if there is a need to increase capacity. This would also mean exploring the possibility of offsetting on-street disabled parking to off-street parking locations. This could only be established if the viability was high, and the offering available still met the needs of existing drivers that use the current facility.

It is likely that within Babergh and Mid Suffolk the most viable locations for this recommendation will be located near or close to densely populated central areas. Examples of issues being present in areas that could benefit are shown below:

- Core areas in Sudbury town centre e.g East Street, A131
- Core areas in Hadleigh town centre e.g High Street, Angel Street
- Core areas in Stowmarket town centre e.g Ipswich Street, Station Road West / East
- Central areas in Eye e.g Broad Street
- Central areas in Needham Market e.g High Street
- Central areas in Boxford e.g Ellis Street.



Figure 17 – Example of street with no loading order to prevent disabled parking

4.5.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

Overall costs for this intervention are low, the bulk of the cost is the application for the TRO. There will be additional tasks such as signage location and purchase coupled with the required road markings. Costs will also be dependent on the number of locations that require improvement. In general, the cost of signage per site is estimated to be no more than **£1,000** along with an approximate cost of **£500** per site for road markings.

As previously discussed, it will be the non-implementation costs associated with this intervention which will be the larger investment. Consultation and legal costs will incur the bulk of the cost, carrying out consultation with stakeholders will cost in the region of **£2,500**. Legal work including advertising the Traffic Regulation Order will cost in the region of **£5,000**.

4.5.2 INTRODUCTION OF PAY & DISPLAY PARKING IN KEY ON-STREET AREAS

Generally, the on-street parking provision near to town centres is located in a more desirable location than off-street car parks. This makes parking on-street much more attractive to visitors, especially those that are not familiar with the area and rely on sat-navs to direct them to a town centre rather than a specific car park. Due to the demand for on-street parking, most town centres have restrictions for length of stay, i.e., maximum stays of one or two hours with a no-return period.

The demand for core on-street parking provision in town centres, can be considered one the easiest sites where parking charges could be introduced. The majority of visitors will not object to paying a charge to pay for a premium location. For those that do not wish to pay for parking, or pay as much for parking, off-street parking can provide free parking, or a reduced parking tariff. This would promote the on-street facility as being a higher convenience service and offset any users that used to park there to the local available off-street car parks. Any amount of revenue generated could then be re-invested back into the local parking infrastructure.

There are a number of locations across the districts where a core on-street provision could be utilised as areas of Pay & Display. Existing demand is high, and the locations demonstrate a high turnover of spaces and little, if any spare capacity. Two examples where small areas of Pay & Display parking could be introduced in core town centre include the Market Hill and North Street areas of Sudbury, and Ipswich Street in Stowmarket.

It is acknowledged that Sudbury currently offers 3 hours free parking in car parks that have restrictions in place i.e., maximum stay, or charges after 3 hours. Therefore, it will be more controversial to introduce parking charges in Sudbury. However, retaining the existing provision in off-street car parks will provide an alternative for any visitors that do not wish to pay for parking. It is recommended to retain the existing two hour limited wait to ensure turnover of spaces. A nominal tariff of £1.00 could be considered sufficient as there are no existing parking charges in place. It is highly unlikely this would discourage usage based on existing footfall and proximity to trip generators.

In Stowmarket, there are existing parking charges in place across car parks, meaning it will be necessary to implement a different tariff structure. Parking on-street in the

core area can be considered premium parking, meaning the tariff should be higher than off-street car parks. The aim being to encourage parking in off-street car parks wherever possible. As the existing parking tariff within Stowmarket is in the region of £1.00 for two hours, it is recommended to consider a tariff of either £1.50 for two hours, or £2.00 for two hours. Similarly, to Sudbury, due to the location of these parking bays, it is highly unlikely this recommendation would impact usage or the local economy.

Away from these two examples, it is expected that there will be other areas across Babergh and Mid Suffolk that could be suitable for this recommendation. So, it is recommended to carry out a district wide evaluation on the suitability of introducing pay and display charging on-street. This will require significant stakeholder engagement.



Figure 18 – Example where on-street pay and display may be appropriate

4.5.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

There are various costs involved in the design and implementation of this intervention. A design or feasibility study is estimated to cost **£5,000-£8,000** per site. The bulk of the cost would be the installation and enhancement of the facility i.e., installation of Pay & Display machines, supply the sufficient signage and road markings and the legal cost surrounding the TRO would cost **£20,000- £25,000** per site.

4.5.3 ON-STREET PARKING SIGNAGE AND ROAD MARKING IMPROVEMENT REGIME

Similarly, to the off-street recommendation to create an improvement regime across all car parks in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, there is a need to ensure road markings and

signage are at a sufficient level to avoid any enforcement difficulties. If road markings and signage are worn and in poor condition, it increases the potential for drivers issued with Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to successfully appeal. An example of this will be no waiting at any time lines (double yellow lines) that are worn to a point it is difficult to interpret what the restriction is. If a vehicle parks on this line and receives a PCN, they may object if they could not understand what the marking was.

It is not feasible or practical to view all parking restriction signage and lines across both districts to identify and prioritise locations that need improvement, due to the size of the area and work involved. Therefore, it is recommended to work with internal colleagues who can report back any issues as part of wider site work undertaken. This should include Civil Enforcement Officers, and Environmental officers who regularly visit sites. It is also recommended to liaise with Suffolk County Council as the highway authority to request feedback from Highways Inspectors when undertaking assessments on the public highway. Comments received from stakeholders such as residents and Local Members should also be captured.

It is vital that any signs and lines that need replacing are upgraded as soon as possible, to avoid enforcement issues. It is recommended that an asset register including all locations be developed to show when signs and road markings are replaced. This record will be a useful resource over the lifetime of the strategy.

4.5.31 COST INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation for the off-street car park regime was to safeguard a percentage of income received by the parking service to generate funding to make improvements within car parks. This recommendation is applicable for the on-street parking improvement regime as well. Either the percentage allocated for off-street car parks can be utilised for on-street as well, or it can be a separate funding pot. It should be noted that off-street car parks should be given greater priority due to the use.

It is therefore recommended to allocate a percentage of approximately **5%** to refresh on-street parking signage and road markings across the councils. The aim being to replace all signage and road markings over the duration of the 20-year parking strategy.

4.5.4 RESIDENTIAL CONCESSIONS FOR DROPPED KERBS AND DRIVEWAYS

For some residents who do not have off-street parking available, there may be circumstances that are preventing them from implementing off-street parking on their own property e.g associated cost or ownership of the property. Vehicles parking on-street may cause localised issues such as traffic congestion, road safety and in particular visibility constraints, and access difficulties for buses. If the councils were to offer a concession for the installation of dropped kerbs and driveways, there is the potential to increase the number delivered and to reduce parking pressure on-street.

This is a recommendation that can be utilised in any location across the two districts. Examples of where this might be feasible include it would be Spring Street, Lavenham, and Magdalen Street, Eye.

There are a number of methods the councils could pursue to deliver this recommendation. There is a need to identify streets where parking pressure can be reduced through properties implementing off-street parking, to develop an asset register. Engagement with the residents would be suggested to understand the appetite. For this recommendation to be cost effective, ideally there should be a handful of properties within an area that would like to implement off-street parking facilities.

Once the asset register has been developed, the councils would need to develop and agree a process for delivery. This could involve procuring a contractor to undertake the works.



Figure 19 – Example of where driveways or dropped kerbs may be applicable

4.5.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

The costs involved are very low, and potentially non-existent. The larger the concession offered to residents, the greater the likelihood of more residents agreeing to participate. This will then provide greater opportunity for a single contractor to tender at a lower price. The concession is then achieved through this cost saving. If the contractors bidding for the construction are not providing adequate cost savings for the number of delivery sites, it may be necessary for the Council to subsidise the costs slightly.

The average cost of a new dropped kerb and driveway construction is in the region of **£10,000-£15,000** per site. If the councils procured a single provider to undertake all sites, there could be a 10-20% cost saving.

4.6 RECOMMENDATION COST AND TIMESCALE SUMMARY – ON STREET PARKING

Table 6 provides a summary of the recommendation costs and indicative timescales as detailed within the sections above.

RECOMMENDATION	APPROXIMATE COST	TIMESCALE
Parking policy		
Investigate the potential for RPS in Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket, as the three towns where streets demonstrate higher parking demand during the day compared to at night. Separate feasibility studies should be undertaken for each town, including consultation with residents. A RPS policy should also be developed.	£20,000 per feasibility study. £30,000 to deliver the scheme for each site.	2022-2027
Any areas of on-street parking that experience excessive demand should be approached with an opportunity to use off-street car parks overnight for parking. This should include all car parks within close proximity to the streets.	£2,500	2022-2027
Liaise with the council's planning team to ensure appropriate measures put in place when assessing new development sites to reduce impact on on-street parking. This should include the specification of parking	N/A	2022-2027

beat surveys in surrounding roads to identify on-street capacity.		
Parking improvement		
Undertake verge parking studies in all locations where verge parking is known to be an issue. This should include assessments of existing situation, development of a scoring criteria, and providing interventions to resolve the issues. Prioritised sites should be actioned with available funding.	£20,000-£25,000 for study in each district. Applying interventions between £1,000-£30,000 per site.	2022-2027
Carry out waiting restriction review programme that assesses each on-street parking restriction separately to determine whether improvements can be made.	£5,000 for review per town. £10,000 for TRO / design costs. £1,000-£2,000 delivery costs.	2022-2032
Sustainable integration		
Investigate the delivery of car club schemes in towns and villages across both districts. A study should recommend on-street locations and type of scheme. Approaching the market will provide accurate costs and delivery timescales.	£15,000-£20,000 for feasibility study that will provide delivery costs.	2022-2027
Undertake unmet taxi demand studies in key locations across both districts such as near public transport stations, NHS Trusts, and supermarkets. If results demonstrate a need for additional taxi ranks, this should be delivered.	£20,000 per district to undertake study	2022-2027
Investigate the potential for on-street EV charge points. A feasibility study should be undertaken to identify suitable locations and resolve any issues such as power sources. The councils should monitor funding opportunities from government.	£10,000-£15,000 for feasibility study. £5,000-£7,000 for each charge point	2027-2032
Work closely with BMSDC officers delivering the councils LCWIP to identify routes that may impact on-street parking. Parking surveys should be done to identify available parking supply. Where possible, on-street parking can be removed to reallocate road space to NMUs.	N/A	2027-2032
Parking operations		
Any correspondence received from Council officers and stakeholders on dangerous on-street parking involving blue badge holders should be noted. Where possible, restrictions should be put in place to prevent parking and additional disabled bays provided in car parks.	£2,500-£5,000 per site for consultation and TRO. £500-£1,000 delivery costs per site.	2022-2042

<p>Councils to consider the introduction of parking charges for key on-street provision such as core town centre areas to manage demand and increase turnover of spaces. This should only cover short-stay parking to prevent acts greater than 2-hours. Charges should be low if no existing charges in place, or slightly higher than off-street car parks where charges are in place.</p>	<p>£5,000-£8,000 feasibility per site. £20,000-£25,000 delivery costs per site.</p>	<p>2027-2032</p>
<p>Over the course of the 20-year strategy, it is recommended the councils seek to replace all existing signage and refresh on-street parking road markings where required.</p>	<p>5% allocation of turnover</p>	<p>2022-2042</p>
<p>In areas with excessive on-street parking, or areas where on-street parking is causing an issue, the councils could consider approaching residents with concessions to install dropped kerbs and driveways to create more off-street parking.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>2027-2032</p>

Table 6 – Recommendation costs and timescales

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Basepoint Business Centre
Andersons Road
Southampton
Hampshire

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Tenacity House
11 Osborne Place
Dundee
DD2 1BE

023 9243 2756

info@2020consultancy.co.uk

www.2020consultancy.co.uk

ACTIVE TRAVEL &
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT

TRAFFIC
ENGINEERING

PARKING
CONSULTANCY

TRANSPORT
PLANNING

ROAD SAFETY

HIGHWAY DESIGN

PUBLIC REALM

Page 112
STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT

INTERIM STAFF



Parking Study Report

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	PLANNING CONTEXT	5
1.2	BABERGH DISTRICT PARKING CAPACITY AND CONDITION	6
1.3	MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT PARKING CAPACITY & CONDITION	11
1.4	CAR PARKING IN BABERGH AND MID-SUFFOLK SUMMARISED	15
2.0	PARKING POLICY BACKGROUND	17
2.1	NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)	19
2.2	PARKING STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT (IHT)	19
2.3	BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PLANNING POLICIES	19
2.5	SUFFOLK LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2011	20
2.6	BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2018	22
3.0	BENCHMARKING WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES	23
3.1	INTRODUCTION	23
3.2	PARKING TARIFFS.....	24
3.3	SUMMARY OF BENCHMARKING	25
4.0	ASSESSMENTS OF BARBERGH AND MID SUFFOLK CAR PARKS	26
4.1	SUDBURY CAR PARKS	27
4.2	LAVENHAM CAR PARKS.....	28
4.3	HADLEIGH CAR PARKS	29
4.4	RURAL CAR PARKS IN BABERGH DISTRICT	31
4.5	STOWMARKET CAR PARKS	33
4.6	NEEDHAM MARKET CAR PARKS	34
4.6	EYE CAR PARKS	35
4.6	RURAL CAR PARKS IN MID SUFFOLK.....	37
5.0	PARKING SURVEYS	38
5.1	INTRODUCTION	38
5.2	CAR PARK OCCUPANCY SURVEYS	39
5.3	DURATION OF STAY SURVEYS	49
6.0	STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	53
7.0	FORECASTING FUTURE PARKING DEMAND	54
7.1	INTRODUCTION	54
7.2	METHODOLOGY	55
7.3	IMPACT ON PARKING ACROSS BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK	57
7.4	CONSIDERATION & IMPACT OF THE FORECASTING TOOL	64
7.5	SUMMARY OF FORECASTING FUTURE PARKING DEMAND	65

8.0	BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK PARKING SERVICE	67
8.1	INTRODUCTION	67
8.2	CAR PARKING SIGNAGE & WAY-FINDING	67
8.2.1	STRATEGIC CAR PARK SIGNS	71
8.2.2	ADVANCED DIRECTIONAL CAR PARK SIGNS	71
8.2.3	CAR PARK VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS	71
8.2.4	SPECIFIC CAR PARKING SIGNS (STATIC OR VMS).....	74
8.2.6	WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE.....	74
8.3	PAYMENT OPTIONS	75
8.4	ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS	77
8.5	DISABLED AND CHILD PRIORITY SPACES	79
8.6	PARKING ENFORCEMENT.....	81
8.6.1	MANAGEMENT OF CAR PARKS	83
8.7	PARKING INFORMATION ON BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL WEBSITE 83	
8.8	LORRY PARKING.....	84

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2020 Consultancy has been commissioned by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to undertake a car park study and prepare a parking strategy covering off-street car parks and the provision of on-street parking. The Councils are seeking to develop a parking strategy that align with the Councils vision, which is designed to shape the future growth of the districts, set out opportunities for enhancing the quality of the local environments and the range of different uses it offers, and provide a prospectus for investment in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The Councils consider the parking strategy to be a key means of enhancing what are already strong and vibrant districts, and its preparation reinforces the importance of parking as an asset for residents of Babergh and Mid Suffolk, visitors, and those who work in the districts.

The supply of parking spaces serves various functions; it is a service to the public, residents and visitors; it can support businesses to operate and expand; it can support (or undermine) efforts to improve the local environment. If a revenue surplus is generated by off-street parking, it can be used by the councils to maintain parking facilities or provide funds for other schemes and services.

The population of Babergh district is 92,300 (Census 2021) and the population of Mid Suffolk district is 102,700 (Census 2021), meaning the two districts combine equate to a population of approximately 195,000. Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts make up two of the five districts within the county of Suffolk, which has a population of 758,556, making it the 32nd largest county in the country. This also means that approximately 24% of the Suffolk population live within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Figure 1 illustrates the location of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts within the context of the Suffolk region.

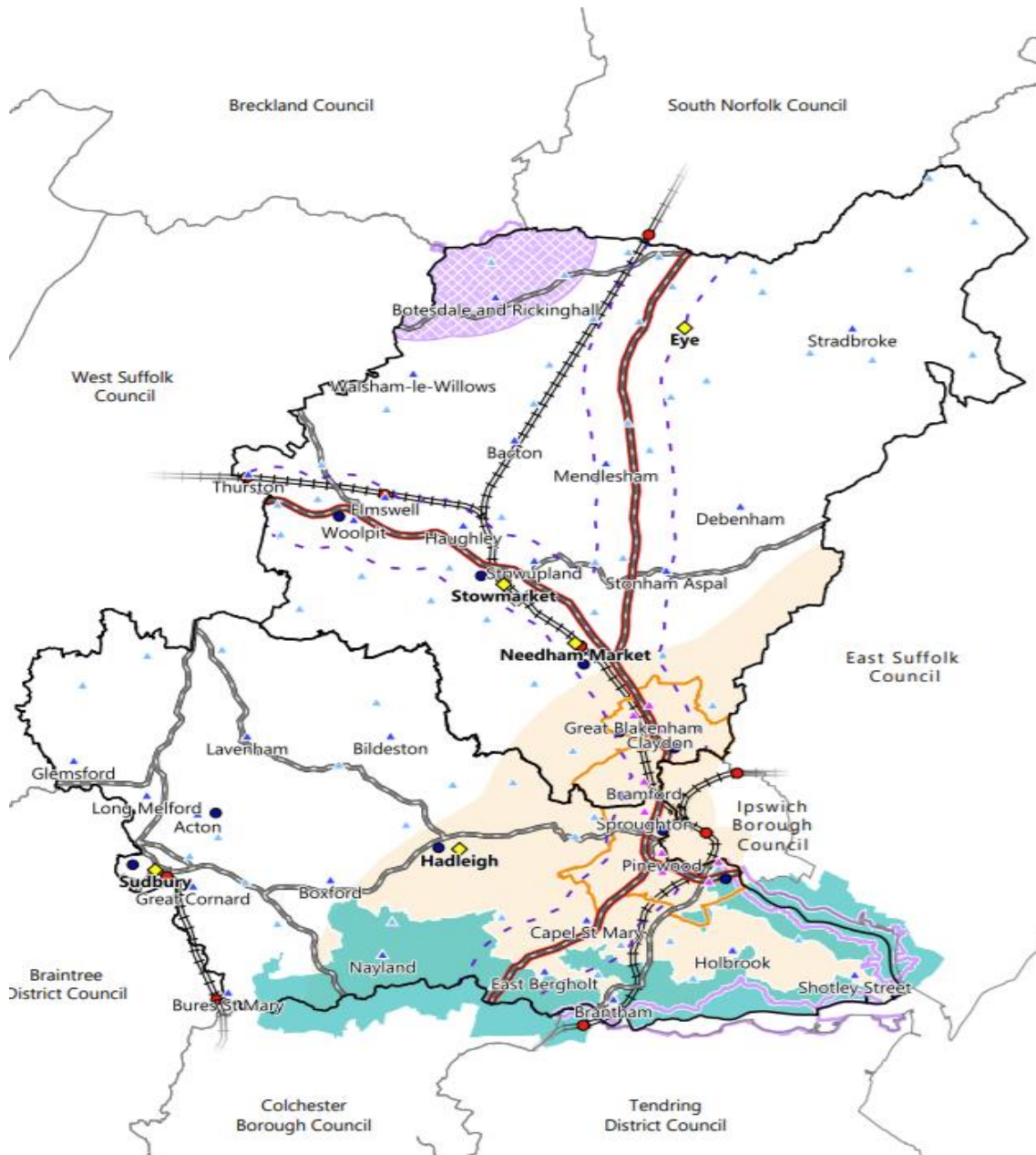


Figure 1 – Location of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District in relation to Suffolk region

Across the two districts, there are numerous trip generators that make the locations appealing for residents to live, businesses to operate, and visitors to travel to. Both districts provide a mixture of different environments with more urban town centres such as Sudbury, and Hadleigh within Babergh, and Stowmarket within Mid Suffolk. There are also quieter rural villages such as Lavenham, Eye, and Debenham. This means that there will be various attraction types making the reliance of parking crucial to the ongoing local economies.

1.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Sudbury town centre is the principal retail, commercial and administrative centre within Babergh, and Stowmarket is the principal retail, commercial and administrative centre within Mid Suffolk. Outside of Babergh and Mid Suffolk, there are other major settlement areas within Suffolk with the largest town being Ipswich, which has a population of over 133,000 and makes up one of the five districts within Suffolk. The second largest settlement is Lowestoft, which falls within East Suffolk Council, and the third largest settlement is Bury St Edmunds, which falls within West Suffolk Council.

Babergh covers an area of approximately 229.8 square miles and Mid Suffolk covers an area of approximately 336.3 square miles. There are three cities located within proximity to the two districts with Cambridge located approximately 45km to the west, Norwich located approximately 45km to the north, and Chelmsford located approximately 37km to the south.

The districts are located to the east of England and are sited away from the motorway network with the closest motorway being the M11 that runs from London to Cambridge. The closer Strategic Road Network (SRN) includes the A14, which runs from Northamptonshire eastwards to Felixstowe in East Suffolk, passing through key towns in the county including Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket, and Ipswich. The SRN also includes the A131 and A134, which runs north to south and connects Bury St Edmunds to Sudbury. There are numerous local roads that provide connections to the towns and villages across the two districts.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts [Joint Local Plan](#) was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination on the 31st March 2021. The documents' purpose is to provide the strategy for the growth of Babergh and Mid Suffolk. It will set out the strategy for development up to 2037, including land allocations. Once adopted, the Plan will replace the existing local planning policies for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

The Plan will set out planning policies to set the context for protecting the districts' valuable natural and built environment and ensure that new development is delivered in a sustainable way. The Plan is primarily based upon and in conformity with national planning policy and legislation, whilst having full regard to relevant strategic and locally significant matters.

The Vision for the Joint Local Plan states the following.

By 2037, Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts will have transitioned to a low carbon future, with the ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030. Significant growth will have occurred, embedding the principles of sustainable development, balancing social, economic and environmental issues.

Major new housebuilding will have taken place, including the delivery of affordable housing for first time buyers and those on low incomes, whilst recognising the districts have an ageing population. Strategic employment sites will be protected, and their proposed expansion supported in principle to ensure jobs are retained locally and created where opportunities exist, allowing businesses to expand and new businesses to invest in the area.

There will be enhanced biodiversity through the delivery of measurable net gains across the districts, supported by an identified ecological network. The historic and landscape character of the districts will be apparent with development being sensitive to this character and applying good design principles.

There will be a clear vision for the towns of Hadleigh and Sudbury in Babergh, and for Eye, Needham Market, and Stowmarket in Mid Suffolk. Many communities will have adopted neighbourhood plans, adding locally to the decision-making process.

A significant amount of growth will have taken place within the strategic transport corridors, recognising the opportunities that exist to move around the area and the relationship with the wider housing market area and functional economic area.

Infrastructure including education, health and transport will have been delivered, including school extensions, expanded health facilities and more opportunities for walking, cycling and use of public transport, as communities grow with active and healthy futures.

1.2 BABERGH DISTRICT PARKING CAPACITY AND CONDITION

There are approximately 1,605 publicly available, off-street car-parking spaces (including 56 disabled spaces) situated in towns and villages across Babergh and their locations are shown in figures 2-12. At the time this strategy was commissioned, all 1,605 car park spaces were operated by Babergh District Council. There is a Waitrose superstore in Sudbury that has approximately 150 off-street car parking spaces located towards the

south-east of the town centre and in close proximity to the train station, which has not been included within the analysis as it is a privately owned car park.

Due to the location of the superstore, it is highly likely that some visitors to the town centre will use the superstore car park to access the town facilities. There are other privately owned car parks such as Sainsburys and Tesco superstores that have not been included in the analysis although these are located slightly further away from the town centre, meaning it is less likely they will be used for other trip purposes.

SUDBURY

There are 11 car parks in Sudbury town centre which are fairly evenly spread out, with two car parks located to the north of the town, three car parks located to the east, and two car parks located to the west of the town. There are also four car parks that are located towards the south-west of the town, but these are sporadic and are more likely to serve specific purposes such as The Quay and the active travel path that runs alongside the River Stour, and residential developments. The most densely populated area of parking in Sudbury is in the vicinity of the train station and Kingfisher leisure centre. There are three car parks located within this area that provide 705 parking spaces which equals 44% of the towns off-street parking supply.

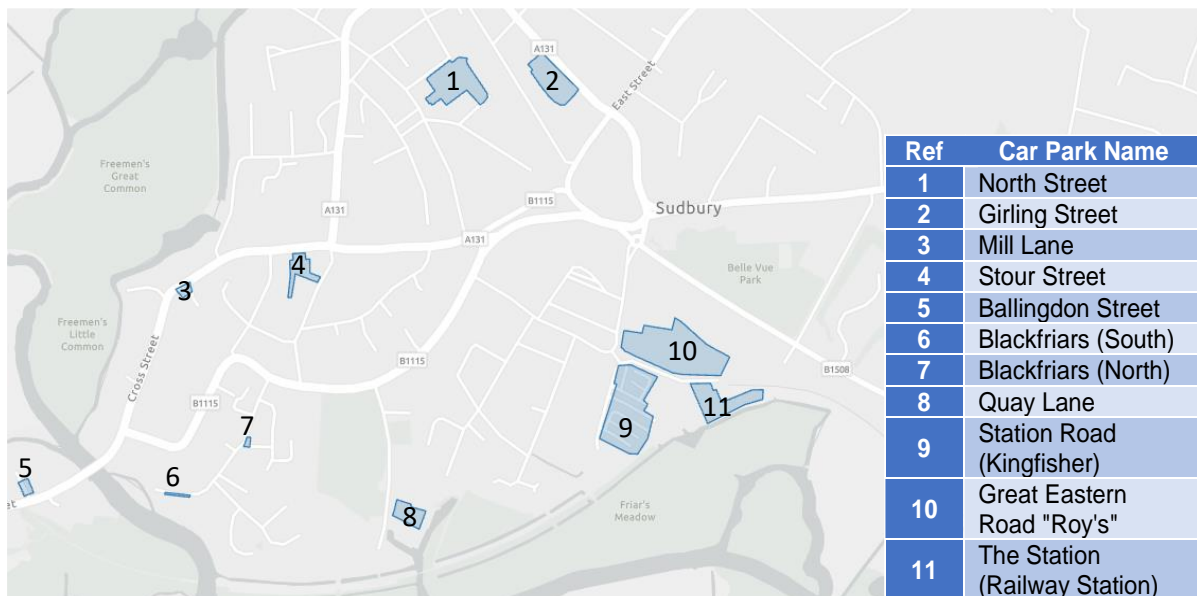


Figure 2 – Sudbury town centre car park locations

LAVENHAM

There are two car parks located in Lavenham, they are Prentice Street, and The Cock Horse Inn car parks. Both car parks serve the village, with one located to the north

(Prentice Street), and one located to the south (The Cock Horse Inn). Across both car parks, there are 110 parking spaces with 86 located in The Cock Horse Inn car park and 24 located in Prentice Street. There are coach parking spaces, located within the Cock Horse Inn car park which is likely to encourage tourists to visit the village.

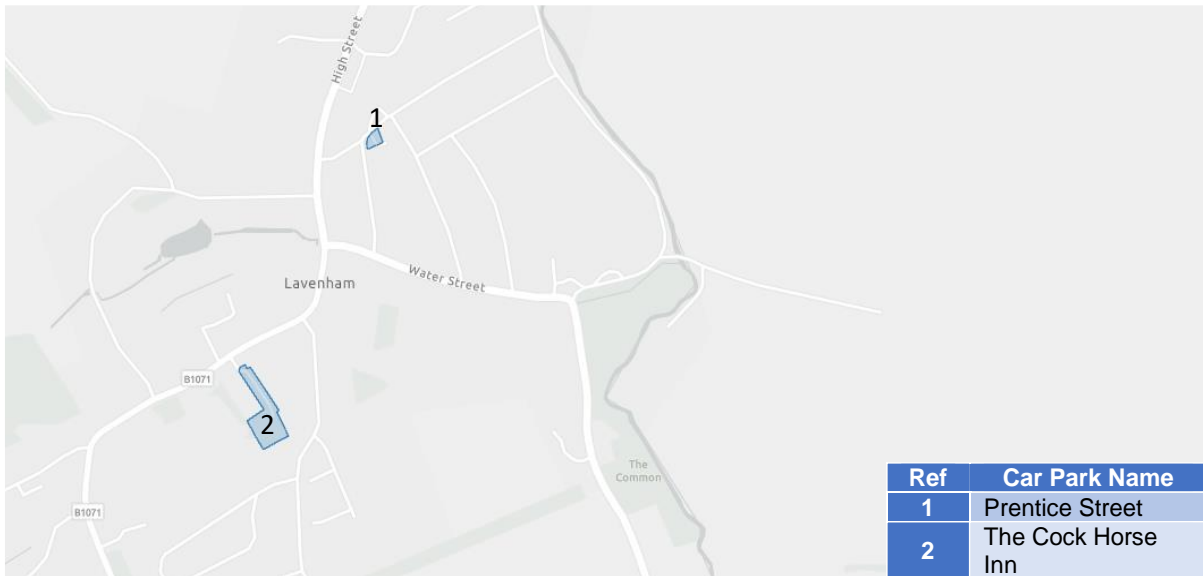


Figure 3 – Lavenham car park locations

HADLEIGH

There are six car parks in Hadleigh, with five serving the town centre, and one providing parking for the Railway Walk trail, which is located to the south of the town. The five town centre car parks are relatively well spread-out providing access from the north, east, south, and west. Between all six car parks there is a total of 313 parking spaces, the majority of which serve the town centre. Magdalen Road is the largest car park in Hadleigh, with 178 spaces provided and equals 57% of the total for the town. The car park includes both short and long-stay parking bays.

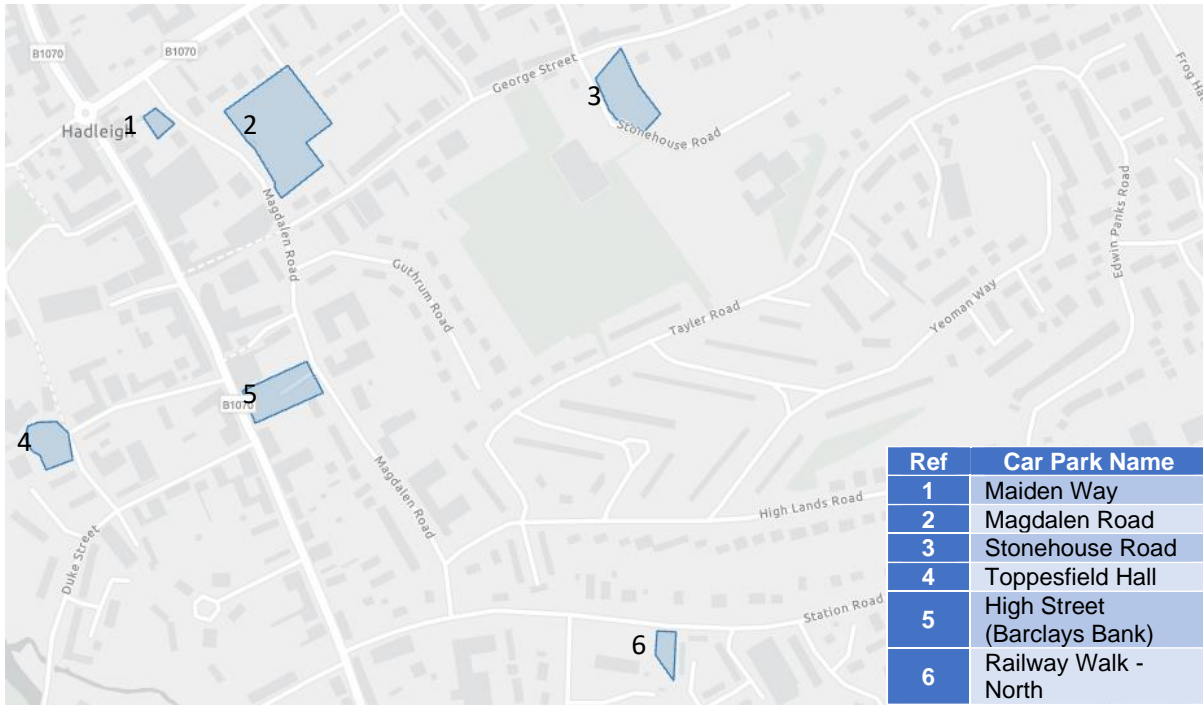


Figure 4 – Hadleigh town centre car park locations

The remaining car parks within the Babergh district are located in smaller villages, where each village has only one car park. They include Raydon, Chelmondiston, and Holbrook. Pin Mill car park, which is in Chelmondiston is the largest of the three and contains 43 parking spaces. There are 6 spaces in the Railway Walk car park in Raydon, and 16 parking spaces in the Lower Holbrook car park in Holbrook.

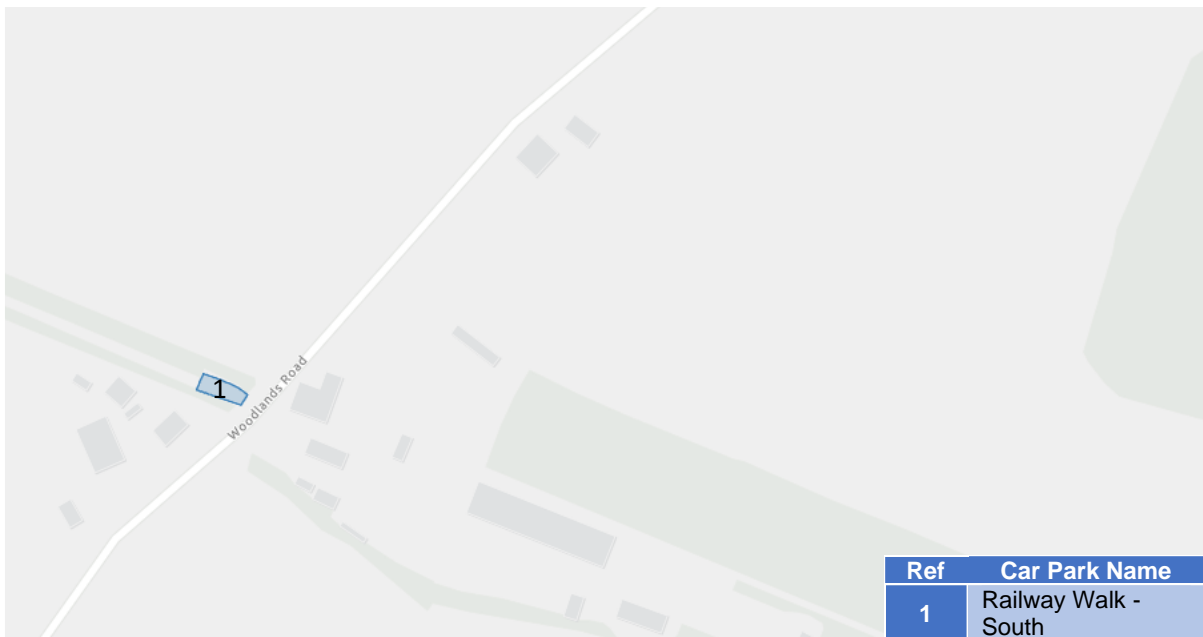


Figure 5 – Raydon car park location

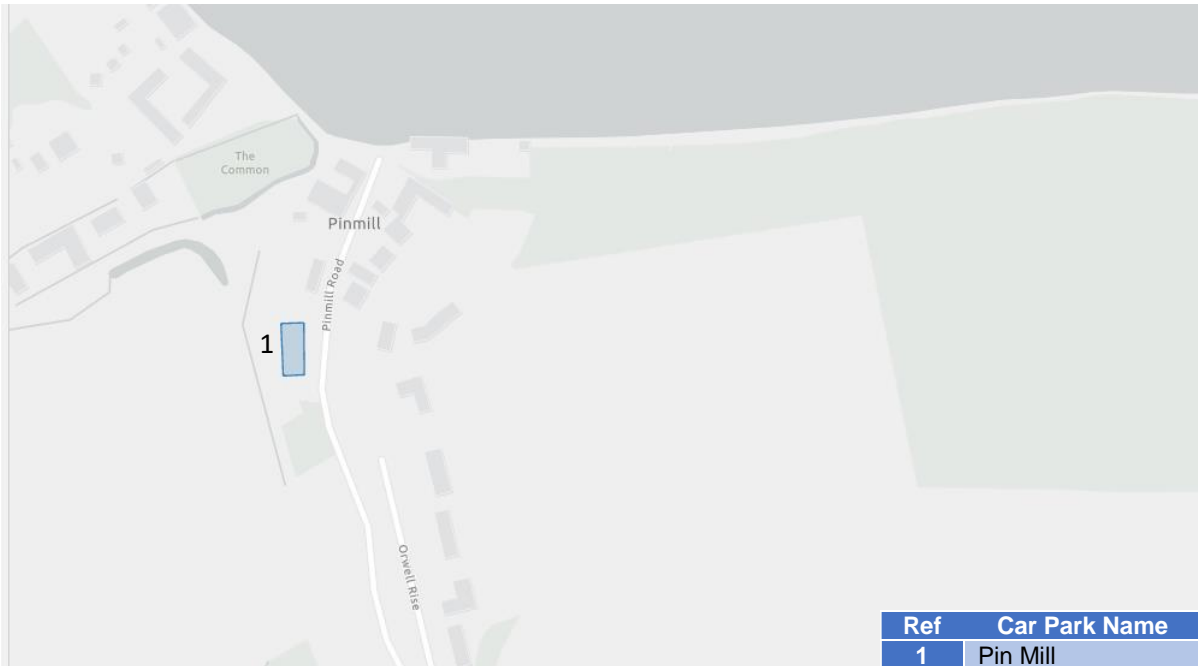


Figure 6 – Chelmondiston car park location

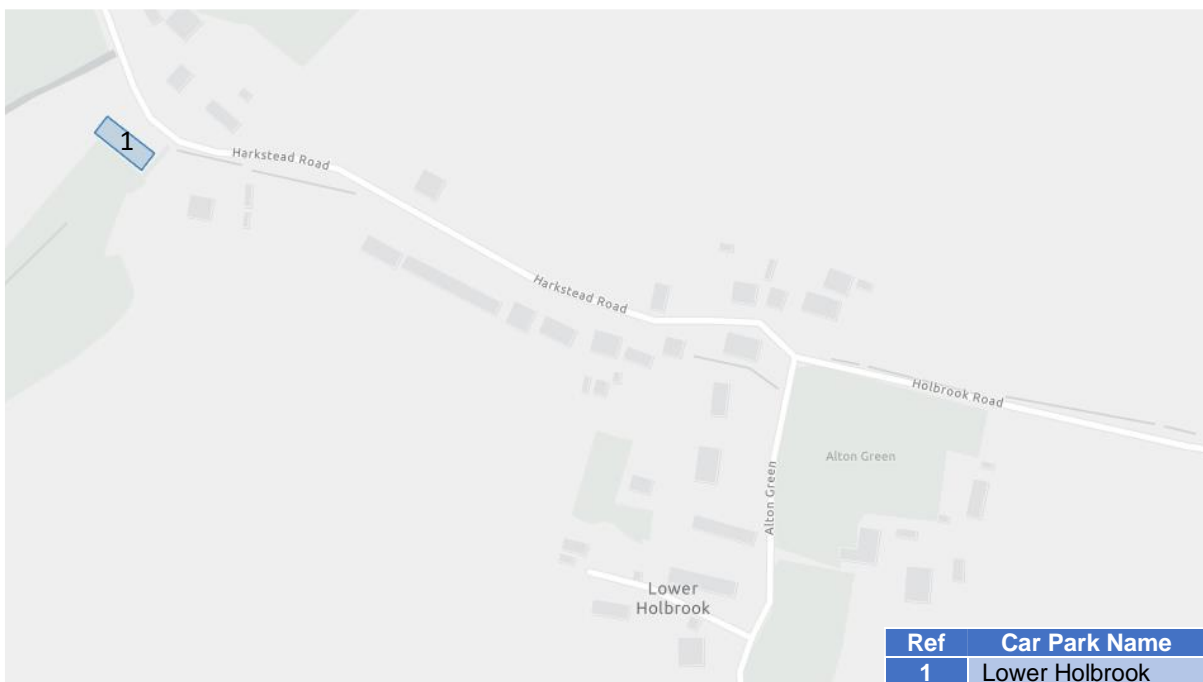


Figure 7 – Holbrook car park location

Across Babergh, there is a mixture of designated short-stay car parks and long-stay car parks. The short-stay car parks are focused on key areas of the largest towns i.e. Sudbury and Hadleigh. There is 3 car parks within Sudbury that are designated as short-stay only, with a maximum time of 3 hours, and no return in 4 hours permitted. These car parks are Great Eastern Road, North Street, and Girling Street.

There are four car parks within Hadleigh that are specifically designed as short-stay car parks (the High Street, Magdalen Road, Maiden Way and Toppesfield Hall), although Magdalen Road car park includes areas of long-stay parking as well. Approximately 44% of Magdalen Road car park (79 spaces) is designated as short-stay parking, and 56% (99 spaces) is designated as long-stay parking.

Car parks within Sudbury, and Hadleigh that are designated long-stay and have parking charges in place for over 3 hours are:

- Station Road (Kingfisher), Sudbury,
- The Station, Sudbury
- Magdalen Road, Hadleigh.

Current charges are as follows:

- between 3 hours and 24 hours - £3.00
- between 24 hour 48 hours – £6.00
- a period of more than 48 hours – £9.00.

There are no parking tariffs in those car parks located in Lavenham, Raydon, and Holbrook. Within Pin Mill car park there is a 30p per hour tariff in place between 9am and 5pm seven days a week.

1.3 MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT PARKING CAPACITY & CONDITION

There are approximately 1,017 publicly available, off-street car-parking spaces (including 44 disabled spaces) situated in towns and villages across Mid Suffolk and their locations are shown in Figure 3. At the time this strategy was commissioned, all 1,017 car park spaces were operated by Mid Suffolk District Council. There are Tesco and Lidl superstores in Stowmarket that have not been included within the analysis as these are privately owned car parks. As these car parks are located on the outskirts of the town, it is unlikely they will be used by visitors for other purposes such as visiting the town centre.

STOWMARKET

There are seven car parks located across the town centre, three are situated close together to the north of the town, these are Bury Street, Union Street and Union Street West car parks. These three car parks are of moderate size and primarily serve shopping needs as they are located close to the key shopping area.

There are a further two car parks located to the southwest of those car parks mentioned above, they are Iliffe way and the Meadow Centre/Asda car parks. Iliffe way car park has a capacity of 90 spaces and its primary use is for visitors of the Leisure centre located next to the car park site.

The Meadow Centre/Asda car park is the largest in Stowmarket and has a capacity of 267 spaces with 16 of these allocated as disabled use. The primary function of this car park is for visitors to the store. There are several business establishments located to the rear of the store which can be accessed via a pedestrian only route. In addition, visitors to this car park visit the Food Museum which is also located to the rear of the store.

The other two car parks are located further south and offer a total of 250 spaces, these are Milton Road and Ipswich Street car parks. Ipswich Street car park serves the visitors of the Regal Theatre. Milton Road is well positioned to service the parking needs of people visiting various restaurants and shops including B&M stores as well as The Mix. Stowmarket offers a total of 719 spaces available, which is 71% of the total offering within the district.

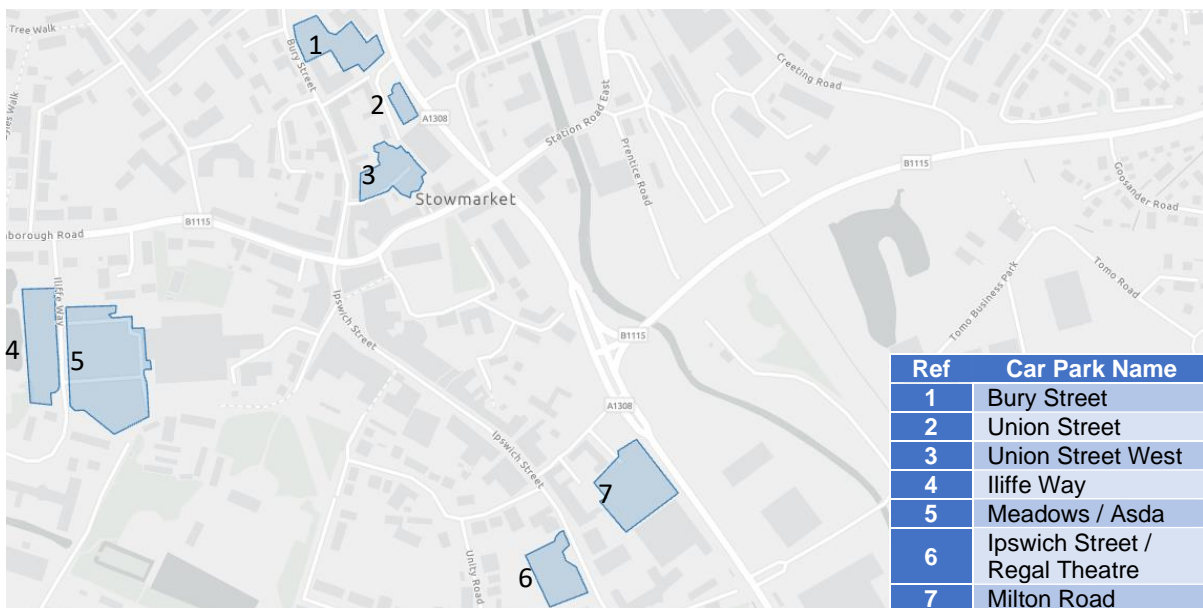


Figure 8 – Stowmarket town centre car park locations

NEEDHAM MARKET

there are two car parks offering a total of 58 parking spaces. Station Yard has parking that runs adjacent to a parade of shops and just south of this is the second car park which is situated at Needham Lake. The car park does not have defined bay markings, so a total occupancy can only be assumed. After consideration of information and a visit to the site,

capacity for this car park is estimated at 27 spaces. The service need for this car park is visitors to Needham Lake including the Duck and Teapot café, the visitors centre and the surrounding areas.

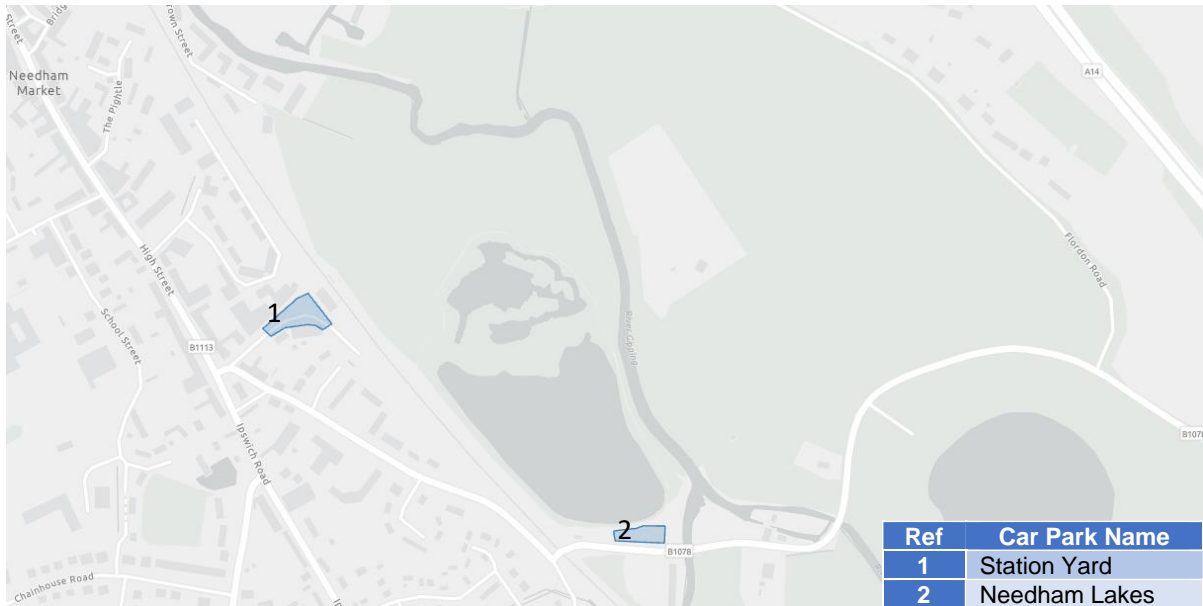


Figure 9 – Needham Market car park locations

EYE

There are two car parks with 107 overall. Both car parks are positioned centrally and are very close to a number of primary roads that serve gateways into the town from the north and the south and the B1117 which orientates west to east. Both car parks serve as a facility for key trip generators including local pubs, shops, and amenities.

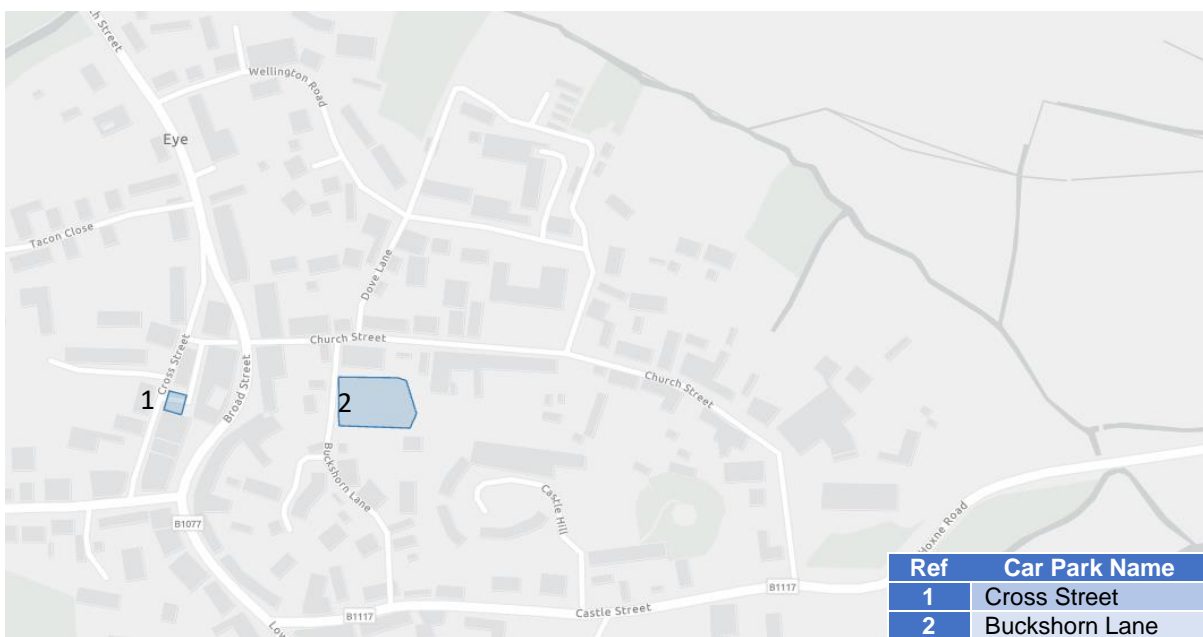


Figure 10 – Eye car park locations

There are a further two car parks located within the district. One in Debenham with a total of 15 spaces and one in Woolpit with 24 spaces.

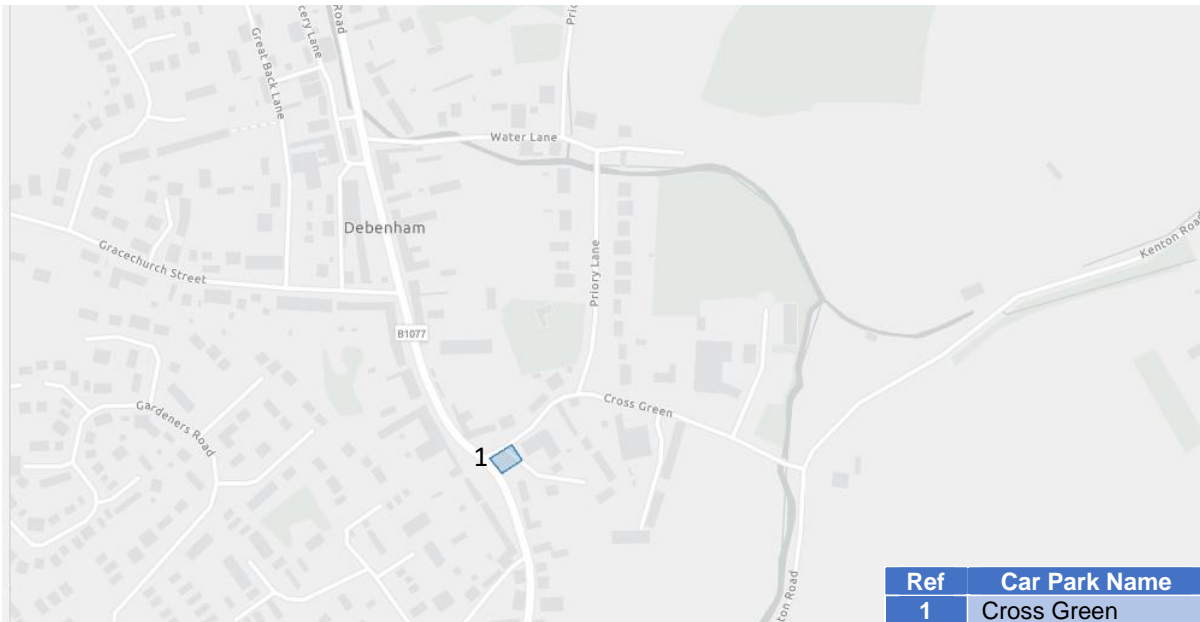


Figure 11 – Debenham car park location

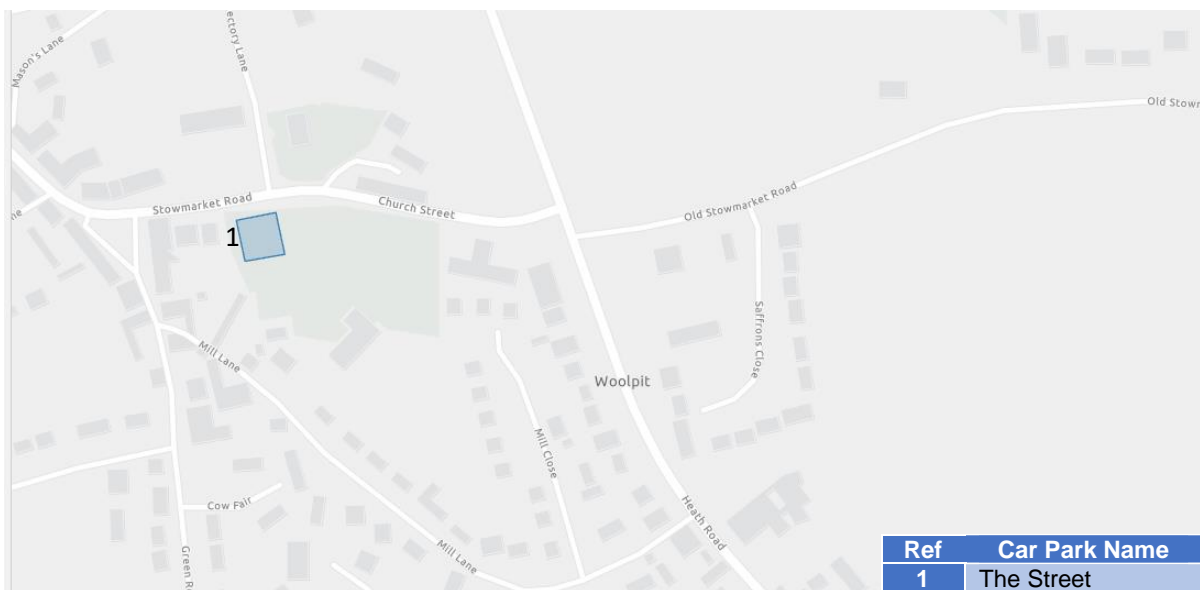


Figure 12 – Woolpit car park location

The district has a mixture of both short and long stay car parks. There are 13 car parks in total of which only two are short stay and both are located in Stowmarket and service the needs of visitors to Asda and Morrison. The remaining 11 car parks are designated as long stay car parks. 7 of the 13 car parks have charges in place and all are located in Stowmarket. The remaining 6 car parks have no charges and are located in Eye, Debenham, Needham Market and Woolpit. They equate to 27% of the total car park offering within the district.

In the Mid-Suffolk district there are a mixture of tariff charges. There are tariff charges in car parks located in all long stay car parks within Stowmarket. There are only two short stay car parks within Stowmarket. These are both shoppers car parks for Meadow Centre (Asda) and Milton Road car park, which serves B&M. Both short-stay car parks have charges in place. The remainder of the district car parks do not charge for off road parking. These areas include Debenham, Eye, Needham Market and Woolpit all of which have several unique attributes including key trip generators such as shopping areas, leisure areas, and areas of outstanding outdoor environment.

1.4 CAR PARKING IN BABERGH AND MID-SUFFOLK SUMMARISED

A total of 2,622 car parking spaces are provided by Babergh and Mid-Suffolk district councils for off-street car parks. This figure does not include any privately owned car parks.

All car parks that have charges in place operate from a Pay & Display tariff system. Although as discussed previously tariff charges do differ across the two districts. All car parks that have tariff charges provide a facility to pay for parking using a mobile device. Below is a list that shows which car parks have tariff charges and the function to pay via mobile device.

- Station Road (Kingfisher), Sudbury.
- The Station, Sudbury.
- Magdalen Road (Long Stay), Hadleigh
- Bury Street, Stowmarket.
- Iliffe way, Stowmarket.
- Ipswich road, Stowmarket.
- Meadow Centre (Asda), Stowmarket
- Milton road (Morrisons), Stowmarket
- Union Street, Stowmarket.
- Union Street West, Stowmarket.

The following table gives an overview of the tariff charges by car park in the districts.

Car Park	Location	Tariff Charges (£)								
		0-1 Hour	1-2 Hour	2-3 Hour	3-4 Hour	4-5 Hour	5-6 Hour	24 Hour	48 Hour	72 Hour
Ballington Street	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
Girling Street	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Great Eastern Road "Roy's"	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Mill Lane	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
North Street	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Quay Lane	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	Unlimited Max Stay		
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	~	~	~	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	9.00
Stour Street	Sudbury	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	~	~	~	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	9.00
Prentice Street	Lavenham	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Magdalen Road (Long)	Hadleigh	~	~	~	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	6.00	9.00
Magdalen Road (Short)	Hadleigh	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	~	~	~	~	~	~	Unlimited Max Stay		
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	~	~	~	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay		
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	~	~	~	~	~	~	Unlimited Max Stay		
Pin Mill	Chelmondiston	0.30	0.60	0.90	1.20	1.50	1.80	~	~	~
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	~	~	~	~	~	~	Unlimited Max Stay		
Cross Green	Debenham	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay		

Buckshorn Lane	Eye	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay
Cross Street	Eye	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay
Station Yard	Needham	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay
	Market	~	~	~	~	~	~	
Needham Lake	Needham	~	~	~	~	~	~	Unlimited Max Stay
	Market	~	~	~	~	~	~	
Bury Street	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50	24hr Max Stay
Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50	24hr Max Stay
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50	24hr Max Stay
Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	2.00	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay
Milton Road	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	2.00	~	~	~	3hr Max Stay
Union Street	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50	24hr Max Stay
Union Street West	Stowmarket	1.00	1.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.50	24hr Max Stay
The Street	Woolpit	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay

Table 13 - Tariff Charges for car parks in BMSD

In Babergh, there are four car parks that have tariff charges, these include two in Sudbury, one in Hadleigh and one in Chelmondiston. The only car park that charges for stays under 3 hours is Pin Mill car park located in Chelmondiston. The other car parks do not operate a charge for parking up to 3hrs, and charge fees for 24-hour increments thereafter (See table 13 above for details).

In Mid Suffolk, there are seven car parks that have tariff charges, all of which are located in Stowmarket and require a fee of £1.00 for the first 2 hours. Thereafter the charges increase per hour by 0.50p until 4 hours, which is charged at £2.50. Subsequently from that time any increase in total stay would result in no further charge, up until the maximum permitted stay of 24 hours. As mentioned, previously there are two short-stay car parks located in Stowmarket that operate tariff charges. Both, the Meadow Centre (Asda) and the Milton Road (B&M) car parks offer permitted maximum stays of 3 hours. The charges are £1.00 up to 2 hrs and £2.00 for the total of 3 hours.

2.0 PARKING POLICY BACKGROUND

Parking plays an important role in providing for and facilitating the key economic and service functions of a town by allowing for access by car. Parking is particularly valuable

for those towns with important regional functions like Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket. These locations provide services for, as well as being reliant upon, a population drawn from a wider catchment area than its immediate vicinity, many of whom may live in relatively dispersed / suburban locations, distant from key services and often difficult to connect by public transport.

Whilst under-provision of parking can be detrimental to the economic and social functions of a town and village, an over-provision of parking supply can be similarly damaging. Parking is often space intensive, occupying land that could otherwise be put to an alternative, arguably more beneficial use. Areas of land set aside for parking and associated highway and access structures often sever important links for pedestrians and cyclists and increase the distances between facilities and amenities.

The increased requirement for car access associated with increased parking levels (often in constrained and environmentally sensitive central urban locations) implies increased congestion, delay and environmental degradation.

Such issues are identified within Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Joint Local Plan that highlight the need to explore potential family attractions and provide greater sustainable connectivity from the train stations to desirable destinations and attractions, through bespoke walking and cycle ways rather than rely on the private car. [The Councils Local Cycling and Walking Plan \(LCWIP\)](#) aims to improve safety for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) by providing clarity with respect to areas across the districts with active travel priority and those parts where streets accommodate both pedestrian and vehicle movements.

Where the parking provision does not take account of all the complex factors that influence economic activity it can become inconsistent with the needs of the town / village and its people.

The supply, location and cost of parking is inter-connected with and impacts upon initiatives and measures to encourage sustainable travel and can conflict with wider, strategic measures to encourage economic growth. For example, reducing the marginal price of parking may act to reduce the cost of travel by car and therefore make a town or village more accessible in one way. However, if the result of this policy were to lead to substantially higher demand for parking and reliance on car travel to access the town and

village centres, it may conversely increase delay, congestion and pollution thereby reducing the attractiveness of the town and village centres.

Parking standards for new development and policies for car parks are also key issues to be considered within the parking strategy. Local and national policy is in place to provide the framework for decisions about the levels of public and private parking to be provided by new developments.

This strategy has been prepared with reference to relevant planning and transport policy and reports. The following documents provide information relating the policy framework for the parking strategy and future growth within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

2.1 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)

This Parking Strategy will be undertaken in accordance with [paragraph 106 of the NPPF \(2018\)](#) which states: *“In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.”*

2.2 PARKING STRATEGIES AND MANAGEMENT (IHT)

A document was prepared by the Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) in 2005 to provide guidance on parking policy context; objectives and measures; and implementation for the preparation of parking strategies. The guidance has been used to inform preparation of this parking strategy.

A key element of this guidance is the recommended level of demand and supply of parking spaces. The guidance suggests that an appropriate target would be that peak demand should not exceed 85% of the supply of parking spaces. The aim of this is to limit the amount of searching for a space by drivers and the consequential environmental damage, congestion, and frustration. Where demand exceeds this threshold then steps should be taken to either reduce demand (by increasing parking charges or improving non-car modes of travel, for instance) or by increasing the amount of available parking space.

2.3 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PLANNING POLICIES

The [Joint Local Plan](#) aims to establish a long-term strategy to manage development, provide services, deliver infrastructure and create sustainable communities.

The JLP identifies nine strategic employment sites including Stowmarket, Sudbury, Acton, Eye, Hadleigh, Needham Market, Raydon, and Woolpit. The JLP states that these sites are essential to securing the future prosperity of the area and that as Babergh and Mid Suffolk are largely rural districts, the towns and core villages within them serve an important function in the provision of shopping, employment and leisure opportunities. To maintain the vitality and viability of existing town and retail centres, new retail, leisure and community facilities will be directed sequentially to the towns in Babergh and Mid Suffolk and to the core and hinterland villages as defined in the settlement hierarchy.

The proposed housing distribution and delivery across the districts demonstrates approximately 33% of the housing growth to 2037 (approx 3,161 dwellings) will take place within the districts market towns such as Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket. In comparison, approximately 28% of the housing growth to 2037 (approx. 2,699 dwellings) will take place in core villages. This highlights the importance the role of the market towns, and core villages have within the districts.

2.5 SUFFOLK LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2011

This is the strategic plan for Suffolk's third [Local Transport Plan \(LTP\)](#). The LTP sets out the County Council's proposals for transport provision within Suffolk for the next 20 years, including walking, cycling, public transport, car-based travel and freight, together with the management and maintenance of local roads and footways.

Within the LTP are ambitious plans for local transport provision and highway maintenance, including:

- Maintaining (and in the future improving) our transport networks
- Tackling congestion
- Improving access to jobs and markets
- Encouraging a shift to more sustainable travel patterns.

The Suffolk local transport plan supports '[Transforming Suffolk: Suffolk's Sustainable Community Strategy](#)'. The headline themes of the community strategy are:

- Creating a prosperous and vibrant economy
- Improving learning and skills for the future
- Creating the greenest county

- Providing safe, healthy and inclusive communities.

The key ambition is to support the local economy, attract world class businesses, and support and develop the local workforce, in the context of a shift towards a low carbon economy. This will help residents to achieve a high quality of life and create stronger and more self-reliant communities. While improving the local economy the strategy also aims to help make Suffolk a healthier, safer place to live and work; improve the level of educational attainment; and reduce the impact of harmful emissions. Working towards these priorities will place the county in a strong position to capitalise on future opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Table 14 illustrates the relationship between the Suffolk priorities and the transport aims contained within the Local Transport Plan.

Suffolk’s Priorities	Challenges	Transport aims
A prosperous and vibrant economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support sustainable economic growth; • Use Suffolk’s unique selling points to capture emerging markets; • Reduce economic inequalities across the county; • Transport and infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity and accessibility; • Maintain core transport networks. Balance capacity and demand for travel, through increasing the use of sustainable transport and reducing need for travel; • Improve access to jobs and commercial markets for residents and businesses based in the county.
Creating the greenest county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing CO2 emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced emissions from transport, including road maintenance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting to climate change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining resilience of transport networks (e.g. coping with flooding, pot holes, winter damage).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving air quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced air pollutant emissions.
Safe, healthy and inclusive communities (Protect vulnerable people and reduce inequalities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving health impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating an increase in walking and cycling.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving accessibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the physical accessibility of the transport system, improving information about travel options, improving access to services for those without access to cars.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting regeneration and tackling deprivation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting wider regeneration.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving road safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the number of casualties on the transport network.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving air quality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing impact of poor air quality on local communities.

Learning and skills for the future (Transform learning and skills)

- Improving access to education.

- Improving accessibility to schools, colleges, universities and other places of learning;
- Access to broadband for online learning.

Table 14 - The relationship between the Suffolk priorities and transport aims in the LTP

2.6 BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY 2018

In 2018, district councillors endorsed a joint 'Open for Business' Strategy to help support business and commerce. In putting together, the strategy, businesses, communities and a network of partners were consulted. The strategy sets out key economic growth and productivity challenges, priorities and actions in the short term and longer term. One of the Council's key objectives expressed in the Joint Local Plan is to promote economic prosperity by supporting measures that enable the local economy in the districts to adapt to changing economic circumstances and to make the most of newly arising economic opportunities.

As part of the Economic Strategy, the Councils are committed to:

- Promoting our 'Open for Business' ethos at every opportunity to deliver our Joint Strategic Plan
- Supporting, with our partners, businesses of all sizes and across all sectors
- Encouraging a culture of entrepreneurship and supporting new start-up businesses
- Supporting, with our partners, our existing businesses to establish, survive, grow and improve their productivity and competitiveness
- Welcoming and supporting larger businesses looking to relocate or expand in our areas, ensuring we have sufficient employment site allocations to enable this
- Developing our investment strategy to join-up investment in land and property, development and regeneration projects to provide sustainable business growth options
- Championing the business community on the regional, national and international stage to promote growth and trade locally and boost inward-investment
- Obtaining and maintaining intelligence and baselines of evidence. Working with our partners on effective use, collation and analyses of data to inform strategies and actions which deliver growth

- Developing our digital functionality and content to enable easier access to relevant and targeted information (including sectoral and transactional)
- Publishing information and intelligence that businesses can use to inform growth and investment decisions
- Ensuring there is continuing councillor and officer development and closer working to best serve our businesses - developing training, expertise and locality knowledge.

3.0 BENCHMARKING WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the development of the car park strategy, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to determine how Babergh and Mid Suffolk's parking offer compares to that of neighbouring authorities and locations that share similar characteristics such as type of offering, size, population, and provision of key trip generators. The neighbouring authorities selected for the benchmarking were:

- East Suffolk
- West Suffolk

Locations that share similar characteristics to Babergh and Mid Suffolk and selected for the benchmarking exercise were:

- Wyre Forest
- East Northamptonshire

The population, number of car parking spaces, and percentage of spaces against the population for each location is shown in Table 15.

Location Centre	Population (2019 estimate)	Town Centre Car Parks	
		Total No. Spaces	% of Spaces Population
Babergh	92,036	1,594	1.73%
Mid Suffolk	103,895	985	0.95%
East Suffolk	249,461	8377	3.36%
West Suffolk	179,045	6,123	3.42%
Wyre Forest	101,291	2,317	2.29%
East Northamptonshire	94,527	594	0.63%

Table 15 – Benchmarking site information

The results of table 15 demonstrate that Babergh has the higher percentage of spaces to population compared to Mid Suffolk. The total percentage of 1.73% is fourth greatest in comparison to East Suffolk, West Suffolk and Wyre Forest. The districts population combined is 195,000 and the combined number of parking spaces offered is 2,622, these figures are closer in comparison to both East and West Suffolk.

Table 15 demonstrates that Babergh and Mid Suffolk has a low percentage of parking spaces compared to population with only the East Northamptonshire district having a lower percentage. Both East and West Suffolk have over 3% of spaces compared to population whereas Babergh has less than 2% and Mid Suffolk has less than 1%. Generally, the parking provision at a town level is expected to be around the 4% mark. At district level this is expected to reduce due to wider and often rural parts reducing the need for off-street parking spaces whilst maintaining population rates. Therefore, a percentage range between 2-3% at district level is considered acceptable within the Suffolk region.

3.2 PARKING TARIFFS

Car park pricing can be competitive between different local authorities and between public and private operators in similar locations (if a destination has both public and private operators). The average parking tariffs within Babergh and Mid-Suffolk have been benchmarked against comparable areas as shown in Table 16 below.

Area	Average Cost of Parking (Per Hour)
Babergh	No charge
Mid-Suffolk	£1.00
East Suffolk	40p -£1.40/ Hour
Ipswich	70p - £1.80/ Hour
West Suffolk	£1.00 - £3.50/ Hour
East Anglia	£1.00 - £2.00/ Hour
North Essex	£1.20 - £2.10/ Hour
East Cambridgeshire	Free/ £3 per day

Table 16 – Benchmarking site parking tariffs

Table 16 demonstrates that parking charges are comparable against neighbouring authorities and towns with similar characteristics. All the areas shown in the table charge for parking apart from Babergh which does charge after 3 hours in some locations and some areas within East Cambridgeshire. The tariff for East Cambridgeshire is based on

having a maximum time of stay permitted before having to pay for a 24 hour stay. Within the areas that charge the cheapest tariff charge is that of East Suffolk at a spread of 40p to £1.20 per hour. The most expensive cost/spread of tariff charge is for West Suffolk which charges between £1.00 - £3.50 per hour.

When considering the car parks in Mid Suffolk that have parking charges in place for short and long-stay parking, the charges are low in comparison to those locations selected for the benchmarking exercise. Whilst some locations have low tariffs in operation in some car parks i.e. 40p tariff in East Suffolk, these are more aligned to car parks within Mid Suffolk where there are no parking charges such as Debenham and Eye.

Based on this exercise, it would be possible to make a nominal increase in Mid Suffolk car parks, without impacting usage. Whilst stakeholders may not favour an increase, it is unlikely this would discourage use given there are no cheaper alternative locations. Similarly, there is the option for Babergh to consider the introduction of short-stay parking charges without an impact to local economies for the same reason.

3.3 SUMMARY OF BENCHMARKING

The outcome of the benchmarking exercise illustrates the following key points in relation to the overall number of parking spaces available, and the parking charges within Babergh and Mid Suffolk compared to neighbouring locations with similar characteristics.

- Babergh offers the first 3hrs of parking with no charge, whereas most local districts charge per hour for parking
- The parking charges in place within Mid Suffolk are generally lower than those in comparison locations
- Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have a lower percentage of parking places compared to population in comparison to the benchmarking locations in particular Mid Suffolk with less than 1% of parking places
- Combining Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts provides a more comparable population to East Suffolk and West Suffolk districts
- Increasing parking charges in Mid Suffolk and introducing short-stay charges in Babergh is unlikely to impact footfall based on the charges in operation in nearby areas and those locations with a similar offering.

4.0 ASSESSMENTS OF BARBERGH AND MID SUFFOLK CAR PARKS

In developing the parking strategy, an assessment of each off-street car park located within the districts was undertaken to understand the current condition of the car park and inform recommendations within the strategy. Site visits were undertaken during August 2021 when the Covid-19 pandemic was still present

The car parks have been assessed against a set of criteria that was developed prior to the site visits and allowed each car park to be scored and to provide a prioritisation list of sites that may require attention. The assessment criteria included the following considerations:

- Accessibility
- Surveillance and CCTV
- Boundaries and perimeters
- Road markings
- Lighting
- Pedestrian access and safety
- Vehicular access
- Directional signage on approach to the car park
- Wayfinding to key destinations in or near the car park
- Overall condition
- Electric vehicle facilities
- Priority spaces for disabled and children
- 24-hour operation

For each of the above criteria, a score of 0-3 was provided. 0 was given to the car park if the criteria were fully met or considered excellent. For instance, a car park that offers excellent pedestrian access and safety i.e. controlled crossings would score a 0, whereas a car park with none of these facilities would score a 3. Therefore, the lower the score the better rating for the car park.

4.1 SUDBURY CAR PARKS

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Ballingdon Street	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	0	24
Blackfriars (North)	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	0	27
Blackfriars (South)	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	0	27
Girling Street	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	0	15
Great Eastern Road "Roys"	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	0	15
Mill Lane	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	0	22
North Street	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	11
Quay Lane	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	0	25
Station Road (Kingfisher)	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	8
Stour Street	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	0	23
The Station (Railway Station)	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	2	3	2	0	13

Table 17 – Assessment scores for Sudbury car parks

Only three of the total eleven car parks were given a score of 1 against the overall condition category meaning that the score was average to poor for the remaining eight car parks. The condition of road markings was evaluated as a separate score for which the Blackfriars North and South car parks and Quay lane car park were given a score of 3. This indicates that the need for these car parks to be re-conditioned to improve the user experience.

The directional signage on the approach to the car parks in Sudbury was assessed and attributed a score. The car parks that were given the worst possible score were Ballingdon Street, Blackfriars (North), Blackfriars (South), Mill Lane and Quay Lane, which were all given a score of 3. This means that the directional signage leading to all these car parks was unsatisfactory or non-existent.

There are no short-stay car park charges for car parks in Sudbury. The two car parks that have charges are Station Road (Kingfisher) and The Station, which are both long stay. The charges currently implemented are in 24 hour increments up to a total of 72 hours (3 days), please see table x for more details.

Overall, the car parks were given a total score which was made up by the scores from the eleven different criteria parameters. Table 17 above indicates the score attributed to each

car park in Sudbury on the established criteria. Based on the determined criteria, the data shows Station Road (Kingfisher) car park as having the overall highest quality score of 8. The only scores for which the car park was attributed more than 1 was for directional signage to the car park and wayfinding where the car park was given a score of 2.

The car parks that attributed the poorest score based on the criteria was Blackfriars (North) and Blackfriars (South), which had a total of 27 each. This indicates that on most criteria it scored poorly and the overall condition of both car parks was judged to be poor and attributed a score of 3.

4.2 LAVENHAM CAR PARKS

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings		Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Prentice Street	1	2	1	0		1	1	2	3	3	1	0	15
The Cock Horse Inn	1	3	1	2		2	2	1	2	2	2	3	21

Table 18 – Assessment scores for Lavenham car parks

In Lavenham, there are two car parks located to the north and to the south of the village centre. Both car parks are near to the main village road network and can be accessed from various directions. The larger of the two car parks which is near the Cock Horse Inn, services the needs of visitors to the village hall, library, and the local surgery. This car park also has a coach park area that is well used for visitors to the area. The car park at Prentice Street is positioned more centrally and located near residential housing and a number of small businesses. It is also smaller in size than the Cock Horse Inn car park and serves a small number of visitors to the surrounding area and from nearby villages.

The two car parks differ in the overall condition score as after the on-site assessment was completed it was evident that works had been recently undertaken at the Prentice Street car park. The Cock Horse Inn car park was given an overall score of 2 meaning that improvements can be made. Prentice Street was given an overall condition score of 1 which takes into account for the recent improvements undertaken.

Prentice Street scored a total of 15 and the Cock Horse Inn car park scored a total of 21. This indicates that improvements can be made to the Cock Horse Inn car park to enhance the user experience.



4.3 HADLEIGH CAR PARKS

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
High Street (Barclays)	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	0	13
Magdalen Road	2	1	3	3	1	1	2	2	3	2	0	20
Maiden Way	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	0	19
Railway Walk - North	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	2	0	19
Stonehouse Road	2	0	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	0	18
Toppesfield Hall	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	3	2	0	19

Table 19 – Assessment scores for Hadleigh car parks

In Hadleigh, there are six car parks all of which are positioned within the town and situated centrally. This means that that they can all be accessed from different directions and are close to the arterial roads surrounding Hadleigh. The car parks are in close proximity to local businesses, recreational areas and open spaces, which could account towards overall occupancy levels.

The largest car park is located along Magdalen Road and has a short and long-stay designation, with each having its own designated area. The car park is central and is used by visitors to the town centre

In addition, there are two further car parks; Maiden Way; and the High Street which are situated close to the Magdalen Road car park and these primarily service trips to the town centre.

There are three car parks situated on the outskirts of the town centre which cater for specific needs. Toppesfield Hall car park to the west of the town centre caters for visitors to the Hall and the Health centre. The second car park is located in Stonehouse Road to the east of Hadleigh and provides parking for visitors to the Leisure centre and to the open greenspace adjacent to the car park. The last car park, located to the south of the town is Railway Walk North, which primarily caters for the needs of walkers and people wishing to explore the surrounding area.

Based on the assessment criteria in Table 19 above, five of the six car parks were given an overall condition score of 2. The High Street car park was attributed the best overall condition score of 1.

A further three car parks given a score of 2, were Maiden Way, Toppesfield Hall and Railway Walk (North). It was judged that although the boundaries and perimeters were adequate, improvements could be made to enhance the overall user experience. There were also two car parks that scored 1, they were the High Street and Stonehouse Road car parks. These were judged to have well determined boundaries and perimeters that improved safety and allowed for a satisfactory user experience.

There is only one car park in Hadleigh that charges to park that is the long stay area of Magdalen Road car park, which has charges in place from 3 hour stays up to a maximum of 72 hours. The remaining five car parks do not charge for parking but do have specific maximum stay allowances, more details of these can be found in section 1.4 of this report.

Of the six car parks in Hadleigh it is the High Street car park which scores best with a total score of 13. The remaining car parks had a scoring range of between 18 and 20. The poorest scoring car park was Magdalen Road with a score of 20. Three car parks score a total of 19 - Maiden Way, Toppesfield Hall and Railway Walk (North). Stonehouse Road scored a total of 18 which indicates that is second to the High Street car park.



4.4 RURAL CAR PARKS IN BABERGH DISTRICT

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Railway Walk (South)	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	0	27
Pin Mill	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	0	23
Lower Holbrook	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	0	27

Table 20 – Assessment scores for Babergh rural car parks

There are three car parks located in rural areas of the Babergh district. They are Railway Walk (South) located in Raydon, Pin Mill car park located in Pin Mill and Lower Holbrook

car park located in Holbrook. All three car parks are small in size but serve the specific needs of the areas they are situated in, with all three having good links to primary roads within the specific areas.

The Railway Walk (South) car park serves the needs of people wishing to walk the surrounding open countryside spaces whereas the Pin Mill car park serves the parking needs of the visitors of a range of trip generators located within the vicinity, including the public house, waterfront and also the National Park area slightly to the east. The Lower Holbrook car park serves visitors wishing to explore the local area.

The largest of the three car parks is Pin Mill with a capacity of 43 cars. The capacity of the Lower Holbrook car park is 16 cars and the Railway Walk (South) car park is 6 cars.

As with other car parks, each rural car park was assessed based on specific criteria, which can be found in table 20 above. The Railway Walk (South) car park and Lower Holbrook car park were given an overall condition score of 3 whereas the Pin Mill car park was given a score of 2. As the car parks are located in rural areas, they do not require the same level of infrastructure as town car parks.



4.5 STOWMARKET CAR PARKS

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Bury Street	2	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	0	19
Iliffe Way	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	0	22
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	0	9
Meadow Centre (Asda)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	7
Milton Road	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	10
Union Street	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	0	22
Union Street West	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	8

Table 21 – Assessment scores for Stowmarket car parks

There are seven car parks located within Stowmarket and they are all positioned centrally within the town centre. Of the seven car parks there are two supermarket car parks, Milton Road (Morrisons) and Meadow Centre (Asda) and one that predominantly services the visitors of the theatre, Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre). The remaining four are multi use car parks. All seven car parks are located close to the major road network and are accessible when travelling from different directions. The superstore car parks have the largest capacity of car parks within Stowmarket, with a total of 435 spaces - 267 spaces at the Meadow Centre and 168 spaces at Milton Road. The remaining five car parks total less than 100 spaces between them.

The overall condition of the car parks was assessed and attributed a score with Union Street, Bury Street and Iliffe way car parks given a score of 2. Milton Road (B&M) was given a score of 1 as it was deemed to be in a better overall condition.

Union Street West, Meadow Centre (Asda) and Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre) car parks were given the best possible score of 0 for overall condition. Directional signage on the way to the Meadow Centre (Asda) car parked scored 1 As it was deemed as more than adequate with slight changes required to improve the score further.

The remaining six car parks all scored 2 for this criteria, meaning that directional signage was present but would require improvements such as positional change, number of signs and condition of signs. As can be seen by table 21 above all seven car parks can improve the signage to onward destinations that is currently present at each location.

The car park that scored the best overall in Stowmarket was Meadow Centre (Asda) with a total score of 7. This was closely followed by Union Street West with a total of 8, Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre) car park with a total of 9 and Milton Road (B&M) with a score of 10.



4.6 NEEDHAM MARKET CAR PARKS

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Station Yard	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	0	22
Needham Lake	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	0	26

Table 22 – Assessment scores for Needham Market car parks

There are two car parks located to the south east of the centre of Needham Market. Both are located near to the B1113, which runs through Needham Market northwest to southeast and both are accessed from various directions. The larger of the two car parks, which is near Station Road is directly in front of the train station services the needs of visitors to the various shops positioned alongside the car park. Users of the train station have their own car park. The Needham Lakes car park is positioned to the centre of the Needham Lake play area and walks and services the parking needs of visitors of the lakes and surrounding areas.

Both car parks scored 2 for overall condition highlighting that their condition can be improved to enhance the user experience and overall functionality of the car parks. As table 22 above shows, the car parks have been given differing scores for lighting. The lighting at Station Road was deemed adequate but could be improved so consequently scored a 2, yet the lights from establishments and the local train station contributes positively to the overall lighting on site. Needham Lake car park received a score of 3 indicating poor or non-existent lighting. This can, however, be attributed to Needham Lake being a greenspace where additional lighting can adversely affect the environment and the overall aesthetic of the surrounding area.



4.6 EYE CAR PARKS

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Buckshorn Lane	1	3	1	3	0	2	3	3	2	2	0	20
Cross Street	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	3	1	0	16

Table 23 – Assessment scores for Eye car parks

In Eye, there are two car parks located to the east and west of the B1077 that runs through Eye. Both car parks can be accessed by users approaching from different directions. The larger of the two car parks, is in Cross Street and services the needs of visitors to the various establishments in the village centre. This car park is also within walking distance of the car park at Buckshorn Lane. The car park at Buckshorn Lane is again near the village centre and also services the needs of residents that do not have on-street parking available.

The car park located at Buckshorn Lane was given an overall condition score of 2 whereas Cross Street car park was given a score of 1. As the table above shows, both car parks score poorly for signage.

As previously mentioned, the car parks were assessed on eleven specific criteria and accredited a score for each. The car park located at Buckshorn Lane scored a total of 20 whereas the car park at Cross Street scored 16 indicating that there are a number of elements which can be improved upon in both car parks.



4.6 RURAL CAR PARKS IN MID SUFFOLK

Car Park	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Overall Condition	24hr Facility	Total
Cross Green	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	0	24
The Street	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	30

Table 24 – Assessment scores for rural Mid Suffolk car parks

There are two other car parks located in rural areas of Mid Suffolk They are Cross Green car park in Debenham and The Street car park I in Woolpit. Both car parks are small but serve the specific needs of the areas they are situated in, with both having good links to primary roads within the specific areas. Cross Green car park serves the needs of people wishing to visit the local establishments whereas The Street car park serves the parking needs of the visitors of a range of trip generators including the church, village hall and the village green for which the car park is located directly next too. Both car parks have small capacities albeit sufficient for the various needs that they serve.

Having assessed each car park based on specific criteria set out in table 22 above. The Street car park was given an overall condition score of 3 and the Cross Green car park was given a 2. Both car park locations are located in rural areas and as such do not require the same level of infrastructure as town car parks. Both car parks are free of charge and implement a maximum stay time of 24hrs (See section 1.4 for information on tariff charges).

Car parks in more rural areas have little requirement to meet certain criteria due to position and occupancy levels.



5.0 PARKING SURVEYS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the process of preparing a parking strategy, it is important for parking occupancy surveys to be undertaken. These surveys involve visiting car parks at various times of the day on weekdays and a Saturday, to collect data on usage in each car park. Collating information of vehicles that are present over several survey times i.e. 10am, 12noon, 2pm, and 4pm, it is possible to determine the turnover of spaces in each car park and whether vehicles are undertaking short-stay or long-stay parking. This is important as the designation of car park spaces may need adjusting to cater for the demand i.e more long-stay or short-stay parking spaces.

In line with the approach adopted elsewhere in this strategy, private car parks for the use of specific businesses (e.g., private staff car parks for offices) have not been surveyed or taken into account within the occupancy analysis. These car parks are outside of the scope of this strategy but nevertheless will still impact upon traffic flows, congestion, air quality and in many ways, demand on public car parks.

In an ideal situation, the parking survey results should demonstrate a higher turnover of spaces in short-stay car parks. Short-stay car parks should be located close to the key attractions such as town and village centres, leisure facilities i.e. sports centres, places of interest such as religious/historic buildings, and areas to enjoy the environment such as walking routes. An example of a short-stay car park is The Meadow Centre car park in Stowmarket. The primary purpose of the car park is to serve the Asda supermarket whilst some visitors may wish to use other facilities such as the town centre, it is acknowledged that trips should be no more than three hours.

Although there are a number of short-stay car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, the majority of car parks are designated as long-stay. For many, there are no parking restrictions or charges and as such can be utilised all day. There are some car parks that are setup to function as long-stay more than those without designation. For instance, in Sudbury The Station car park that primarily serves the train station is advertised as a long-stay car park. The car park offers 3-hours free parking before a £3.00 charge is required to cover a period of 3-24 hours.

5.2 CAR PARK OCCUPANCY SURVEYS

Car park occupancy surveys have been undertaken for all parking locations described in section 4 of this report, which includes all Council owned car parks in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The surveys were undertaken during the month of August 2021 and on a weekday and a Saturday. The weekday surveys took place on a Tuesday or Wednesday. A Saturday was also included as this day is expected to be the busiest of the week.

Surveys were undertaken at 10am, 12pm, 2pm, and 4pm to understand the fluctuating parking patterns within the towns and villages. Undertaking the surveys at these times also enables us to understand the likely reasons for parking. For instance, in a car park without parking restrictions, if a vehicle is present between 10am and 4pm it's likely to be a commuter or a resident. If a vehicle is present at just one survey, it is likely to be a visitor.

Tables 25-26 below provide the occupancy data for each of the car parks surveyed . The car park demand can be broken down into four percentage categories.

- 60-74% - car parks that can be classified as having scope for additional parking without impacting the ability to locate a parking space quickly.
- 75-84% - car parks that generally mean locating a parking space can be achieved relatively quickly although the car park will appear busy.
- 85-94% - car parks that are likely to be challenging finding a parking space. Often the spaces available can be priority spaces, meaning drivers are unable to locate a space or it can be challenging. This level of occupancy can cause frustration with drivers.
- 94% plus - car parks where it is unlikely that a driver will be able to locate a parking space in a larger car park or extremely challenging in a smaller car park. Very few spaces will be free across the car park and if some of these include priority spaces, there is a possibility there will be no standard spaces available for visitors. To locate a space, drivers will most likely need to pass through all running lanes to view every individual section to locate a space.

If a car park is regularly reaching and exceeding 85% occupancy, it may be necessary to consider providing greater parking provision or implementing measures that may discourage parking for longer periods such as parking charges.

Car parks under 60% occupancy can be classified as underutilised, which means there is scope for reallocation of land use or the need to promote the car park for better use.

Car Park	Town / Village	Spaces		10am		12pm		2pm		4pm	
		Total	Dis	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	14	1	9	64	11	79	7	50	4	29
Blackfriars (North)		10	0	2	20	2	20	3	30	6	60
Blackfriars (South)		8	0	4	50	3	38	4	50	6	75
Girling Street		78	2	51	65	55	71	53	68	37	47
Great Eastern Road		268	10	86	32	106	40	93	35	55	21
Mill Lane		23	2	17	74	15	65	12	52	7	30
North Street		199	11	107	54	109	55	98	49	61	31
Quay Lane		30	0	25	83	24	80	21	70	12	40
Station Road (Kingfisher)		297	6	173	58	196	66	159	54	122	41
Stour Street		39	1	38	97	36	92	31	79	23	59

The Station (Railway)		140	3	29	21	43	31	28	20	17	12
Prentice Street	Lavenham	24	2	11	46	18	75	15	63	10	42
The Cock Horse Inn		86	2	42	49	62	72	67	78	27	31
High Street	Hadleigh	52	3	29	56	36	69	32	62	20	38
Magdalen Road		178	7	101	57	115	65	97	54	72	40
Maiden Way		9	1	6	67	4	44	4	44	3	33
Railway Walk - North		6	0	2	33	3	50	4	67	2	33
Stonehouse Road		47	2	33	70	26	55	23	49	25	53
Toppesfield Hall	Raydon	21	3	17	81	15	71	12	57	10	48
Railway Walk - South		6	0	1	17	2	33	4	67	3	50
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	43	0	17	40	23	53	19	44	12	28
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	16	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	2	13
Cross Green	Debenham	15	1	15	100	15	100	14	93	10	67
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	41	3	27	66	35	85	30	73	26	63
Cross Street		66	3	41	62	54	82	51	77	39	59
Station Yard	Needham Lake	31	1	27	87	24	77	22	71	15	48
Needham Lake		27	4	20	74	24	89	23	85	16	59
Bury Street	Stowmarket	89	0	75	84	70	79	64	72	50	56
Iliffe Way		90	0	35	39	48	53	31	34	25	28
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)		64	4	64	100	63	98	61	95	52	81
Meadow Centre (Asda)		267	16	162	61	185	69	157	59	112	42
Milton Road		168	8	94	56	110	65	89	53	71	42
Union Street		26	0	22	85	20	77	16	62	14	54
Union Street West		77	4	74	96	72	94	70	91	66	86
The Street	Woolpit	24	0	5	21	11	46	7	29	4	17
TOTAL		2579	100	1461	57	1635	63	1422	55	1036	40

Table 25 – Car park occupancy data for weekday survey

Car Park	Town / Village	Spaces		10am		12pm		2pm		4pm	
		Total	Dis	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	14	1	10	71	12	86	9	64	5	36
Blackfriars (North)		10	0	4	40	4	40	5	50	7	70
Blackfriars (South)		8	0	5	63	4	50	6	75	6	75
Girling Street		78	2	46	59	54	69	42	54	33	42
Great Eastern Road		268	10	80	30	121	45	89	33	61	23
Mill Lane		23	2	18	78	21	91	15	65	9	39
North Street		199	11	112	56	125	63	108	54	76	38
Quay Lane		30	0	26	87	29	97	25	83	15	50

Station Road (Kingfisher)		297	6	185	62	214	72	174	59	139	47
Stour Street		39	1	33	85	35	90	29	74	27	69
The Station (Railway)		140	3	26	19	62	44	45	32	29	21
Prentice Street	Lavenham	24	2	15	63	21	88	15	63	11	46
The Cock Horse Inn		86	2	50	58	69	80	61	71	52	60
High Street	Hadleigh	52	3	26	50	43	83	36	69	28	54
Magdalen Road		178	7	121	68	135	76	97	54	63	35
Maiden Way		9	1	7	78	8	89	5	56	4	44
Railway Walk - North		6	0	4	67	4	67	2	33	3	50
Stonehouse Road		47	2	36	77	32	68	27	57	21	45
Toppesfield Hall		21	3	18	86	16	76	10	48	9	43
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	6	0	2	33	1	17	3	50	1	17
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	43	0	22	51	29	67	23	53	14	33
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	16	0	2	13	3	19	1	6	0	0
Cross Green	Debenham	15	1	14	93	15	100	12	80	8	53
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	41	3	32	78	37	90	28	68	21	51
Cross Street		66	3	45	68	59	89	63	95	52	79
Station Yard	Needham Lake	31	1	20	65	27	87	18	58	11	35
Needham Lake		27	4	23	85	26	96	21	78	19	70
Bury Street	Stowmarket	89	0	72	81	76	85	66	74	41	46
Iliffe Way		90	0	43	48	53	59	45	50	20	22
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)		64	4	62	97	64	100	61	95	45	70
Meadow Centre (Asda)		267	16	174	65	197	74	181	68	88	33
Milton Road		168	8	104	62	126	75	112	67	58	35
Union Street		26	0	23	88	22	85	20	77	12	46
Union Street West		77	4	75	97	74	96	73	95	50	65
The Street	Woolpit	24	0	8	33	10	42	9	38	4	17
TOTAL		2579	100	1543	60	1828	71	1536	60	1042	40

Table 26 – Car park occupancy data for Saturday survey

The key headline from tables 25 and 26, demonstrates that overall, across the two districts, there is sufficient parking capacity to meet the demand. Whilst it must be acknowledged that at peak periods the capacity in some of the busier towns and villages may become an issue, taking this data as a standard neutral week, increasing the number of parking spaces shouldn't be a priority. From the data above, the peak parking demand occurs between 10am and 12pm on a Saturday with a peak occupancy rate of 71%. This means that across all car parking spaces within the two districts, there are up to 751 available spaces. It's widely considered that this time on a Saturday is the most likely peak parking period during the week.

The weekday period between 10am and 12pm is the second highest peak parking demand, with an occupancy rate of 63%. This reinforces the popularity of the time of day for visitors to travel into towns and villages across the districts. The occupancy rates at 10am and 2pm on a Saturday are the same with a percentage of 60. In comparison the occupancy rates at these times on a weekday is only 57% (10am) and 55% (2pm). This demonstrates that Saturday can be generally considered a busier day. Both weekday and Saturday has an occupancy rate of 40% at 4pm. This suggests that there is greater reduction on a Saturday (20%) than a weekday (15%).

Figure 1 below, illustrates the comparison between the car park occupancy rates on a weekday and Saturday over the two-hour survey periods to illustrate how the demand fluctuates across the time of the day.

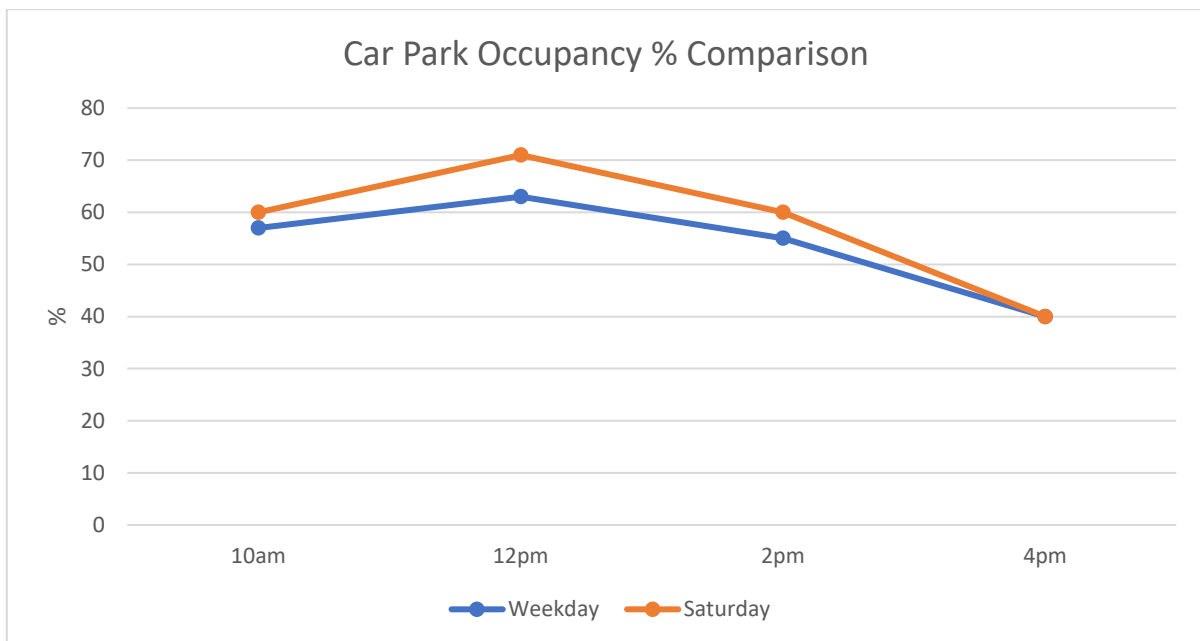


Figure 1 – Car park occupancy weekday / Saturday comparison

Whilst the overall parking occupancy across Babergh and Mid Suffolk demonstrates there is sufficient parking spaces to accommodate the demand, The data does change when comparing Babergh with Mid Suffolk. Firstly, it should be acknowledged that there is more capacity within Babergh, with an additional 609 parking spaces than Mid Suffolk car parks.

The average parking demand across a weekday in Babergh is 47% and 64% in Mid Suffolk, a difference of 17%. On a Saturday, the average parking demand is 52% in Babergh, and 66% in Mid Suffolk, a difference of 14%.

For all four time slots (10am, 12pm, 2pm and 4pm), the percentage occupancy rates are higher in Mid Suffolk than Babergh, both during the week and on Saturday. Interestingly, three of the four time slots (10am, 12pm, and 4pm) have an occupancy rate difference of 17%, whereas at 2pm there is a difference of 15% on the weekday data. The peak occupancy rate is 74% in Mid Suffolk, which occurs at 12pm. Within Babergh, the peak occupancy rate is 57%, which also occurs at 12pm. Both districts have the lowest occupancy rate at 4pm, 51% within Mid Suffolk, and 34% within Babergh. 34%, is the lowest occupancy rate over all survey times.

Figure 2 illustrates this district comparison on a weekday in car parks.

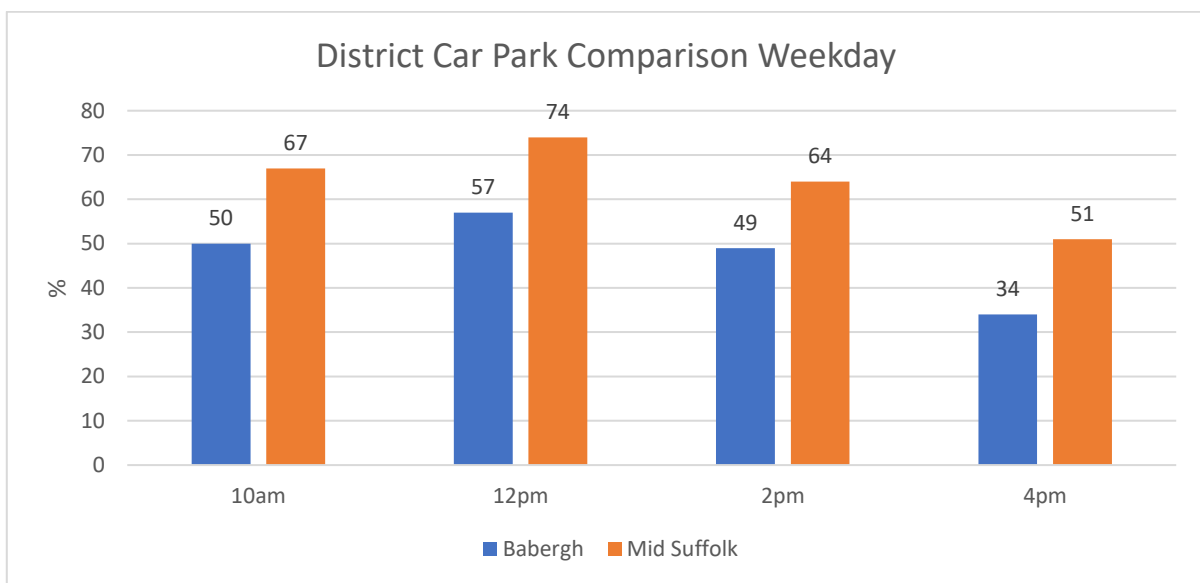


Figure 2 – District car park occupancy weekday comparison

Comparing car parks on a Saturday illustrates that there is greater fluctuation between car parks in Babergh than in Mid Suffolk. There is a 18% occupancy rate difference at 10am, 15% occupancy rate difference at 12pm, 20% occupancy rate difference at 2pm and 6% occupancy rate difference at 4pm. This data suggests that parking demand at 2pm is much higher in Mid Suffolk whereas at 4pm there is little difference. The occupancy rate of 80% in Mid Suffolk at 12pm is the highest rate over all survey times. The peak occupancy rate for Babergh is 65% over all survey times, which also occurs at 12pm.

Figure 3 illustrates this district comparison on a Saturday in car parks.

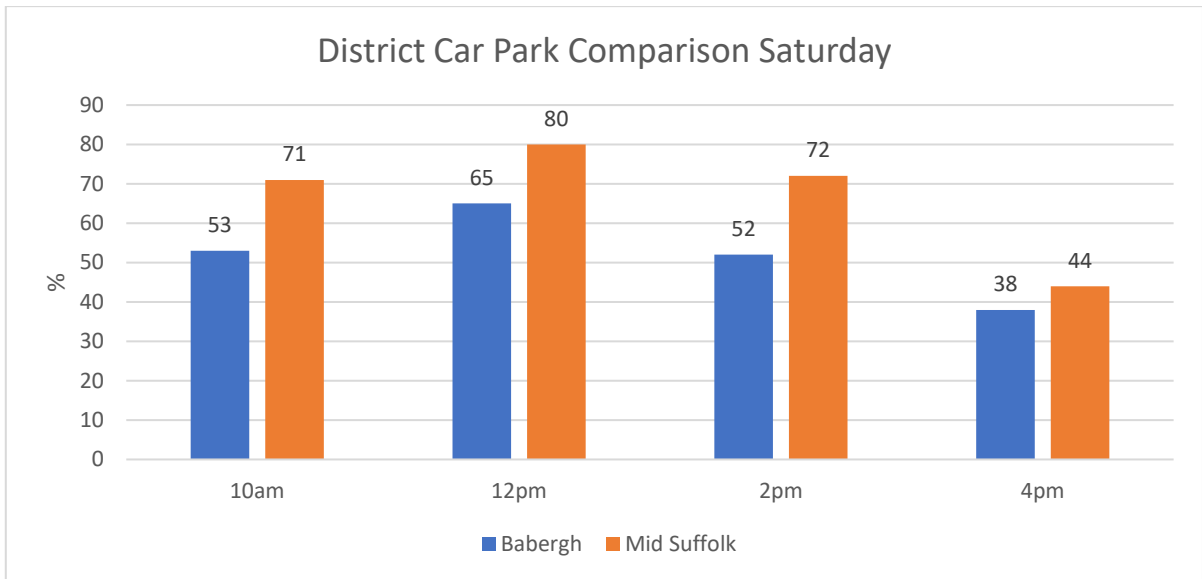


Figure 3 – District car park occupancy Saturday comparison

It is also possible to compare individual towns and villages across the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts to understand how parking varies across the district. Lavenham has the highest occupancy rates within the Babergh district on a weekday, peaking at 75% occupancy at the 2pm survey. Hadleigh experiences the highest occupancy out of the towns in the Babergh district, peaking at 64% occupancy at the 12pm survey. In comparison, the peak occupancy in Sudbury is 54% at 12pm, which demonstrates a 10% difference in occupancy. It should be noted that there are far more parking places available in Sudbury compared to Hadleigh, with a difference of 793.

Figure 4 illustrates a breakdown of car parking occupancy within the Babergh district towns and villages on a weekday.

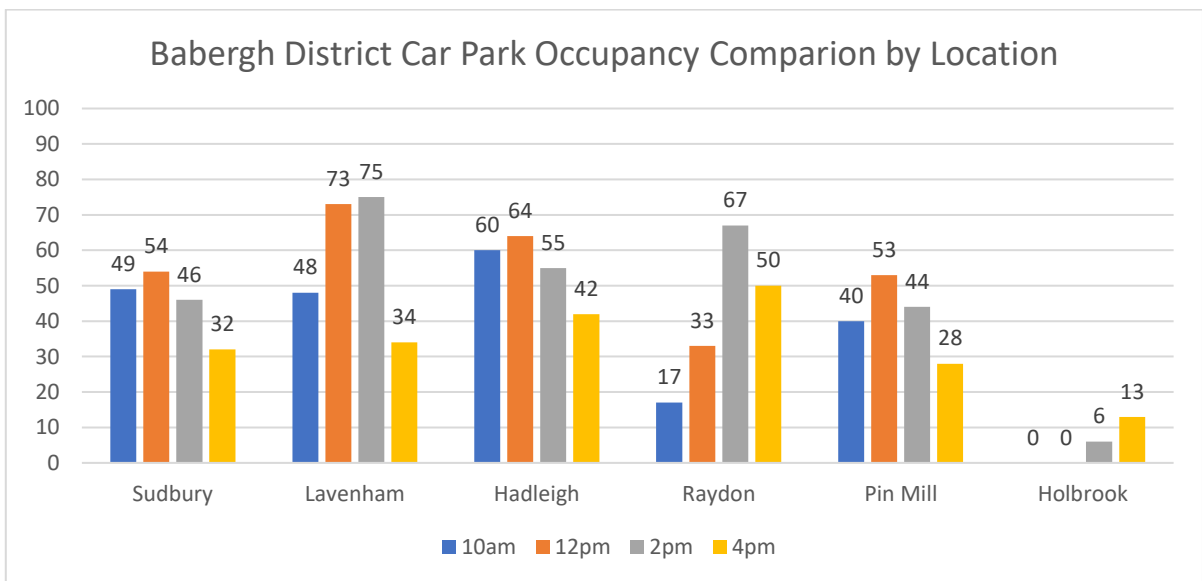


Figure 4 – Babergh district towns & village car park occupancy weekday

Within Mid Suffolk, Debenham has the highest occupancy rate although there is only one small car park, which does skew the results compared to other locations with more parking places. With occupancy rates at 100% at 10am and 12pm, and 93% at 2pm on a weekday, it does highlight the need to consider additional parking supply within the village. Both Eye and Needham Market also demonstrate high occupancy rates, with Needham Market illustrating a peak rate of 83% (12pm), and Eye also illustrating a peak rate of 83% (12pm). It should be noted that one car park in Needham Market was closed during the survey, which impacts the results.

Stowmarket provides 79% (781/985) of the total parking places within the district. This means that the occupancy rates are likely to be lower than the smaller locations within the district as there is more parking supply. The peak occupancy rate within Stowmarket is 73%, which occurs at 12pm on a weekday. This equates to 568 vehicles parking in car parks.

Figure 5 illustrates a breakdown of car parking occupancy within the Mid Suffolk district towns and villages on a weekday.

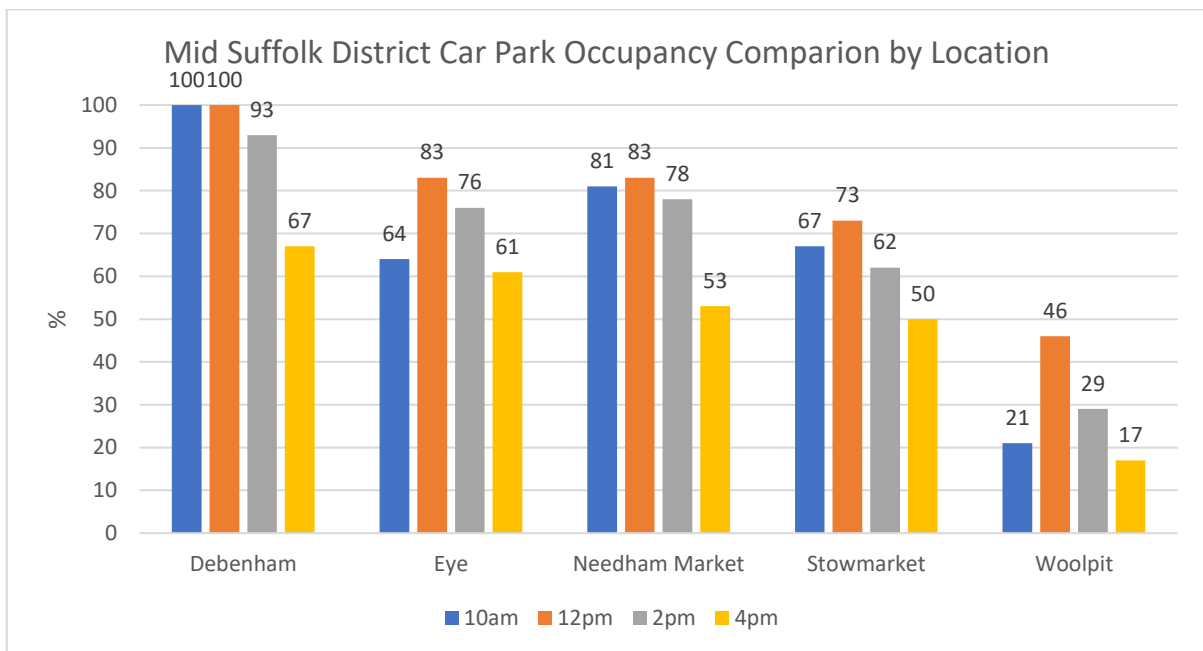


Figure 5 – Mid Suffolk district towns & village car park occupancy weekday

As shown in figure 5, there is greater parking demand on a Saturday compared to a weekday. Therefore, it can be assumed that the occupancy rates in each car park will be higher. The majority of parking locations in Babergh peak at 12pm on both weekdays and a Saturday apart from Raydon where it peaks at 2pm on both dates and Lavenham on the

weekday. Comparing the 12pm peak periods on the weekday and Saturday survey demonstrates that there is an 8% increase in Sudbury on a Saturday, 9% increase in Lavenham, and 12% increase in Hadleigh. Based on the parking provision, this is a consistent increase across car parks.

Whilst there is an increase between weekday and Saturday parking in all locations within Babergh, only Lavenham reaches a point where locating a parking space could become slightly challenging. The peak occupancy rate in Lavenham is 82%. This means only 20 car parking spaces were available across both car parks. Hadleigh’s peak occupancy rate was 76% meaning 75 spaces were available, and Sudbury’s peak occupancy rate was 62% meaning 425 spaces were available. Pin Mill has the greatest fluctuation between weekday and Saturday with an increase of 14% on the Saturday.

Figure 6 illustrates a breakdown of car parking occupancy within the Babergh district towns and villages on a Saturday.

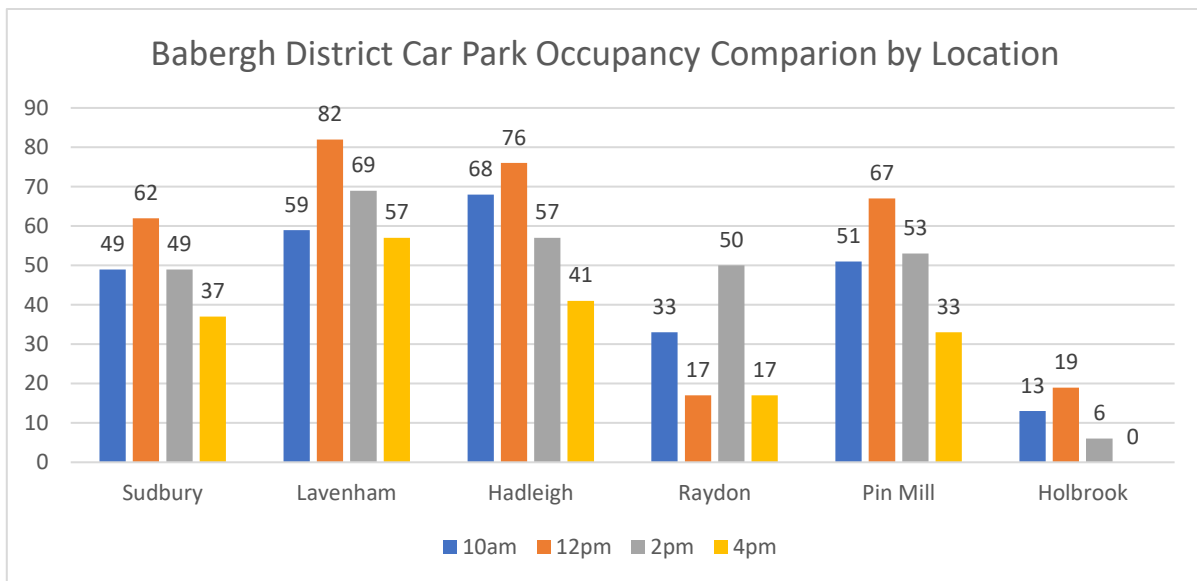


Figure 6 – Babergh district towns & village car park occupancy Saturday

In Mid Suffolk the parking occupancy rates are much higher in comparison to Babergh. However, the majority of locations have a smaller parking supply, with Stowmarket being the only location with more than two car parks, which has a peak occupancy rate of 78% on a Saturday (12pm). This means 169 parking places were available out of the 781 total supply.

All locations on a Saturday have a peak occupancy rate at 12pm. Debenham, Eye, and Needham Market all have peak occupancy rates between 90-100%. This should be

considered a concern as at these rates, visitors will struggle to locate a parking space meaning there is a risk that visitors will travel elsewhere, impacting economies.

Woolpit is the only location within Mid Suffolk where there is a greater peak occupancy rate on a weekday compared to the Saturday. This is only 4% and with the size of the car park, this is not considered to cause any impacts that need further consideration. Debenhams peak is 100% for both a weekday and Saturday. There is a 7% increase in Eye on a Saturday, 8% increase in Needham Market, and 5% increase in Stowmarket.

Figure 7 illustrates a breakdown of car parking occupancy within the Mid Suffolk district towns and villages on a Saturday.

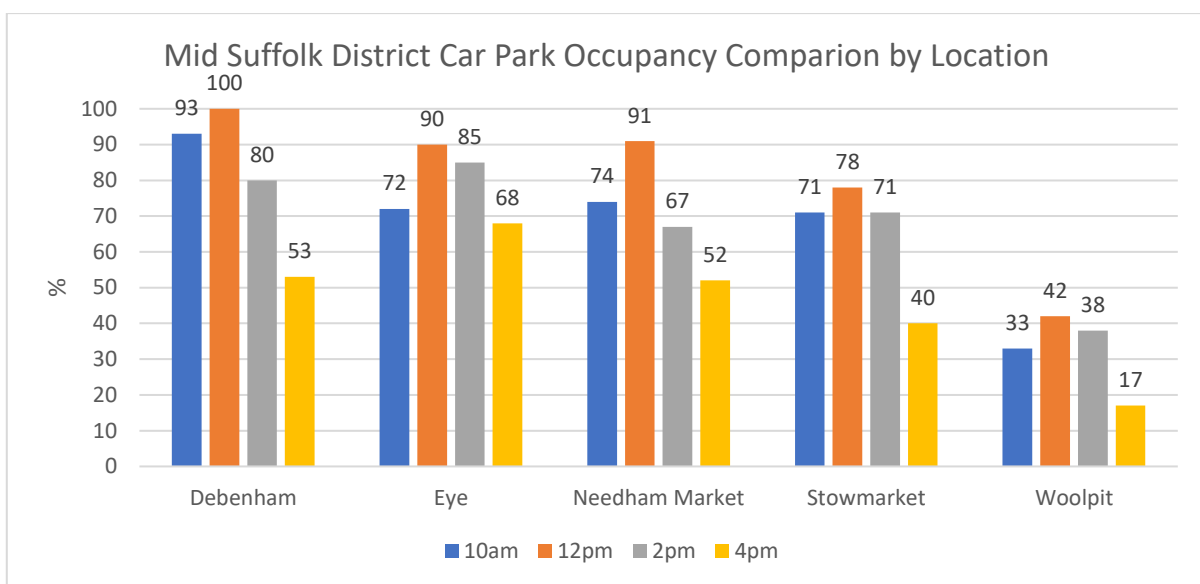


Figure 7 – Mid Suffolk district towns & village car park occupancy Saturday

Whilst the analysis shown above demonstrates that generally speaking there is sufficient parking supply across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts, there are a number of car parks that are either reaching or exceeding the 85% threshold when locating a parking space can become problematic. A total of 35 car parks have been reviewed as part of the occupancy surveys. If the peak parking occupancy rate is used to determine how many car parks are either reaching the 85% occupancy threshold (for this assessment 80-84% threshold has been used), or exceed the 85% threshold, there are 15 car parks that are at or over 85%, and two car parks that are reaching 85%.

There are a total 15 car parks that are at or over 85%. Four of which are in Sudbury, one is located in Lavenham, one in Hadleigh, one in Debenham, two in Eye, two in Needham Market, and four in Stowmarket. Therefore, whilst Sudbury, and Stowmarket illustrate

sufficient parking capacity across the towns, there should be a concern that there are several car parks that are subject to high demand. Stowmarket has seven car parks within the town, meaning 57% of the car parks have capacity issues on a Saturday. Sudbury has 11 car parks (albeit two are for residential use), meaning only 36% of the car parks have capacity issues on a Saturday.

5.3 DURATION OF STAY SURVEYS

Duration of stay parking analysis was undertaken to understand the turnover of spaces. This plays an important role in the areas local economy. Data suggests if the turnover of spaces is too low it is likely that parking charges are needed (or too low if in place), and visitors and shoppers are happy to loiter and may not spend the same amount of money as those who are visiting an area for shorter periods of time. If the turnover of spaces is too high it is likely that parking charges are high if in place, or the areas offering is not fit for purpose and visitors will not have the same opportunities to spend money.

To enable the identification of the turnover of car parking spaces, vehicle registration plate data is noted during each survey. This was collected at the same time as the occupancy surveys - 10am, 12pm, 2pm, and 4pm. Residents, business owners and employees are likely to be located in the car park for all four of these surveys, or at least three surveys. Vehicles that are present for less than four or two hours are highly likely to be visitors to the area.

For each of the car parks shown below the total number of vehicles recorded in parking spaces has been demonstrated (acts). The higher the number of acts in relation to the number of spaces, the greater the car park turnover is during the day.

If a car park records fewer parking acts per bay than overall spaces, it is usually a good indication that the car park is not performing from an operational perspective. It is likely that without the car park there would not be a significant impact on the town centre and other town centre car parks. The number of parking acts should reduce for each time period i.e. there should be more parking acts between 0-2 hours than 2-4 hours. The only caveat with this is parking acts over 6 hours as this covers more than one two-hour window.

Table 27 provides a breakdown of parking acts for each of the off-street car parks across both districts.

Car Park	Location	Acts (A)	Spaces (S)	A/S	0-2 Hours		2-4 Hours		4-6 Hours		>6 Hours	
					No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts
Ballington Street	Sudbury	25	14	1.79	10	40	4	16	3	12	8	32
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	13	10	1.30	2	15	1	8	3	23	7	54
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	10	8	1.25	1	10	3	30	2	20	4	40
Girling Street	Sudbury	128	78	1.64	68	53	41	32	6	5	13	10
Great Eastern Road	Sudbury	210	268	0.78	151	72	48	23	5	2	6	3
Mill Lane	Sudbury	75	23	3.26	37	49	21	28	5	7	12	16
North Street	Sudbury	287	199	1.44	177	62	66	23	26	9	18	6
Quay Lane	Sudbury	56	30	1.87	23	41	20	36	3	5	10	18
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	403	297	1.36	210	52	139	34	24	6	30	7
Stour Street	Sudbury	39	80	0.49	19	49	3	8	1	3	16	41
The Station (Railway)	Sudbury	91	140	0.65	31	34	18	20	15	16	27	30
Prentice Street	Lavenham	63	24	2.63	34	54	12	19	9	14	8	13
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	160	86	1.86	75	47	48	30	26	16	11	7
High Street	Hadleigh	163	52	3.13	119	73	37	23	6	4	1	1
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	292	178	1.64	153	52	88	30	23	8	28	10
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	66	9	7.33	40	61	22	33	4	6	0	0
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	21	6	3.50	12	57	7	33	0	0	2	10
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	112	47	2.38	69	62	38	34	5	4	4	4
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	128	21	6.10	82	64	30	23	13	10	3	2
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	17	6	2.83	9	53	8	47	0	0	0	0
Pin Mill	Chelmondiston	64	43	1.49	26	41	21	33	10	16	7	11
Lower Holbrook	Lower Holbrook	2	16	0.13	1	50	1	50	0	0	0	0
Cross Green	Debenham	45	15	3.00	18	40	15	33	2	4	10	22
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	111	41	2.71	52	47	25	23	5	5	29	26
Cross Street	Eye	196	66	2.97	106	54	44	22	23	12	23	12
Station Yard	Needham Market	148	31	4.77	81	55	51	34	6	4	10	7
Needham Lake	Needham Market	101	27	3.74	33	33	38	38	21	21	9	9
Bury Street	Stowmarket	263	89	2.96	159	60	78	30	50	19	24	9

Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	175	90	1.94	111	63	40	23	35	20	6	3
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	211	64	3.30	118	56	65	31	38	18	24	11
Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	513	267	1.92	398	78	104	20	57	11	38	7
Milton Road	Stowmarket	469	168	2.79	370	79	89	19	54	12	26	6
Union Street	Stowmarket	136	26	5.23	81	60	40	29	12	9	14	10
Union Street West	Stowmarket	253	77	3.29	192	76	55	22	24	9	15	6
The Street	Woolpit	44	24	1.83	20	45	18	41	2	5	4	9

Table 27 – Parking acts for all car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts

The number of parking acts (number of vehicles using the car park) are recorded per space, which can indicate the popularity of a car park, or the number of long stay parking acts occupying spaces. The nature of the car park will impact the turnover of spaces as a car park usually has a primary use. For instance, the Meadow Centre (Asda) is likely to be popular for users that wish to park for short stay shopping visits whereas The Station (Railway) is more likely to be used for long-stay visits as the primary use of the car park is for customers making journeys by train.

Traditionally, the larger the car park, the more parking acts are expected subject to restrictions or parking charges. The Meadow Centre (Asda) had the highest number of parking acts with 513 parking acts over the survey period. This is followed by Milton Road with 469, and Station Road (Kingfisher) with 403 parking acts. Stowmarket is therefore responsible for the highest two parking acts, and Sudbury the third. This is not a surprise as they are two largest towns across the districts.

Whilst the total number of parking acts is related to the size of the car park, the number of parking acts per space is not. Often smaller car parks present higher figures for parking acts per space, especially in key locations such as town centres. Maiden Way car park in Hadleigh has the highest number of parking acts per space with a total of 7.33. This means that between 10am and 4pm, each parking space in the car park had over seven different vehicles occupying the space. Union Street car park in Stowmarket had the second highest number of parking acts per space with a total of 5.23.

Any car park that has a score of less than 1.0 for the total number of parking acts means there were less vehicles entering the car park over the whole survey period than total number of spaces. This is a good indication if the car park is serving a purpose to the local

area. Across both districts, four car parks provided a score of less than 1.0. These were: Great Eastern Road, Stour Street, and The Station (Railway) within Sudbury, and Lower Holbrook. It should be noted that this does not necessarily mean the car park is not being utilised as there can be a higher turnover of spaces between the survey periods i.e. between 10am and 12pm a space could be used on a number of occasions. The survey will only pick up two of these.

The vast majority of parking acts fall within the 0-2 hour category. Only two car parks across both districts have a higher percentage within another category. These two car parks are Blackfriars North and South in Sudbury. Both of which can be classified as residential car parks, meaning there is a greater likelihood of longer parking stays. For both car parks, it was the 6+ hour category that was the highest. Across both districts, the average rate of 0-2 hour parking acts was 52%. Milton Road in Stowmarket had the highest percentage of acts within the 0-2 hour category with 79%.

Figures 8 and 9 below show the total number of parking acts for each parking provision to demonstrate the difference between the town centre car parks on a market weekday, non-market weekday, and Saturday.

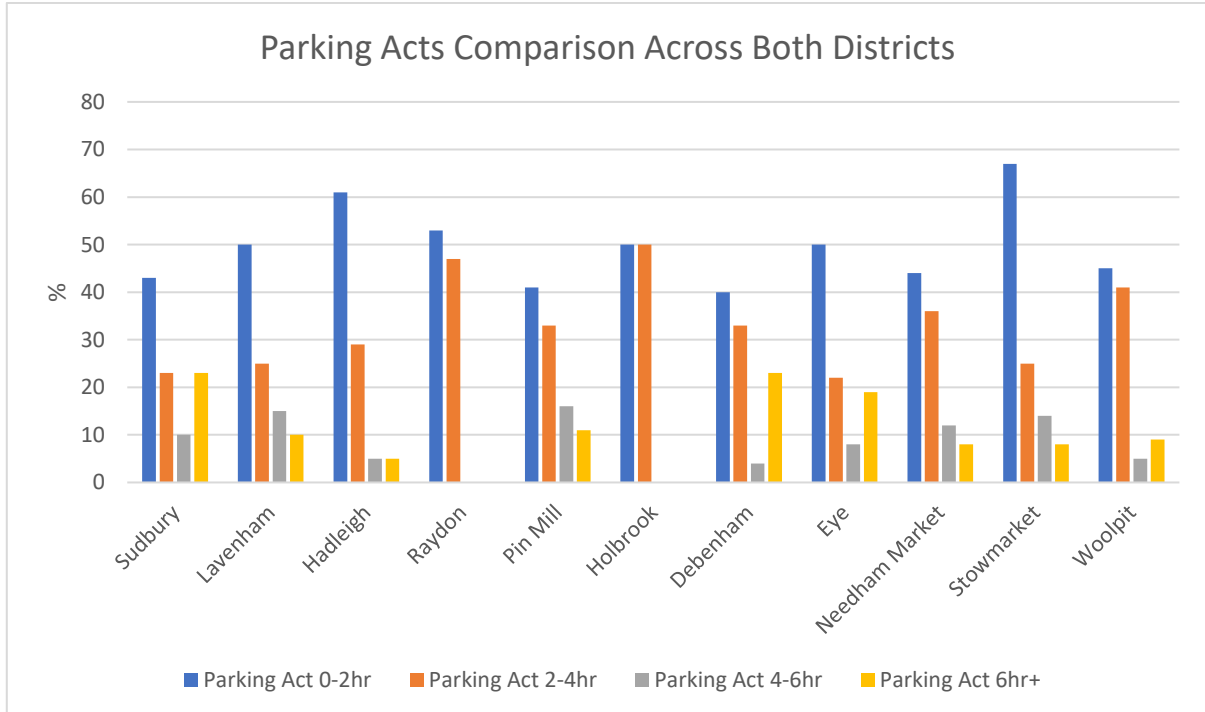


Figure 8 – Breakdown of parking acts across Babergh and Mid Suffolk

The data contained in figure 8 above illustrates that the 0-2 hour parking acts in Stowmarket are significantly higher than the other categories. There is also no location

that has a higher percentage overall. This suggests that Stowmarket is a town that is more frequently used by visitors for short-stay visits compared to other similar locations. For instance, comparing Stowmarket to Sudbury suggests visitors are much more likely to stay six or more hours in Sudbury.

Comparing the three largest towns illustrates that these locations are much more likely to be utilised for short-stay visits compared to other smaller locations. This may be due to the three towns being utilised for shopping visits whereas the smaller locations are more likely to be used for leisure activities. Needham Market and Pin Mill are good examples of leisure locations compared to the three towns.

A comparison of parking acts was also undertaken at district level. Figure 9 illustrates the data, which shows a broadly similar range of parking acts across both districts. Babergh has a slightly higher rate of short-term parking acts whereas Mid Suffolk has a slightly higher rate of long-term parking acts.

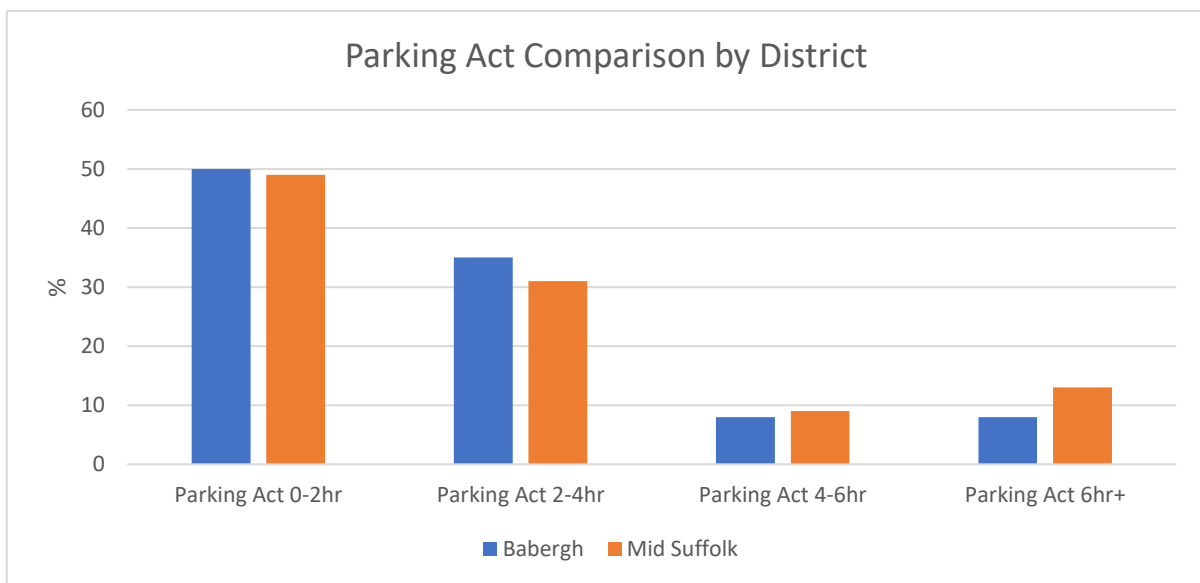


Figure 9 – Comparison of parking acts within Babergh and Mid Suffolk

6.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

When developing the parking strategy, it was necessary to undertake investigation studies into the existing parking provision to understand the baseline and where potential improvements can be made through appropriate intervention. To support this process, a district-wide stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken to gain feedback from various stakeholders on their parking behaviours, concerns, likes, and what is considered important when parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This is the first of two

consultations that to be held as part of the development of the parking strategy, with a second phase to be undertaken on the interventions that will be contained within it.

It is fundamental for the development of the parking strategy to garner a level of stakeholder and public engagement that would allow for opinions and possible concerns to be offered. It is from this engagement that data can be sourced and analysed to allow for a higher standard of subject understanding. It is important to offer this platform for engagement to produce further understanding and possible mitigating actions that would have a higher adoption probability with thorough stakeholder involvement at this stage. It was clear from the high levels of engagement on the consultation process and online survey that the subject of car parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk is an important issue. Babergh and Mid Suffolk has many trip generators and attraction destinations that require parking facilities, and this process allows for the parking provision to be looked at both for the short and long-term.

Public consultation for the first phase of the parking strategy project began on Tuesday 31st August 2021 and was due to last for four weeks, ending on Tuesday 28th September 2021. However, it was agreed to extend the consultation for a further two weeks to allow the opportunity for greater engagement. Therefore, the consultation process lasted just over six weeks concluding on Friday 15th October 2021.

Following the first consultation exercise, a separate engagement feedback report has been produced which includes detailed analysis of the 1,248 completed questionnaires received as well as detailed feedback received during the virtual workshops.

7.0 FORECASTING FUTURE PARKING DEMAND

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Using the baseline data analysed within section 5, the car parking supply across the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts overall is currently deemed adequate for the demand.. Although, there are a number of car parks at or over capacity in the town and village centres, there is generally sufficient parking spaces available, especially in those town centres where there are a number of car parks. There is not a need to consider additional parking in the town centres until all car parks are showing signs of parking pressure.

In some of the smaller more rural locations such as Lavenham, Debenham, Eye, and Needham Market, there may be a need to consider additional parking supply in the near future. This is because there is limited off-street parking available. Debenham in particular, has parking pressure at most times of the day and days of the week, as there is only one publicly available car park. These locations do have on-street parking opportunity, which assists in the parking supply. However, with future potential growth, it is unsustainable to assume the on-street parking provision can cope with the additional parking, without impacting local traffic flow and more importantly, safety.

Whilst there is not a need to increase parking supply within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts based on the current demand, it may be necessary to increase the supply in the future based on increased vehicles entering the two districts. With the Joint Local Plan likely to be adopted in the future, regeneration opportunities within towns and villages across the two districts, along with the scope for car ownership to increase, it is likely that the demand on parking will increase in future.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

To assist the development of car park strategies and transport planning projects that consider the future impact of traffic, the Department for Transport have developed a tool that assists in the forecasting of traffic growth - TEMPro (Version 7.2). TEMPro is a software programme designed for estimating growth in traffic and is based on predictions of future housing, population, car ownership, trip rates and jobs in and around the relevant area. It is a model that is based on origin and destinations, and therefore it also takes into account general growth from surrounding areas and then predicts how this growth will affect the relevant area. The software produces growth factors for a relevant area based on specified baseline and future years.

Any forecasts about future travel behaviour are subject to levels of uncertainty because of the sheer numbers of contributory factors and unforeseen circumstances, but the use of the DfT's traffic growth forecasts is considered to be the best available tool to make these predictions. It may be advisable to have contingencies in place that reduce the risk of future forecasts being higher or lower than forecast and regular reviews of town centre parking would help to steer the strategy in the right direction.

Estimating future parking demand is not a straightforward exercise as it is influenced by a number of factors including:

- **The availability of parking** – plentiful supply means the attractiveness of driving to a location increases whereas, conversely, if parking is in short supply, drivers may travel by an alternative mode or may even be discouraged from visiting the area altogether. Furthermore, the more plentiful the parking supply, the cheaper the charges levied are likely to be thereby increasing demand further. It is therefore difficult to determine whether any latent demand exists in such circumstances
- **Sustainable travel options** – if attractive alternatives to the private car are available, people are more likely to use them and be less reliant upon car use thereby reducing demand for parking. However, it is noted that the travel requirements for some people mean that they cannot use sustainable transport options, and this can limit the effectiveness of this factor. It should also be noted that town centre trips often result in the purchasing of goods that may be difficult to transport using sustainable travel;
- **Parking charges** – if parking charges are too high, people may be put off from driving to an area. They may choose to travel by an alternative mode, go elsewhere or may be discouraged from visiting the area altogether. Conversely, charges that are too low (or don't exist) may result in an overreliance upon car use to access the towns and villages that may result in detrimental environmental and social impacts
- **Growth of the internet** – an increasing number of everyday tasks can now be undertaken without having to travel. Additionally, the internet provides information on the location and price of parking spaces, their availability, if the appropriate technology has been implemented and it enables the development of new initiatives such as driveway rental, car sharing and bike hire. As the internet continues to evolve this will impact upon travel patterns and parking demand
- **Population growth and relocation** – as population increases and moves, demand for goods and services will increase and change. These people will be free to travel where they like and will not necessarily choose their closest destination.

In addition to those factors likely to influence demand, several issues are likely to influence the supply of parking spaces. Foremost is the need to consider how and where potential development proposals might reduce the supply or alter the location of public parking.

It is often the case that car parks are identified as potential locations for redevelopment, especially if the car parks are underutilised. As discussed within section 5, a few car park sites across Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been identified as being underutilised based

on existing usage. This does provide the opportunity to consider alternative land use such as redevelopment, although it may be possible to increase usage through regeneration and other works within the local area.

The growth data has been applied to the surveyed data to project future parking demand across the two districts for a 20-year period up to 2042. The growth in car ownership within the districts has been applied, rather than trip end growth, as the projected growth is greater. The predicted growth in parking demand is shown in tables 28 and 29 and are base level figures based on growth of the existing situation. Further improvements such as the identified regeneration across the districts will result in an increase in numbers.

From...	To...	Origin Trip Growth	Destination Trip Growth	Average Trip Growth
2021	2026	1.0424	1.0423	1.0424
2021	2031	1.0825	1.0823	1.0824
2021	2036	1.1198	1.1193	1.1196
2021	2041	1.1608	1.1604	1.1606

Table 28 - Predicted growth TEMPRO Version 7.2

From...	To...	Don't own a Car	own 1 Car	Owens 2 Cars	Owens 3+ cars	All Cars
2021	2026	0.9983	1.0389	1.065	1.0579	1.0563
2021	2031	0.9965	1.0714	1.1219	1.1307	1.1118
2021	2036	0.9838	1.0944	1.1825	1.1903	1.1626
2021	2041	0.9817	1.1274	1.2591	1.2551	1.2247

Table 29 - Car Ownership TEMPRO Version 7.2

7.3 IMPACT ON PARKING ACROSS BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK

It is acknowledged that whilst TEMPro provides a good basis for estimating background growth across the districts, it may not necessarily be reflective of specific locations of growth and consequently parking demand within specific car parks in the towns and villages.

It is important that the parking strategy fits as one element of a coherent overarching transport plan that covers parking across both districts, which is the driving force behind the parking strategy. Care should be taken to ensure that the proposed level of parking is not set too high as to inadvertently encourage car use to access towns and villages to the detriment of more sustainable modes, particularly if doing so would be likely to undermine the viability of such services and supporting infrastructure (e.g. congestion increasing

delay for public transport vehicles or severance of key links for pedestrians and cyclists by major traffic corridors). This said, the future prosperity and economic success of towns and villages will be reliant upon reasonable access by car.

The TEMPro figures are broken down into five-year periods. As this car park strategy has been created in 2022, the 20-year period covers 2027, 2032, 2037, and 2042. Tables 30 to 33 provide the forecasted growth in council operated car parks for each of the five-year periods, the forecasts are based on many variables and should be taken as a guide only.

Car Park Name	Location	Capacity	Peak Occupancy	2027	% Occupied
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	14	12	12	89
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	10	7	7	73
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	8	6	6	78
Girling Street	Sudbury	78	55	57	73
Great Eastern Road	Sudbury	268	121	126	47
Mill Lane	Sudbury	23	21	22	95
North Street	Sudbury	199	125	130	65
Quay Lane	Sudbury	30	29	30	101
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	297	214	223	75
Stour Street	Sudbury	39	38	40	101
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	140	62	65	46
Prentice Street	Lavenham	24	21	22	91
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	89	69	72	81
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	52	43	45	86
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	178	135	141	79
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	9	8	8	93
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	6	4	4	69
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	47	36	37	80
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	21	18	19	89
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	6	3	3	52
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	24	29	30	70
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	16	3	3	20
Cross Green	Debenham	15	15	16	104
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	37	34	35	96
Cross Street	Eye	63	63	66	100
Station Yard	Needham Market	31	27	28	91
Needham Lake	Needham Market	24	26	27	100
Bury Street	Stowmarket	89	78	81	91
Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	90	53	55	61
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	64	64	67	104

Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	267	197	206	77
Milton Road	Stowmarket	168	126	131	78
Union Street	Stowmarket	26	23	24	92
Union Street West	Stowmarket	74	74	77	104
The Street	Woolpit	16	12	13	78

Table 30 – TEMPro forecasting across Babergh & Mid Suffolk car parks for 2027

Car Park Name	Location	Capacity	Peak Occupancy	2032	% Occupied
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	14	12	13	92
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	10	7	8	75
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	8	6	6	81
Girling Street	Sudbury	78	55	59	76
Great Eastern Road	Sudbury	268	121	130	49
Mill Lane	Sudbury	23	21	23	98
North Street	Sudbury	199	125	135	68
Quay Lane	Sudbury	30	29	31	104
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	297	214	230	78
Stour Street	Sudbury	39	38	41	105
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	140	62	67	48
Prentice Street	Lavenham	24	21	23	94
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	89	69	74	83
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	52	43	46	89
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	99	135	145	82
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	9	8	4	72
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	6	4	39	82
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	47	36	19	92
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	21	18	3	54
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	6	3	31	73
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	24	29	3	20
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	16	3	16	108
Cross Green	Debenham	15	15	37	99
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	37	34	68	103
Cross Street	Eye	63	63	29	94
Station Yard	Needham Market	31	27	28	104
Needham Lake	Needham Market	24	26	84	95
Bury Street	Stowmarket	89	78	57	64
Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	90	53	69	108
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	64	64	213	80
Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	267	197	136	81
Milton Road	Stowmarket	168	126	25	96
Union Street	Stowmarket	26	23	80	108

Union Street West	Stowmarket	74	74	13	81
The Street	Woolpit	16	12	13	92

Table 31 – TEMPro forecasting across Babergh & Mid Suffolk car parks for 2037

Car Park Name	Location	Capacity	Peak Occupancy	2037	% Occupied
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	14	12	13	95
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	10	7	8	78
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	8	6	7	83
Girling Street	Sudbury	78	55	61	78
Great Eastern Road	Sudbury	268	121	134	50
Mill Lane	Sudbury	23	21	23	101
North Street	Sudbury	199	125	139	70
Quay Lane	Sudbury	30	29	32	107
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	297	214	238	80
Stour Street	Sudbury	39	38	42	108
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	140	62	69	49
Prentice Street	Lavenham	24	21	23	97
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	89	69	77	86
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	52	43	48	92
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	99	135	150	84
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	9	8	9	99
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	6	4	4	74
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	47	36	40	85
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	21	18	20	95
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	6	3	3	56
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	24	29	32	75
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	16	3	3	21
Cross Green	Debenham	15	15	17	112
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	37	34	38	103
Cross Street	Eye	63	63	70	107
Station Yard	Needham Market	31	27	30	97
Needham Lake	Needham Market	24	26	29	108
Bury Street	Stowmarket	89	78	87	98
Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	90	53	59	66
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	64	64	72	112
Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	267	197	220	82
Milton Road	Stowmarket	168	126	141	84
Union Street	Stowmarket	26	23	26	99
Union Street West	Stowmarket	74	74	83	112
The Street	Woolpit	16	12	13	84

Table 32 – TEMPro forecasting across Babergh & Mid Suffolk car parks for 2037

Car Park Name	Location	Capacity	Peak Occupancy	2042	% Occupied
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	14	12	14	98
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	10	7	8	80
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	8	6	7	86
Girling Street	Sudbury	78	55	63	80
Great Eastern Road	Sudbury	268	121	138	52
Mill Lane	Sudbury	23	21	24	104
North Street	Sudbury	199	125	143	72
Quay Lane	Sudbury	30	29	33	110
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	297	214	244	82
Stour Street	Sudbury	39	38	43	111
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	140	62	71	51
Prentice Street	Lavenham	24	21	24	100
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	89	69	79	88
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	52	43	49	94
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	99	135	154	87
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	9	8	9	101
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	6	4	5	76
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	47	36	41	87
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	21	18	21	98
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	6	3	3	57
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	24	29	33	77
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	16	3	3	21
Cross Green	Debenham	15	15	17	115
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	37	34	39	106
Cross Street	Eye	63	63	73	110
Station Yard	Needham Market	31	27	31	100
Needham Lake	Needham Market	24	26	30	111
Bury Street	Stowmarket	89	78	90	101
Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	90	53	61	68
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	64	64	74	115
Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	267	197	227	85
Milton Road	Stowmarket	168	126	145	86
Union Street	Stowmarket	26	23	27	102
Union Street West	Stowmarket	74	74	85	115
The Street	Woolpit	16	12	14	86

Table 33 – TEMPro forecasting across Babergh & Mid Suffolk car parks for 2042

The results show that there is a 3-5% increase in overall parking demand over each five-year period and that parking demand is much higher in Mid Suffolk car parks compared to Babergh car parks. This is in part related to more parking places within Babergh

although Mid Suffolk has a higher population. Reviewing all car parks in Babergh, theoretically there is no need to consider additional parking supply even at the year 2042, as the average occupancy is 82%.

However, when reviewing individual locations, the data can be interpreted differently. In Hadleigh, the expected 2042 occupancy data across all car parks is 91%. If demand was as high as the prediction, additional parking would be required. Planning for this should occur when the demand reaches the 85% threshold, which is expected to occur in Hadleigh in 2032. In Sudbury, the 2042 predicted occupancy data across all car parks is 84%. This means that 2042 is when planning should be considered for additional parking supply, with an expected delivery within a five-year period.

In Lavenham, the current occupancy rate as an average across both car parks is 83% during peak periods. By 2027 this reaches 86%, which means consideration may need to be given to additional parking supply. If additional parking is to be supplied, this should be in place before 2032 as the expected occupancy rate reaches 89% by 2032.

Figure 10 illustrates the forecasted growth in Babergh car parks for each of the five-year periods up to 2042 and demonstrates that both Lavenham and Hadleigh are above the threshold and Sudbury is just reaching the threshold.

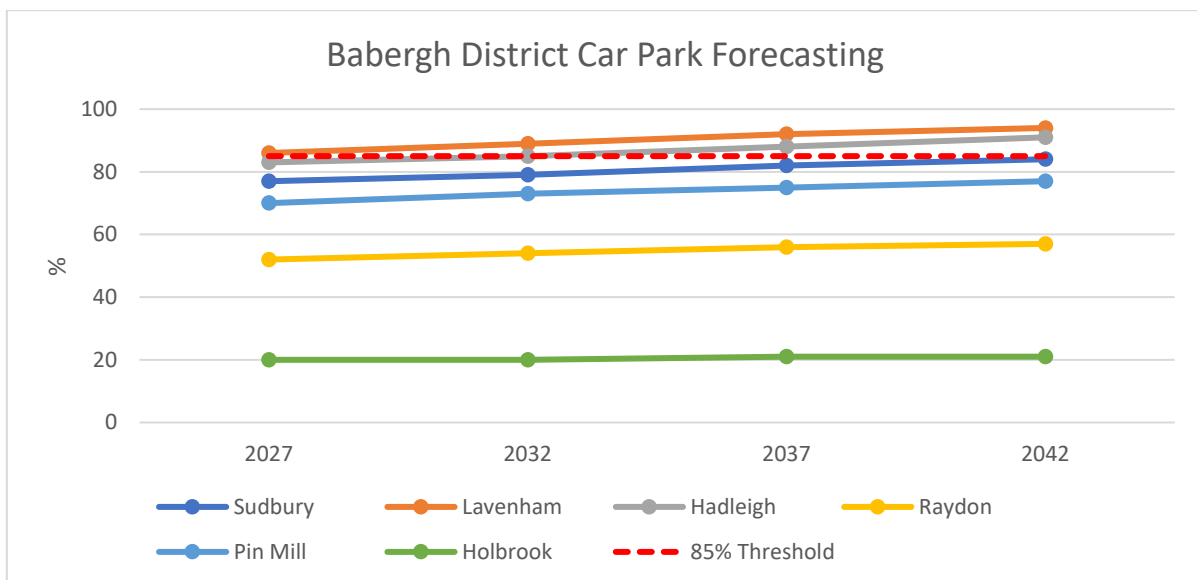


Figure 10 – Forecasting car park growth in Babergh district up to 2042

As shown in tables 30 to 33, there are a number of car parks that exceed the available capacity based on the continuation of demand through the forecasting. It is to be assumed that these vehicles would relocate to another car park that had sufficient occupancy. For

example, by 2042 Stour Street car park is estimated to be at 111% occupancy meaning that 11% of vehicles would need to relocate to another car park. The most likely car parks would be Mill Lane or North Street based on location.

Based on the forecasting data, parking in Mid Suffolk will become more of an issue as the occupancy rates are higher. Across the whole district the expected occupancy rate by 2042 is 100%. This does not mean every car park within the district will be at capacity. but many car parks will exceed 100% i.e. Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre) in Stowmarket, is expected to reach 115% by 2042.

Across all car parks in Stowmarket, the expected occupancy rate by 2042 is 96% meaning that virtually all parking spaces will be occupied. Therefore, based on the forecasts, it is vital that additional parking supply is delivered in Stowmarket before 2042. The existing baseline for Stowmarket is 83%, by 2027, this figure is 87%. Increasing parking provision within Stowmarket should be considered and planned for within the next five years, and ideally delivered to avoid a situation where the limited parking impacts the local economy.

Off-street parking in Debenham, Eye, and Needham Market is already an issue based on the data collected during the parking surveys. With that in mind, forecasting growth only exacerbates the situation. By 2042 the expected demand on Debenham is 115%, Eye is 108%, and Needham Market is 106%. Due to the limited parking supply in these locations, it is not possible to relocate the excessive demand as these figures include all off-street parking locations. This means visitors will either need to park on-street, which has safety and traffic flow implications, or visit alternative locations, which impacts local economies.

Figure 11 illustrates the forecasting growth in Mid Suffolk district car parks in five-year periods up to 2042. This demonstrates that all towns and villages across the district with off-street parking exceed the 85% threshold.

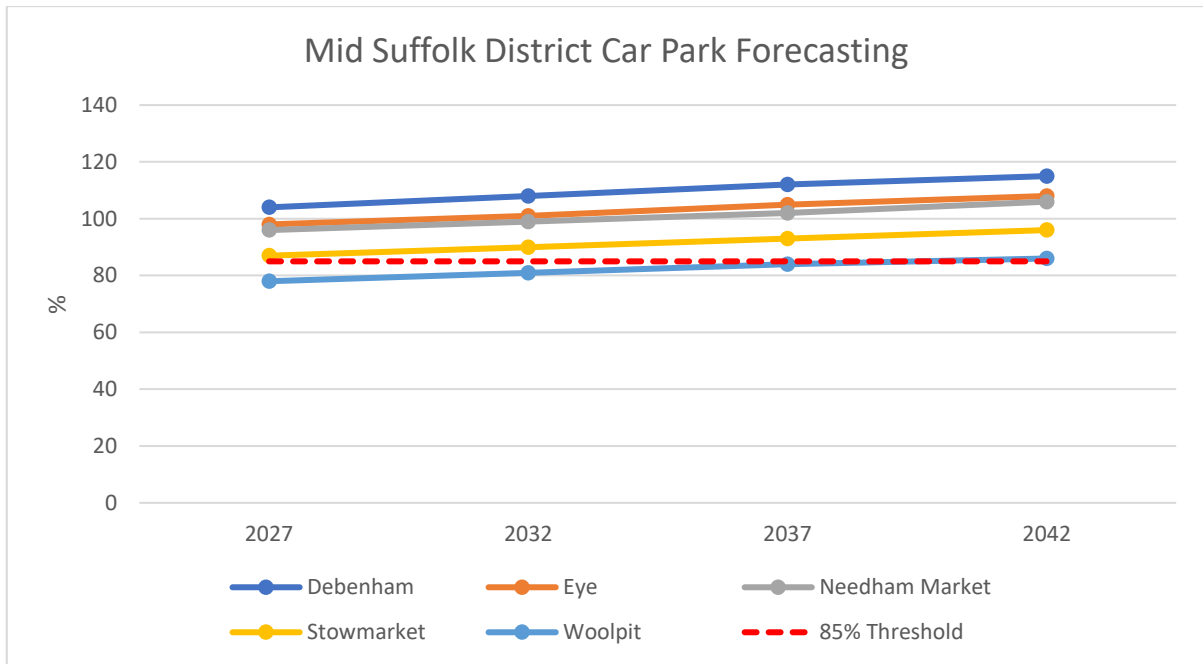


Figure 11 – Forecasting car park growth in Babergh district up to 2042

7.4 CONSIDERATION & IMPACT OF THE FORECASTING TOOL

It should be noted that the forecasting tool used for estimating growth in car parks across the two districts is based on many assumptions and that the baseline data is using peak data from the site surveys, which for the majority of cases is 12pm on a Saturday. Therefore, to a certain degree, the data illustrated in this section can be considered as worst-case scenario. It is important that there is sufficient parking capacity for peak periods to avoid a detrimental impact to local economies as visitors may choose alternative locations with better parking supply as a consequence of this issue.

The forecasting is based on the TEMPro 7.2 dataset, which was released in 2017. and so has not considered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the shift in behaviours i.e. greater reliance on internet shopping, and a potential reduction in travelling into public places such as town and village centres. 2017 also predates the greater shift that was made to sustainable transport and in particular active travel, which coincided with central government releasing the LTN 1/20 guidance that provides greater emphasis on active travel. This means that the forecasting data may be at a lower rate based on less demand on private vehicles.

7.5 SUMMARY OF FORECASTING FUTURE PARKING DEMAND

In conclusion to this review of future forecasting of parking demand across Babergh and Mid Suffolk car parks, there is a clear difference with parking demand between the two districts. At district level, the existing parking supply is sufficient for use within Babergh up till 2042. When breaking this down into individual towns and villages, there is a need to consider additional parking supply (or a reduction in traffic use into the towns and villages) in some locations such as Hadleigh, and Lavenham, and potentially Sudbury.

Within the Mid Suffolk district, there is a far greater need to consider increasing the supply of parking places, both at district level and individual town and village level. By 2042, there aren't any towns or villages with off-street car parks that are below the 85% threshold when locating a parking space can become problematic. In the majority of locations, the demand will exceed the supply. As many of the locations have no alternative parking, there is a risk that this issue may impact the local economies.

Table 34 summarises the forecasting of future parking demand across all off-street car parks within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts over five-year periods up to 2042.

Car Park Name	Location	2022 % Occupied	2027 % Occupied	2032 % Occupied	2037 % Occupied	2042 % Occupied
Ballingdon Street	Sudbury	86	89	92	95	98
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	70	73	75	78	80
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	75	78	81	83	86
Girling Street	Sudbury	71	73	76	78	80
Great Eastern Road	Sudbury	45	47	49	50	52
Mill Lane	Sudbury	91	95	98	101	104
North Street	Sudbury	63	65	68	70	72
Quay Lane	Sudbury	97	101	104	107	110
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	72	75	78	80	82
Stour Street	Sudbury	97	101	105	108	111
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	44	46	48	49	51
Prentice Street	Lavenham	88	91	94	97	100
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	78	81	83	86	88
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	83	86	89	92	94
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	76	79	82	84	87
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	89	93	96	99	101
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	67	69	72	74	76

Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	77	80	82	85	87
Toppesfield Hall	Hadleigh	86	89	92	95	98
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	50	52	54	56	57
Pin Mill	Pin Mill	67	70	73	75	77
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	19	20	20	21	21
Cross Green	Debenham	100	104	108	112	115
Buckshorn Lane	Eye	92	96	99	103	106
Cross Street	Eye	95	100	103	107	110
Station Yard	Needham Market	87	91	94	97	100
Needham Lake	Needham Market	96	100	104	108	111
Bury Street	Stowmarket	88	91	95	98	101
Iliffe Way	Stowmarket	59	61	64	66	68
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	100	104	108	112	115
Meadow Centre (Asda)	Stowmarket	74	77	80	82	85
Milton Road	Stowmarket	75	78	81	84	86
Union Street	Stowmarket	88	92	96	99	102
Union Street West	Stowmarket	100	104	108	112	115
The Street	Woolpit	75	78	81	84	86

Table 34 – Summary of future forecasting in car parks across Babergh & Mid Suffolk

If the Councils are to consider supplying additional parking places across towns and villages within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, it is recommended this is planned when the demand reaches 85% to avoid any impact to the locations such as traffic flow and safety implications through an increase in on-street parking, or an impact to local economies as visitors travel elsewhere.

To assist the forecasting of future parking across the two districts, and the supply and demand of parking spaces, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils could look to set a target of reducing the parking demand by at least 10% through the lifespan of the parking strategy, as a result of promoting sustainable transport. This would have a considerable impact in the overall parking demand and at what point (if any) additional parking may need to be considered.

8.0 BABERGH & MID SUFFOLK PARKING SERVICE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

With 37 car parks located across the two districts that provide different functions i.e. town / village centre parking, amenity parking, and recreational parking, it's vital that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils provide adequate service provision to ensure the parking experience is not compromised. For instance, if a visitor that has never been to Mid Suffolk would like to visit Needham Lake, they will expect to see and have specific information relating to Needham Lake, rather than just the area as an all-encompassing collation.

Consideration should be given to all aspects of the parking service to ensure a good first impression, that will likely result in visitors returning. Examples of the service provision required include:

- Car parking signage and way-finding
- Payment options including when parking is paid for (if charges are in place)
- Electric vehicle charge points and the type of charger used i.e. fast chargers
- Disabled and child priority spaces
- Enforcement of the car parks
- Parking information available on the Councils website

Each of the separate service provisions shown above, within Babergh and Mid Suffolk district car parks are discussed in greater detail below, based on the results of the parking assessments carried out during the development of the parking strategy.

8.2 CAR PARKING SIGNAGE & WAY-FINDING

2020 Consultancy has carried out a high-level review of car park signage across the districts to identify where improvements can be made. This includes the potential to introduce of Variable Message Signs (VMS). There is a direct link between the local centre economy and how easy the area is to access for all modes of transport. Ideally a town centre, and possibly village centres, should be walking distance to transport hubs such as car parks, bus stations, and rail stations.

There are several car parks located across the three main towns; Sudbury; Hadleigh; and Stowmarket, meaning that visitors can choose the most appropriate car park depending

on their intended destination. The only reliable method of allowing visitors to make this decision is through signage. There is currently only a handful of car parking signs within these towns, and they are generally located at and near car park entrances. An example of the type of car parking signage currently in place is shown in figure 12.



Figure 12 – Example of existing car parking signage in Stowmarket

This is not sufficient to create an efficient town centre parking experience and is likely to result in certain car parks being used regardless of the intended location. The location of the signage in relation to the car park makes the signs somewhat redundant (although in figure 12 it is acknowledged there is a benefit in highlighting short and long stay locations). As the signs are located by or near car park entrances, the visitor has already located the car park. Whilst there is benefit in providing signs close to car park entrances, it's more appropriate and needed to have signs on the local road network and if possible, on the strategic road network to provide early direction.

Whilst it is considered that the amount and quality of car parking signage across the two districts is not up to standard, it should be noted that there are some examples of better parking signage. For instance, in Stowmarket there are Advanced Directional Signs (ADS) in place on the arterial road network that provides guidance for drivers on where they need to travel to access car parks. Figure 13 provides an example of the ADS in place.



Figure 13 – Example of ADS car parking signage in Stowmarket

Another key feature for accessing a town or village is how straightforward and clear signage is for visitors from their transport mode to the destination. The success of good car park directional signage for vehicles will be completely undone if the subsequent signage directing visitors from the car park to their destination is poor.

Therefore wayfinding is used to support directional signage. The most common form of wayfinding used is finger posts with key destinations such as town / village centre, toilets, bus/rail station etc being signed in the direction of travel. These can be supported through simple and complex monolith signs that can include maps and key information and act as a modern-day tourist information system.

Figure 14 provides an example of the way-finding monolith signage in place within Sudbury in car parks to provide onward direction to trip generators in the town.





Figure 14 – Example of existing way-finding and monolith signage in Sudbury

The location and number of way-finding signs is as important as vehicular signs. It should be possible for a visitor to have no understanding of an area, to make their way from a car park to their destination without any confusion.

For a town or village economy to be maximised, visitors should spend as little time travelling from the car park to their destination as possible. This results in a greater turnover of spaces, greater economy, and a better overall experience. Therefore, considerable improvements to district parking signage and way-finding is possible.

There are four types of car parking signage that have been considered as part of this high-level assessment. They are:

- Strategic car parking signage that provides car parking directional information for a number of car parks or parking locations within a town centre
- Car park advanced directional signage that provides directional information for a few car parks in an area such as Magdalen Road car park, Maiden Way car park, and High Street car park in Hadleigh
- Car park Variable Message Signs that provide car parking directional information across a more urban environment such as town centre
- Specific car park sign that can be static or Variable Message Sign for individual car parks.

Figure 15 provides examples of these signs.

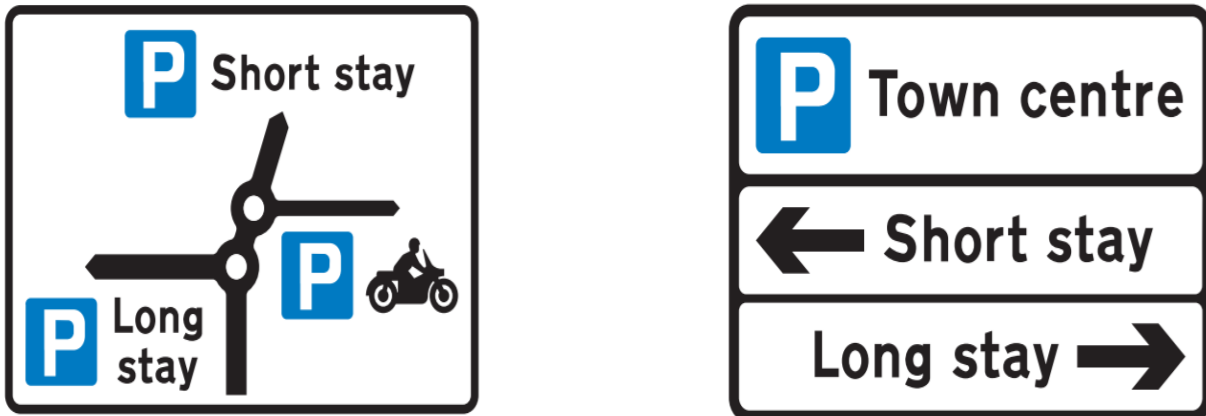


Figure 15 – Examples of car park signage

8.2.1 STRATEGIC CAR PARK SIGNS

Strategic car park directional signs are designed to advise drivers of a certain direction to travel before entering the key location. The wording on these signs should be fairly generic such as long and short stay or town centre north and town centre south.

8.2.2 ADVANCED DIRECTIONAL CAR PARK SIGNS

Advanced directional car park signs are designed to provide direction to a few car park locations within an area. These signs can introduce specific car parks or still provide generic information. It allows destinations to be included within the text. For instance, the train station, or town hall can be listed.

8.2.3 CAR PARK VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

A Variable Message Sign is classified as “a device capable of displaying, at different times, two or more aspects”. These aspects may take the form of a sign prescribed by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016, a legend in accordance with Schedule 16 to the [TSRGD 2016](#) which remains unchanged from the 2002 regulations, a

non-prescribed temporary sign or a blank grey or blank black face. Variable Message Signs encompasses all types of variable sign from simple flap-type fixed signs to complex light-emitting panels. New LED Variable Message Signs allow additional messages to be displayed, which would benefit the town centre if car parks are full as further information i.e. alternative car parks can be provided.

A Variable Message Sign is one of the most effective methods of providing key clear concise information to drivers as they travel to their destination. Variable Message Signs are usually classified as either “free text Variable Message Signs” or “car park guidance Variable Message Signs”. Free text signs provide useful information related to a motorists destination such as “congestion ahead” whereas car park guidance signs provide car park information such as the number of spaces available within a car park. Variable Message Signs can use both forms such as a free text sign displaying “car park A full please use car park B”.

The effectiveness of the Variable Message Sign is related to the location of the sign. The location of the sign is the single most important aspect of delivering an effective sign. If the sign is not located in the most appropriate position it will not serve the purpose for which it was intended. Due to the cost of Variable Message Signs, this makes identifying the location critical. Motorists have little time to take note of the sign, which means it needs to be located within close proximity, and vital that the sign does not create any visibility issues as they can be large in size. All the information on the sign should be clear and visible, which means setting the sign at the correct height is important as well as ensuring no obstacles will obscure the sign such as overgrown vegetation.

Due to the cost of Variable Message Signs, consideration should be given to number of motorists that will view the sign on their journey to the end destination. A sign should be located where the majority of motorists will view the sign. This means signs should be located where routes meet to avoid needing to repeat signs with the same message that could be avoided. In reality this isn't always possible due to the layout of the road network, but it is recommended to allocate time considering the road network to identify the most suitable locations that maximise exposure of each sign under consideration. The exception to this is on roads where the 85th percentile traffic speeds are over 40mph as the Department for Transport states that two Variable Message Signs displaying the same message is provided.

There may be a number of local influences that are likely to have an impact on the location of Variable Message Signs within an authority. The installation of signs on a local level will need to consider the local issues and understand the main traffic flows within the area.

Car park guidance Variable Message Signs are a lot more restricted over the legends that can be displayed on the sign. Generally, the names given for the car parks or locations will be static with the Variable Message aspect restricted for the following:

- Number of spaces within the car park
- Simply the word “SPACES”
- Simply the word “FULL”
- Simply the word “CLOSED”

Whilst the preference on car park guidance signs is to display the number of spaces within the car park, this approach relies upon the infrastructure in the car parks being sufficient quality to ensure accuracy is maintained. If a car park states 50 spaces are available when in reality the car park is full, this will likely result in the car park occupancy levels reducing as motorists will not trust the signs. The other issue with displaying the number of spaces is the issue with allocation. If the car park states 50 spaces, there is no way of knowing what percentage of these are blue badge or parent with child spaces.

Regardless of the legend displayed on the car park guidance, it's considered crucial to ensure the infrastructure is fully working to ensure accuracy is maintained. There is a direct link between car park occupancy levels and the accuracy of car park guidance signs. The more accurate the car park sign is, the less congested the car park will be. It is common in virtually all towns for certain car parks to be favoured. This results in those car parks reaching capacity fast. Utilising successful accurate car park Variable Message Signs will significantly reduce the likelihood of vehicles queuing to access these car parks.

Variable Message Signs are traditionally utilised in more urban environments as they can feel out of place in more rural environments such as Lavenham or Eye. This doesn't mean they cannot be used, but engagement with key stakeholders such as local members and residents would be important

Even within the more urbanised environments such as Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket, the size and location of the car parks make the identification of locations slightly more straight forward. It is recommended to restrict the number of signs providing

information on a number of car parks to no more than four signs across the entire town. This would allow signs to capture traffic from all directions. If there isn't a heavy flow of traffic, static signage is likely to be more effective, based on the cost difference. Variable Message Signs can work well with static car parking signs. This reduces the cost associated with signage.

8.2.4 SPECIFIC CAR PARKING SIGNS (STATIC OR VMS)

Once the signs described above have directed drivers to the towns and villages, the final task is to provide specific car park direction. The purpose of these signs is to tell drivers where to turn to enter car parks. The signs should be located where they are visible and not obstructed by other infrastructure or vegetation.

Each car park should have at least one of these signs to ensure occupancy rates are even across the town or village. These signs can be either static signs or Variable Message Signs. The benefit of using Variable Message Signs is the ability to display the number of spaces available in the car park. However, if the car park infrastructure does not allow this information to be displayed, static signs would work out to be better value for money.

8.2.6 WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE

There is limited way-finding signage across Babergh and Mid Suffolk and it appears to be focused in the three main towns of Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket. Whilst this is likely to be the heaviest footfall area, there is limited signage from car parks.

To improve access for pedestrians, it is recommended to implement new way-finding signage and monolith signs to and from transport hubs and car parks. As described above, wayfinding should be consistent and frequent enough to ensure easy to follow directions are visible for visitors to follow. Therefore, as a minimum way-finding should be located at key junctions or point where more than one direction is available.

It is recommended that wayfinding be implemented at each car park and using monolith signs is a useful way of including car park locations and key local features. For example, Eye Castle or Hoppit Wood and Lake in Debenham. Implementing a point of interest system will also enable visitors to keep track of where they are and their transport destination.

To safeguard future developments and regeneration, it is recommended to create a signage and way-finding plan. This document will outline the procedures and requirements for signage and wayfinding across the districts including design, usage, and location. This document will ensure consistency is maintained in Babergh and Mid Suffolk for both the long and short term

8.3 PAYMENT OPTIONS

Currently, there are a number of payment options available to pay for parking in Babergh (for car parks that require payment after 3 hours) and Mid Suffolk. Car parks are pay and display with payment made by coins, debit / credit card – chip & pin or contactless as well as payment via mobile device. This can be achieved by either ringing a number and inputting vehicle details through an automated service, or using a smart phone functionality to make payment through the parking app.

Where there are limited payment options available, it is likely that this will discourage some visitors from parking in the town centre car parks and instead seek alternative locations. As we move out of Covid-19 restrictions, it is considered essential for local authorities to offer contactless payment where feasibly possible. As there are a number of solutions to pay for parking on the market, this should be considered an area Mid Suffolk District Councils target. Babergh installed new pay and display machines in council owned car parks whilst the parking strategy was being developed (February 2022).

There are broadly three payment options that are available to car park users within pay and display car parks. These include payment by coins, payment by debit/credit card, and payment by phone. Some local authorities now offer additional contactless payment that can be incorporated within an ANPR system. This works in a similar fashion to the congestion charge and the Dartford tunnel charge where drivers can register their vehicle on local authority website and whenever they visit a car park, the ANPR system calculates the time spent and deducts money from an account. This is the most effective, contactless system available as we move out of Covid-19 restrictions.

None of the car parks in Babergh and Mid Suffolk offer pay on exit parking. Pay on exit is widely considered to be the most preferred method of parking as there are no time constraints that need to be thought of during time spent in the town centre. Pay and display relies upon the driver to determine how much time to pay for. If this time expires and the driver doesn't leave the car park, they will receive a Penalty Charge Notice when

enforcement occurs. Pay on exit allows users to stay in the town centre for as long as required. It is common to see a greater local economy in town centres with pay on exit parking based on this.

To offer a better parking experience, the Councils could consider the feasibility of implementing pay on exit systems in car parks where the technology can be introduced. Due to the costs associated with the equipment and infrastructure required to enable pay on exit systems to be implemented, not all car parks work as pay on exit. Generally, small car parks are those most likely to be unsuitable for the system. A feasibility study would need to be undertaken to consider the most suitable car parks, and it would be sensible to run a pilot scheme in one car park where the new payment process can be introduced and trialled to ensure it is a viable payment option that can then be implemented in other car parks.

Having reviewed all car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, it is felt that currently only car parks in Stowmarket would be suitable for pay on exit systems. Other car park locations across Mid Suffolk do not have parking charges in place and are likely to be too rural. In Sudbury and Hadleigh, some car parks have parking charges after 3-hours. Whilst these could be used for pay on exit, the vast majority of parking acts are less than three hours, meaning the cost of introducing the system would not be worthwhile.

The following car parks within Stowmarket are likely to be suitable for pay on exit parking:

- Meadow Centre (Asda);
- Milton Road (Morrisons);
- Bury Street
- Union Street West.

There is the potential for additional revenue generated as a result of the pay on exit systems to offset the cost of implementing the system. However, this is likely to be offset by the loss of revenue as some parking spaces will be lost with the re-designed entrance. There are also a number of logistical considerations that will need to be resolved when identifying the most effective car parks to progress pay on exit systems such as a need for an increase in safety provision, installation of the infrastructure, staff resource to deal with issues and faults, and the impact it may have on the local road network i.e. queuing onto the road due to the barrier control.

8.4 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS

There are currently 20 Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points across Babergh and Mid Suffolk off-street car parks. 16 of the 20 charge points are located in Babergh, and four in Mid Suffolk. Table 35 below provides details of where the EV charge points are located, and how many charge points are in place.

Car Park	Location	Total Number
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	10
Prentice Street	Lavenham	2
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	2
Magdalen Road	Hadleigh	2
TOTAL CHARGE POINTS - BABERGH		16
Cross Street	Eye	2
Ipswich Street (Regal Theatre)	Stowmarket	2
TOTAL CHARGE POINTS – MID SUFFOLK		4

Table 35 – Breakdown of EV charge points across Babergh and Mid Suffolk car parks

Providing 20 EV charge points across the two districts can be considered a positive outcome, especially as the districts are a combination of rural and urban. There are many locations across the County that are larger and more urbanised, which do not provide as many EV charge points, or do not have as many in relation to the total number of parking spaces within car parks. An example of this is Lichfield, which is a city in the West Midlands, approximately 25 miles north of Birmingham. They provide 2,133 parking spaces across 18 car parks. There are only two EV charge points, which works out to be 0.1% of the total supply. In comparison, across Babergh and Mid Suffolk there is 2,622 parking spaces, which means the EV supply is 0.8% of the total.

The overall provision is comparable to larger more urban locations, it is recommended that additional charge points be installed in the three largest towns across the districts; Sudbury; Hadleigh; and Stowmarket. This is exacerbated by Lavenham providing four EV charge points, which can be considered an excellent provision for the size of the location and number of parking spaces overall. The three towns should at least match this amount.

Figure 16 provides an example of the EV facilities across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council owned car parks.



Figure 16 – Example of EV charge points within Babergh and Mid Suffolk car parks

Based on the responses to the stakeholder engagement exercise carried out as part of developing the strategy, the number of EV owners across the two districts is low, with only 5% of the 1,191 completed answers for the question stating they drive an EV on a regular basis. Therefore, whilst there is a need to consider additional EV charge points to encourage use, the current supply can be considered fairly adequate.

The sale of EV vehicles is expected to rise considerably over the next five years, especially with some of the larger car manufactures confirming their intention to stop making petrol and diesel vehicles by 2025. In support of this, the stakeholder engagement exercise also asked respondents whether they would like to see more EV charge points installed across the two districts. 55% (569) stated yes to this, which demonstrates an appetite for EV use in the future.

It is vital that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils promote the EV charge point facilities within the car parks to increase the likelihood of usage. The most effective way to do this currently is on the Councils website. It should be made clear where the EV charge points are located, how many are in place, and the type of charger in place i.e. rapid etc. This will inform visitors prior to visiting the area. Looking ahead, the future, promotion of EV charge points can also be done utilising Variable Message Signs to capture drivers as they are entering the area.

It will not be sufficient for 12 EV charge points to remain the total supply moving forward through the lifespan of the 20-year car park strategy. It will also not be sufficient to simply deliver additional charge points as a short-term measure as the demand is likely to grow

over the 20-years. Therefore, the EV charge point provision will need to increase as short-, medium-, and long-term actions. The scaling of EV charge points needs to be in line with sales of electric vehicles to avoid a negative impact on car parks. Due to the infrastructure required, an EV charge point may take up more room than one standard parking space. Therefore, introducing several EV charge points will create a noticeable impact on the occupancy levels within a car park.

Not all car parks will be suitable for EV charge points. Small car parks will unlikely be effective as it will reduce occupancy levels, creating an issue with demand. This is clear looking at the occupancy data referred to in tables 30 to 22, which demonstrates that the smaller car parks across the district are subject to excessive demand, especially moving in the future years. Therefore, it is important to consider the most effective car parks for EV charge points. Consideration can be given to locations that are currently without any charge points i.e. Debenham and Needham Market, residents only car parks as well as the more urban environments mentioned previously i.e. Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket.

8.5 DISABLED AND CHILD PRIORITY SPACES

There is a clear need to consider priority spaces in car parks to protect specific groups such as those with a disability and those with young children. Visitors with a blue badge may have mobility difficulties, meaning that it is vital they have an opportunity to park as close as possible to the intended destination. There are those disabled visitors that require walking aids that need to be setup prior to use, without the additional space a disabled bay provides, this may be extremely challenging, especially in busy car parks with little area for pedestrians.



Similarly for visitors with small children, it can be extremely difficult to safely extract children from vehicles into pushchairs without the additional space priority parking spaces can provide. They should also be located near intended destinations to provide additional safety, and reduce the time spent travelling within the car park environment where there is little segregation between traffic and pedestrians.

Within the Babergh and Mid Suffolk district car parks, there appears to be a shortage of priority spaces, in particular child priority spaces. There are 56 disabled parking spaces across the Babergh car parks, which represents 3.5% of the total offering. Within Mid Suffolk, there are 44 disabled parking spaces, which represents 4.3% of the total offering. Although there isn't a specific threshold, 4% is an approximate average level of disabled spaces based on work undertaken previously with other local authorities. For Babergh to achieve a 4% provision of disabled bays, there needs to be an increase of approximately 8 parking bays.

It should be noted that there are opportunities for disabled users to park on-street in several locations across the towns and villages. This is often appealing as it can provide better access to the intended destination. Where possible, effort should be made to encourage disabled users to use car parks rather than parking on-street due to the risks associated with this such as safety concerns and localised traffic congestion caused through additional on-street parking.

There are limited child priority spaces across the districts, particularly in Mid Suffolk car parks. Based on the site visits, The Meadow Centre (Asda), Milton Road, and Union Street West are the only three sites that provide this facility. Across the three car parks there are

a total of 19 child priority spaces available. Whilst this is a good amount across three car parks, no other car park within the district provides any. During the surveys, the occupancy rate of these spaces was high. On the weekday, the average rate across the day was 79%. On the Saturday, the average rate across the day was 85%.

The provision in Babergh is much better, both in terms of overall supply, and the number of car parks that provides the spaces. There are 30 child priority spaces across eight car parks. Whilst the provision in Babergh is higher, the demand is similar. On the weekday, the average rate across the day was 77%. On the Saturday, the average rate across the day was 84%. This demonstrates a need to consider more spaces.

The need to provide these spaces for parents and carers is critical to protect the service offering within the districts. The demand for child spaces will be largely impacted on intended destination. Therefore, car parks closest to key attractions, such as town and village centres, leisure facilities, and amenities will provide the best locations for child priority spaces. Based on this, the majority of car parks where there are marked bays can be utilised for child priority.



8.6 PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The management of car parking across the two districts falls into two broad areas. Firstly, enforcement and secondly, the back-office management. It is important for the Councils to consider and investigate the best and most cost-effective way of delivering the service whilst acknowledging that this important, customer facing service does still require dedicated resource.

Civil parking enforcement (CPE) powers in Suffolk moved from the Police to [Suffolk County Council \(SCC\)](#), in April 2020. The aim of which was to decrease unlawful parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Ipswich Borough and West Suffolk Councils manage the enforcement of the districts off-street car parks and enforcing illegally parked vehicles on the highway on behalf of Suffolk County Council (as the Highways Authority).

As all the car parks within the two districts that have parking charges in place, either short and long-stay (Mid Suffolk) or just long-stay (Babergh) are pay and display, there is a requirement for Civil Enforcement Officers to carry out patrols and issue Penalty Charge Notices where vehicles are not displaying a ticket, the ticket has expired, or the vehicle has exceeded the time permitted. The number of Civil Enforcement Officers needs to be reflect the size of the area and the number of car parks that require enforcement. If the Civil Enforcement Officers are required to visit locations outside the three main towns of Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Stowmarket, this is likely to impact the ability to enforce the car parks on a regular basis.

The revenue generated by the additional enforcement locations may not be sufficient to pay for additional patrols as there will be less parking outside the town centres. Given the Councils have a finite resource available it should be seeking to operate the car park service as efficiently and effectively as possible, including taking advantage of back-office software management systems which in essence can provide a system to:

- Monitor Pay & Display machines to identify faults, check battery status and ticket stock
- Provide financial information
- Provide a statistical report on usage and income.

The staff resource required to carry out enforcement of car parks would reduce with the introduction of pay on exit systems. Vehicles would not be permitted to leave the car park until payment has been made. Therefore, if there were suitable car parks in Stowmarket that had pay on exit facilities incorporated, there would be a reduction in locations to enforce, albeit there would still be a need to have staff resource for issues that arise with pay on exit, including faulty equipment. It should be noted, that if ANPR systems are considered for pay on exit systems, it's vital that this is incorporated with barrier control

as local authorities should not use ANPR systems without barrier control due to the enforcement difficulties currently in place.

8.6.1 MANAGEMENT OF CAR PARKS

Consideration could be given to alternative approaches to determine whether a different management operation may be more cost effective for the Councils. For instance, the enforcement and management of car parks could be brought back in-house.

It is recommended to carry out a more detailed study into parking management options with a view to consider the most effective model for Babergh and Mid Suffolk as either a short-term or medium-term action.

8.7 PARKING INFORMATION ON BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL WEBSITE

For some visitors, especially those that have not visited either Babergh or Mid Suffolk before, the District Councils website may be the first location visited prior to the trip to understand parking arrangements and locations of car parks in relation to intended destinations. Therefore, it is important that the parking information on the website is easy to interpret, up to date, and contains the key information to inform journeys into the town / village centre.

The Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's website has information about the location, type, and costs of parking spaces across the two districts, but does not include the number of parking spaces, details on priority spaces, and live space availability for any of the car parks, which is often a welcome inclusion for visitors attempting to understand locations to park. Improvements have been made to the website over the duration of the parking strategy development, which is welcome. Prior to these changes, the parking information was poor. Despite this, and the need for further improvements the website is more user friendly and accessible compared to some neighbouring authorities with information located in one place.

Further improvement is possible to ensure visitors can gain as much information as possible prior to their journey. There are no interactive features to allow visitors the opportunity to view the same level of information that private companies can offer such as current occupancy rates, estimated usage at specific times of day and day of week and to

report on their experiences. This should be linked with any technology transformation undertaken by the councils in the coming years.

8.8 LORRY PARKING

Lorry drivers will be entering and passing through Babergh and Mid Suffolk on a frequent basis. With drivers travelling from overseas or across the country, there is a need for lorry parking (overnight and during the day). The provision of lorry parking has far more complexities than regular car parks, due to the size of the vehicles, and the facility requirements.

The ideal location for a lorry park is often in or near urban areas, which means that land values can be high. The construction of a large area of hard standing with good quality services and proper security arrangements is also expensive. Thus, creating a well sited quality lorry park requires substantial capital investment and it can only be a proper commercial venture if a strong and continuing income stream can be achieved. Indications suggest that many operators and drivers are reluctant to pay more than a minimum for using lorry park facilities.

Overnight lorry parking can be very difficult to locate. A number of local authorities have instituted an overnight ban on lorry parking on their roads. This is to prevent HGVs taking up valuable kerb space in residential areas where they could be seen as unsightly and quite out of scale with the surroundings. It is preferable for lorries to be parked at a managed site that offers safe entry and egress and encourages goods vehicles to park in a formal and well-designed location, rather parked in roadside lay-bys. Such facilities also provide drivers with food and proper rest facilities helping to support compliance with drivers' hours regulations, and also contribute towards road safety.

The provision of lorry parking is the responsibility of the local highways authority, in this case Suffolk County Council (SCC). This does not mean that Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils lack influence when it comes to lorry parking, but liaison and partnership working will be required with SCC. As part of their role as the local highway authority, SCC has undertaken a [lorry route review](#) across Suffolk, which is a technical and community led review of lorry routes that considers changes to the highway network since the plan was updated in 2011.

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Basepoint Business Centre
Andersons Road
Southampton
Hampshire

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Tenacity House
11 Osborne Place
Dundee
DD2 1BE

023 9243 2756

info@2020consultancy.co.uk

www.2020consultancy.co.uk

**ACTIVE TRAVEL &
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT**

**TRAFFIC
ENGINEERING**

**PARKING
CONSULTANCY**

**TRANSPORT
PLANNING**

ROAD SAFETY

HIGHWAY DESIGN

PUBLIC REALM

**STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT**

INTERIM STAFF



Phase 1 – Parking Strategy Consultation Feedback Report

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	4
2.0	CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS	5
2.1	REQUIREMENT FOR CONSULTATION	5
2.2	CONSULTATION MATERIAL	6
2.3	CONSULTATION APPROACH	6
2.4	PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES	7
2.5	VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS	7
3.0	QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS	9
3.1	INTRODUCTION	9
3.2	QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS	9
3.21	LOCATION	9
3.22	QUESTION 2 ASKED ARE YOU RESPONDING AS	10
3.23	QUESTION 3 ASKED WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY PARK YOUR VEHICLE(S) AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES	11
3.24	QUESTION 4 ASKED HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES REGARDING PARKING IN YOUR STREET	12
3.25	QUESTION 5 ASKED DO YOU THINK THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED THE WAY YOU TRAVEL INTO THE BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK REGIONS AND HOW OFTEN YOU VISIT THE TOWN CENTRES?	14
3.26	QUESTION 6 ASKED GENERALLY HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL INTO A TOWN CENTRE BY CAR?	15
3.27	QUESTION 7 FOLLOWS ON FROM QUESTION 6 AND ASKED WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING THE TOWN?	15
3.28	QUESTION 8 ASKED WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY YOU DRIVE INTO TOWN?	16
3.29	QUESTION 9 ASKED WHEN YOU DRIVE WHERE DO YOU NORMALLY PARK? 17	
3.210	QUESTION 10 ASKED IF YOU PARK ON THE STREET WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON FOR DOING SO?	18
3.211	QUESTION 11 ASKED IF YOU CHOOSE PUBLIC OR SHOPPERS CAR PARKS WHICH TOWN/VILLAGE DID YOU USE?	19
3.212	QUESTION 12 ASKED HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY PARKING PROBLEMS AT ANY OF OUR CAR PARKS?	20
3.213	QUESTION 13 ASKED WHAT TOWN DOES THE ISSUES FROM QUESTION 12 RELATE TO?	21
3.214	QUESTION 14 ASKED RESPONDENTS TO IDENTIFY THE ISSUES THAT RELATE TO THEIR VISIT	22
3.215	QUESTION 15 ASKED HOW OFTEN THE PROBLEMS ARE EXPERIENCED? 24	

3.216 QUESTION 16 ASKED RESPONDENTS IF THERE IS ENOUGH OVERALL PARKING ACROSS THE DISTRICTS? 25

3.217 QUESTION 17 COMMENCED THE SECTION OF QUESTIONS ON THE PARKING EXPERIENCE AND THE FIRST QUESTION ASKED RESPONDENTS HOW THEY WOULD RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS? . 26

3.218 QUESTION 18 ASKED RESPONDENTS WHAT THEY LIKE MOST ABOUT THE PARKING FACILITIES? 27

3.219 QUESTION 19 ASKED RESPONDENTS WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED WITHIN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK CAR PARKS? 28

3.220 QUESTION 20 ASKED RESPONDENTS HOW THEY WOULD RATE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS? 29

3.221 QUESTION 21 ASKED HOW YOU WOULD RATE THE QUALITY OF SIGNAGE PROVIDING DIRECTIONS TO THE VARIOUS DIFFERENT CAR PARKING OPTIONS? 31

3.222 QUESTION 22 ASKED PLEASE RANK HOW IMPORTANT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES ARE TO YOU?..... 32

3.223 QUESTION 23 ASKED WHEN WOULD YOU PREFER TO PAY FOR YOUR PARKING? 33

3.224 QUESTION 24 ASKED HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO PAY FOR YOUR PARKING? 34

3.225 QUESTION 25 ASKED HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE AMOUNT CURRENTLY CHARGED FOR LONG STAY PARKING IN CAR PARKS THAT CHARGE?
35

3.226 QUESTION 26 ASKED HOW DO YOU THINK THE CURRENT PARKING CHARGES COMPARE TO NEIGHBOURING TOWNS AND CITIES? 36

3.227 QUESTION 27 ASKED DO YOU HAVE A DISABILITY OR LIMITED MOVEMENT? 37

3.228 QUESTION 28 ASKED HOW EASY DO YOU FIND IT TO LOCATE A BLUE BADGE PARKING SPACE IN ANY OF THE CAR PARKS IN TOWN CENTRE?..... 37

3.229 QUESTION 29 ASKED DO YOU DRIVE AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE ON A REGULAR BASIS?..... 38

3.230 QUESTION 30 ASKED IF SO, WOULD YOU USE CHARGE POINTS IN TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS? 39

3.231 QUESTION 31 ASKED WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE EV POINTS INSTALLED WITHIN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK?..... 40

3.232 QUESTION 32 PROVIDED RESPONDENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPLY ANY SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS RELATED TO PARKING IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK 41

4.0 LOCAL PREFERENCE 42

4.1 ANALYSIS 42

4.11 QUESTION 2 – ARE YOU RESPONDING AS? 42

4.12 QUESTION 6 – GENERALLY HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL INTO A TOWN CENTRE BY CAR?..... 44

4.13 QUESTION 7 – WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING THE TOWN CENTRE? 44

4.14 QUESTION 8 – WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY YOU DRIVE INTO A TOWN CENTRE? 46

4.15 QUESTION 10 – IF YOU PARK ON-STREET, WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE FOR DOING SO?..... 46

4.16 QUESTION 16 – DO YOU CONSIDER THERE TO BE ENOUGH OVERALL PARKING IN THESE CAR PARKS 47

4.17 QUESTION 18 – WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE PARKING FACILITIES YOU HAVE USED IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK 49

4.18 QUESTION 19 – WHAT WOULD MOST LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED WITH BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK CAR PARKS 50

5.0 NEXT STEPS 51

6.0 CONCLUSION 51

APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION LEAFLET 53

APPENDIX B – COPY OF THE WORKSHOP PRESENTATION 54

APPENDIX C – COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE..... 59

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2020 Consultancy was commissioned by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to undertake a car park study and prepare a parking strategy covering off-street car parks and the provision of on-street parking. The Councils are seeking to develop a parking strategy that align with the Councils vision, which is designed to shape the future growth of the districts, set out opportunities for enhancing the quality of the local environments and the range of different uses it offers, and provide a prospectus for investment in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The District Councils consider the parking strategy to be a key means of enhancing what are already strong and vibrant districts, and its preparation underscores the importance as an asset for residents of Babergh and Mid Suffolk, visitors to the district, and those who work in the district.

As part of the development of the parking strategy, it is necessary to undertake investigation studies into the existing parking provision to understand the baseline and where potential improvements can be made through appropriate intervention. To support this process, a district-wide stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken to gain feedback from various stakeholders on their parking behaviours, concerns, likes, and what is considered important when parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This is the first of two consultations that will be held on the parking strategy, with a second process undertaken on the draft strategy and the interventions contained within it. This report summarises the initial consultation process.

It is fundamental for the development of the parking strategy to garner a level of stakeholder and public engagement that would allow for opinions and possible concerns to be offered. It is from this engagement that data can be sourced and analysed to allow for a higher standard of subject understanding. It is important to offer this platform for engagement to produce further understanding and possible mitigating actions that would have a higher adoption probability with thorough stakeholder involvement at this stage. It was clear from the high levels of engagement on the consultation process and online survey that the subject of car parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk is an important issue. Babergh and Mid Suffolk has many trip generators and attraction destinations that require parking facilities and this process allows for the parking provision to be looked at both for the short-term and long-term.

2.0 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 REQUIREMENT FOR CONSULTATION

The aim of the public consultation is to give the public and stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on off-street and on-street parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk, both the existing provision and the potential changes and improvements. The results of the consultation will be used as part of identifying the possible changes needed to ensure that the parking provision is sufficient for use both now and over the next 20 years. The car parks were individually identified and scored against a range of different criteria to evaluate the current provision. This data and the data obtained from the consultation will inform the overall recommendations. On-street parking provision was assessed, and the data acquired will contribute to the overall parking provision and final report.

Note on COVID-19

In March 2020, the UK Government issued guidelines in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. To reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the general public were instructed to remain two meters away from anyone outside of their household and unnecessary travel was not permitted. Public buildings were also closed, and large events banned. Whilst restrictions have been eased and broadly removed, the planning and delivery of stakeholder engagement and public consultation will continue to be impacted for some time with many choosing to continue any engagement remotely.

To ensure that government guidelines were adhered to, 2020 Consultancy considered the alternative arrangements for consultation including the undertaking of virtual engagement and public consultation. This allowed stakeholders the opportunity to provide their comments and feedback on the key questions regarding their parking views and experiences, whilst accommodating the needs of the hard-to-reach groups, without impacting upon the project programme and maintaining social distancing. The virtual consultation process was offered to various key stakeholders along with an online questionnaire, it was carried out in line with the UK government guidelines and advice provided by the UK Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and the Consultation Institute (TCI).

2.2 CONSULTATION MATERIAL

To promote the consultation, a poster was prepared and distributed to stakeholders, advertised on the Council's website and various forms of social media as well as displayed in all council owned car parks. Appendix A provides a copy of the poster that was used as part of the consultation.

2.3 CONSULTATION APPROACH

Public consultation for the first phase of the parking strategy project began on Tuesday 31st August 2021 and was due to last for four weeks, ending on Tuesday 28th September 2021. However, it was agreed to extend the consultation for a little over two weeks to maximise engagement. Therefore, the consultation process lasted just over six weeks in total concluding on Friday 15th October 2021.

As with the majority of public consultation exercises, it was agreed to include both targeted consultation where stakeholders with a known interest were contacted, as well as non-direct consultation, which involved hosting the consultation online for all stakeholders to participate. During the early stages of the project, 2020 Consultancy worked with officers of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils to identify stakeholders that would be directly contacted. These stakeholders included:

- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councillors
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk Town and Parish Councils
- Emergency services
- Transport operators
- Walking and cycling groups
- Disability groups
- Schools and colleges
- Environment agency
- Natural England
- Historic England
- Road Haulage Association
- Local shopping centres
- Business chamber groups

- Sports and leisure groups
- Open space groups

Stakeholders were contacted approximately 10 days prior to the consultation commencing to introduce the project and provide key milestones within the consultation. This included the opportunity to attend a virtual stakeholder workshop, which involved a presentation from 2020 on the project, including findings to date, future changes that could happen, and how it could relate to the districts wider plan. It also provided details on the consultation questionnaire. A copy of the presentation is included in Appendix B.

The consultation questionnaire sought stakeholder views on general parking questions such as, how often do you travel into your local towns and villages, habits when deciding on what car parks to use and issues experienced parking in their residential streets. Respondents had the opportunity to outline why they preferred certain car parks over others and what they would perceive to be the best improvements that could be made to the existing provision.

The questionnaire provided the respondent the chance to register their reasons for trips and if they used car parks or on-street car parking. It also gave them the opportunity to document if they had or have experienced any problems with parking across the districts. In the questionnaire, there were also questions around priority spaces and Electric Vehicle charging. Importantly at the end of the questionnaire, respondents were provided the opportunity to express in a comments section, anything that the previous thirty two questions had not touched upon.

A copy of the questionnaire is contained in Appendix C of this report.

2.4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSES

During the consultation period responses received from stakeholders were logged and analysed. This included returned questionnaires, emails, and letters. All communication received from stakeholders was acknowledged and where necessary a reply was provided, which included emails and phone calls.

2.5 VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

The virtual workshops were well received and offered a safe and cohesive opportunity for the stakeholder to express their views. The attendance was adequate with approximately 40 attendees over the six workshops held. Feedback supplied after the workshops both

directly prior to the end of the meeting or from emails sent post workshop were generally positive. The feedback given highlighted that the opportunity to discuss personal views on parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk was invaluable.

Some comments provided indicated that the workshops and the wider engagement process wasn't specific enough for individual towns and villages. However, as the parking strategy is being delivered at a strategic level, it isn't feasible to go into the detail for each and every town and village within the two districts. This information was fed back to the stakeholders that were raising these concerns.

Table 1 below summarises the key points of conversation from the workshops.

Comments from Stakeholder
Important to ensure sufficient parking for tourists
Reaffirm that this is a parking strategy - not just a car parking strategy
Signage to car parks and parking areas should be investigated including Variable Message Signs that display spaces available
Focusing on an off-street and on-street strategy welcome to provide more detail in both documents to enable stakeholders with a specific interest to focus on one area with appropriate signposting to other sections
When investigating Electric Vehicle charge points, this should incorporate behaviours as well as infrastructure
Babergh and Mid Suffolk should be raising awareness of the second consultation such as through Council tax bills or other innovative methods
Concerns raised over on-street parking near train stations
Assurance sought that parking considerations for new developments will be considered as part of the development of the parking strategy
Electric vehicles shouldn't be given priority over standard vehicles in car parks but instead it's important to ensure there is sufficient provision
Car parks should provide parking provision for all potential users including motor homes, cyclists, motor cyclists etc
Required clarification as to how the parking strategy would adapt to the changing environment of town and village centres i.e. from shopping to commercial
Concerns raised over quality of parking machines in car parks

Residents parking permits should be explored in Lavenham due to ongoing issues that occur in residential streets
Assurance sought that parking within council owned estates will be incorporated in the strategy
Statement on parking charges including the fact there are advantages and disadvantages in free parking but important to understand location is key on these
Whilst some car parks scored poorly for provision of infrastructure such as CCTV and lighting it's important to recognise this isn't welcome in some car park locations
Important that disabled parking is critical part of parking strategy including how these parking places are enforced
Ensure clear links to work around sustainable travel
Parking for motorhomes - use of empty car parks overnight, a chargeable service / would need to remove height restrictions. How would this be enforced?
Important that engagement is carried out with other parking operators
Needham Lake car park likely to be improved in near future as part of improvements to the visitor centre

Table 1 – Comments from stakeholders during virtual workshops

3.0 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the consultation exercise, an online questionnaire was developed, which focused on identifying the current car parking trends and levels of car parking satisfaction, purpose for travel into a particular area, improvements needed for payment options, on street parking habits and the importance of certain car parking in general. This section reviews the 1,248 completed responses.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

3.2.1 LOCATION

The questionnaire started with a request for the respondent to provide their post code which allowed the responses to be identified with a proximity to an area within the district. Figure 1 provides a snapshot map of completed responses based on the location of the stakeholder. This demonstrates that responses were received across most areas of both

districts, which is encouraging to confirm that the consultation promotion was district wide. As expected, it shows a core concentration of responses gathered around the larger towns such as Sudbury, Stowmarket, and Hadleigh, although there were good numbers received from some smaller towns and villages including Eye, and Lavenham.

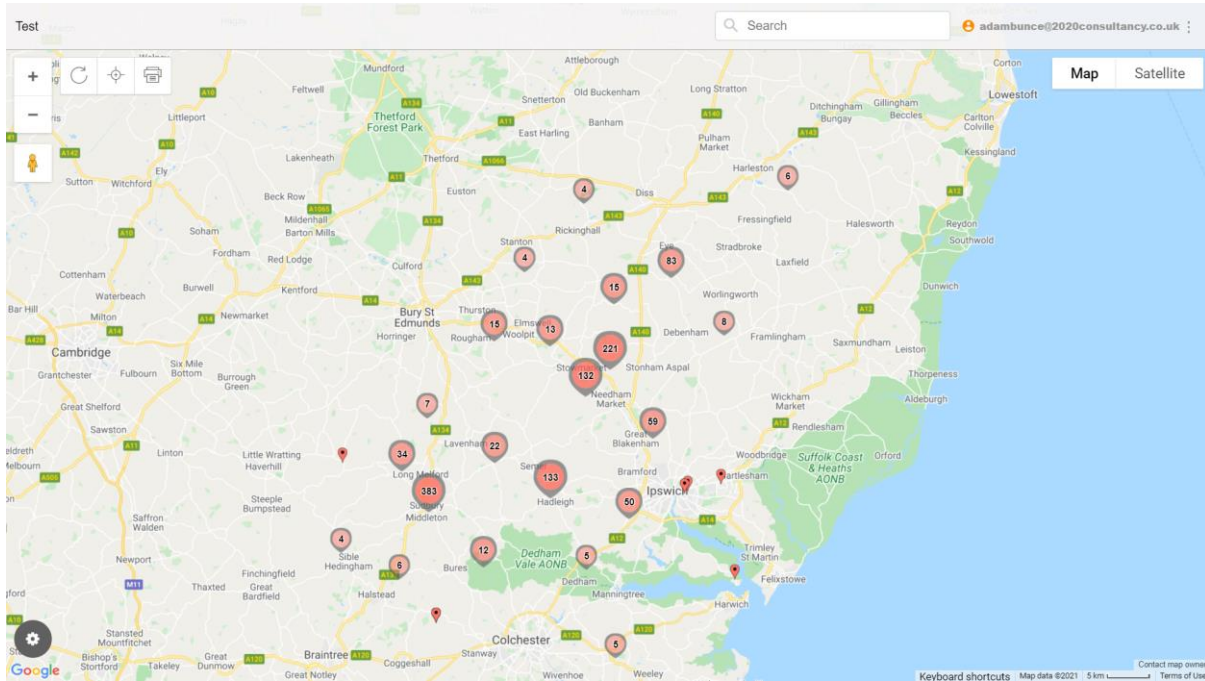


Figure 1 – Heatmap of consultation responses

The questionnaire contained a further 31 questions – a mixture of open and closed format questions. The data has been processed to assess responses and is summarised on the following pages.

3.22 QUESTION 2 ASKED ARE YOU RESPONDING AS ...

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 790 answers meaning 458 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 2 below shows the breakdowns of responses based on the criteria stated.

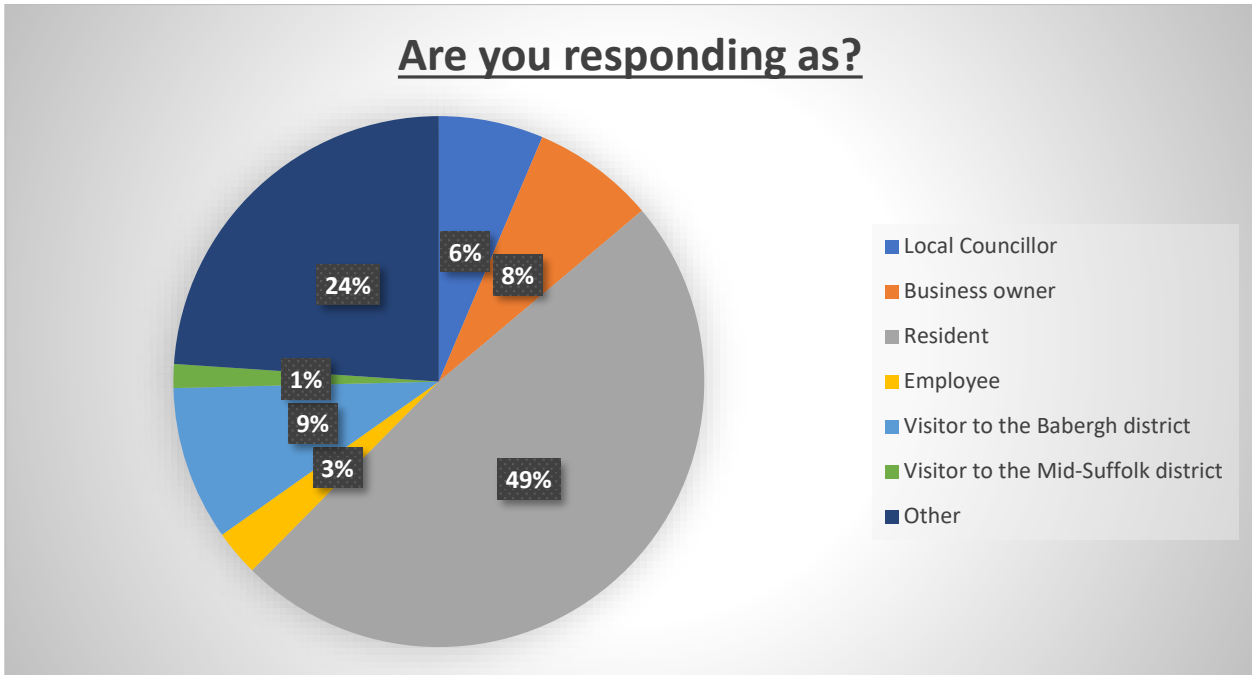


Figure 2 – Breakdown on respondents

The purpose of this question was to provide a breakdown of who was completing the questionnaire. As shown above 49% of respondents were residents which shows that car parking is a subject with significant public investment.

Figure 2 also shows there is a broad range of engagement from a variety of areas including business owners, local councillors and visitors to the districts.

3.23 QUESTION 3 ASKED WHERE DO YOU CURRENTLY PARK YOUR VEHICLE(S) AT THE FOLLOWING TIMES

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses and received 1,239 responses with 9 respondents not answering this question. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the responses.

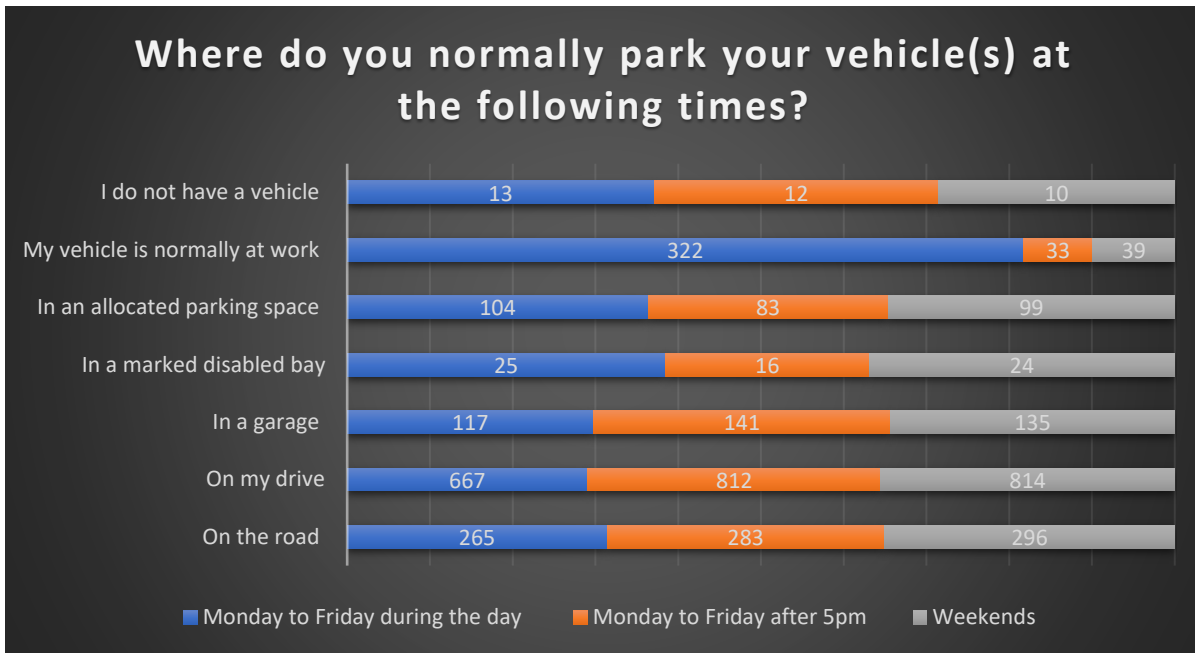


Figure 3 – Existing parking habits for respondents

The purpose of this question was to determine where vehicles were parked by their owners at different times. This question helps determine how many car owners use their vehicle in travelling to work and also if they have access to off road parking. This can give strong data towards car occupancy in the area along with where the car can be located at different times of the day and week.

The results show that the large majority of respondents park their vehicle at work, which subsequently means they travel to work by car. There was also a large amount of response for vehicles located in a garage or on a drive. This provides strong data towards off-road parking provision.

3.24 QUESTION 4 ASKED HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES REGARDING PARKING IN YOUR STREET

This single selection question enabled a tabulation of responses which received 1,235 responses with 13 respondents not answering this question.

Figure 4 below shows the breakdown of responses based on particular issues.

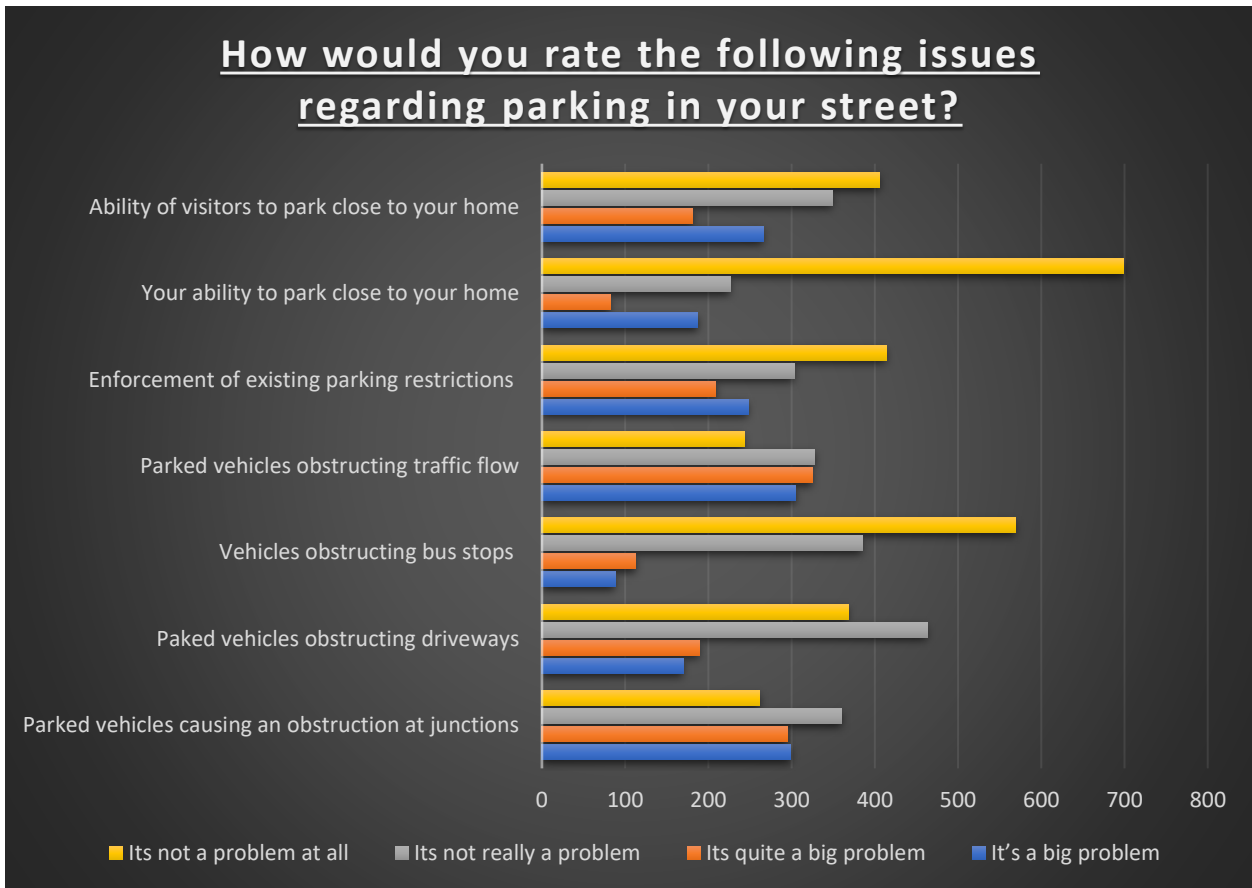


Figure 4 – Existing parking issues for respondents

Figure 4 above shows the various issues that can be apparent and the severity of the issue that the respondent deems correct, with the following levels of severity.

- It's not really a problem
- It's quite a big problem
- It's a big problem.

The purpose of this question is to determine from a pre-arranged selection of issues at what severity the issue is present within the area the respondent lives. This data can then be analysed and used to collate together evidence towards issuing change in a particular area based around the issues outlined. This single selection per issue question allowed for a broad overview of issues that can be experienced through parking. The issue that had the highest response rate for 'it's a big problem' was parked vehicles obstructing traffic flow.

3.25 QUESTION 5 ASKED DO YOU THINK THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS CHANGED THE WAY YOU TRAVEL INTO THE BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK REGIONS AND HOW OFTEN YOU VISIT THE TOWN CENTRES?

This question received 1,232 responses meaning 16 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 5 below shows the breakdown of responses based on travel habits after the pandemic.

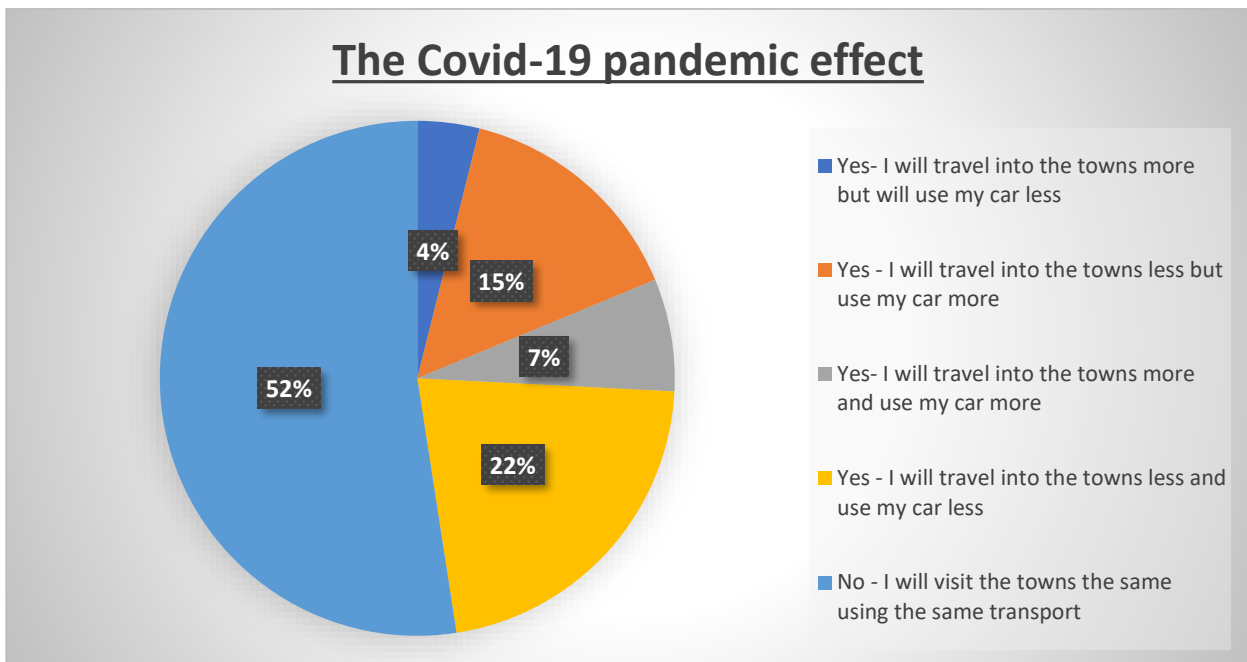


Figure 5 – Impact Covid-19 may have on parking

The purpose of this question is to determine how the pandemic could affect the travelling habits of residents and by what mode they will travel. The results show that 52% of respondents will continue to travel into towns but use their car less. This supports the theory that there could be less travel into town centres by vehicle in the future if this is deemed to be a true reflection. The next most selected option at 22% was respondents stating that they would travel into the town less and use their car less. This suggests that the pandemic has affected how regularly people wish to travel and also highlighted the need to use vehicles less often.

3.26 QUESTION 6 ASKED GENERALLY HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL INTO A TOWN CENTRE BY CAR?

This single selection question received 1,244 responses with 4 respondents not answering the question.

Figure 6 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on how often they travelled into a town / village centre by car.

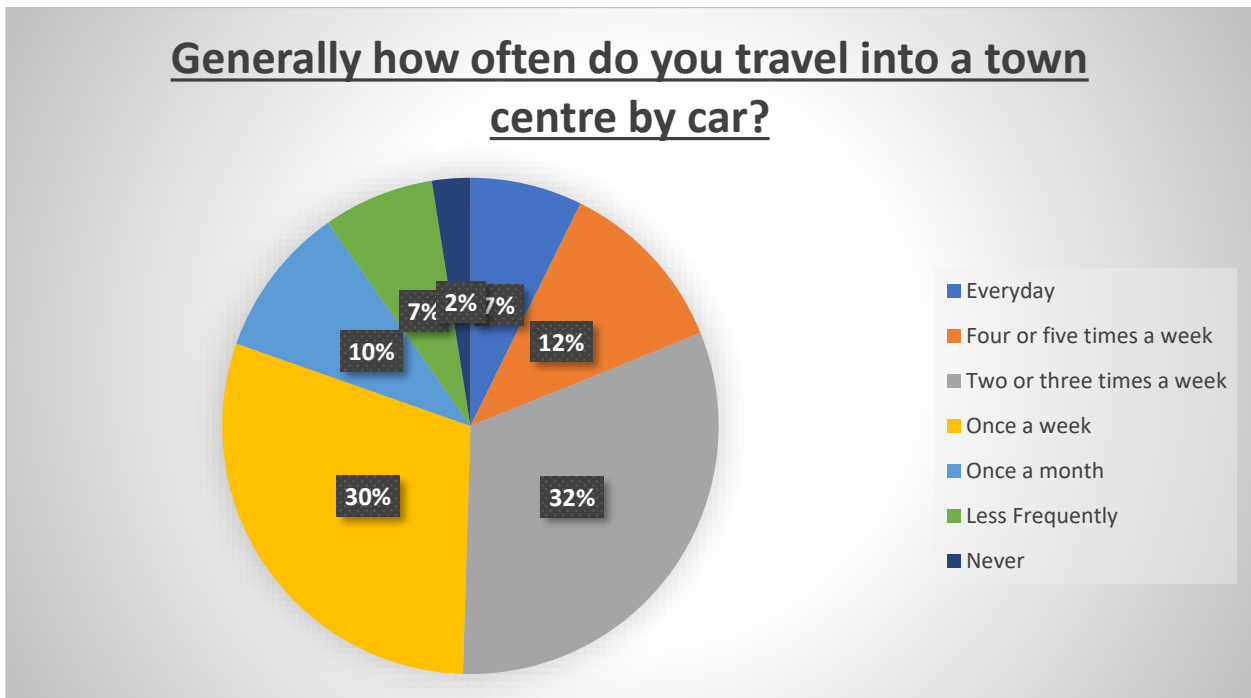


Figure 6 – Existing driving behaviour in towns / villages

Question 6 is asking respondents for information surrounding how often they travel into the town centre. With over 30% of respondents saying that they visited the town centre once a week, this information is encouraging towards the area maintaining a healthy economy through residential spend. The highest response came from the option '@two to three times a week' which stood at 32% of respondents selecting this answer. This data is promising for the local economy, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.27 QUESTION 7 FOLLOWS ON FROM QUESTION 6 AND ASKED WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING THE TOWN?

This multi selection question received 1,242 responses with 6 respondents not answering the question.

Figure 7 below shows the breakdown of responses based on their reasoning for visiting a town.

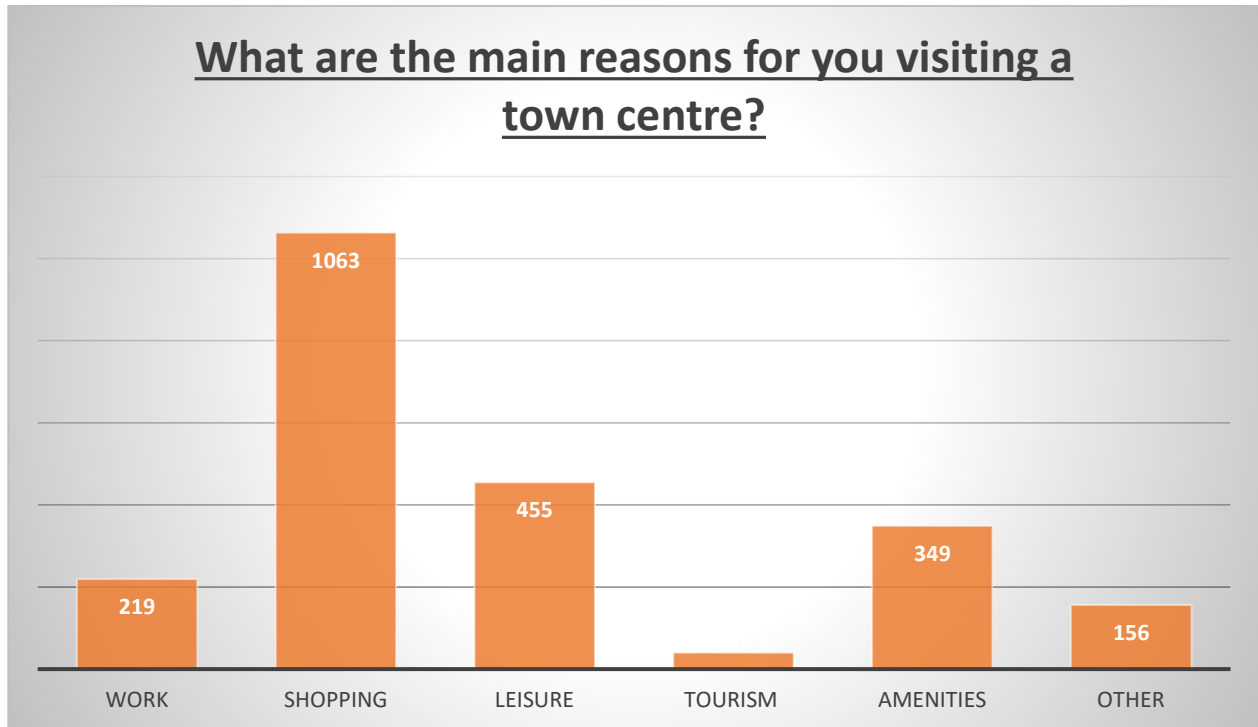


Figure 7 – Reasons for visiting locations in Babergh & Mid Suffolk

The purpose of this question is to understand the reasons why respondents are visiting the town centres. The data received shows that by far the most popular reason respondents chose was shopping which accounted for 1,063 selections. This adds weight to data already received that shows a healthy number of residents still use town centres to shop, again as stated previously very encouraging for the local economy.

3.28 QUESTION 8 ASKED WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY YOU DRIVE INTO TOWN?

This multi selection question received 1,239 responses with 9 respondents not answering the question.

Figure 8 below shows the breakdown of responses based on the reasons why a car was used to visit the town.

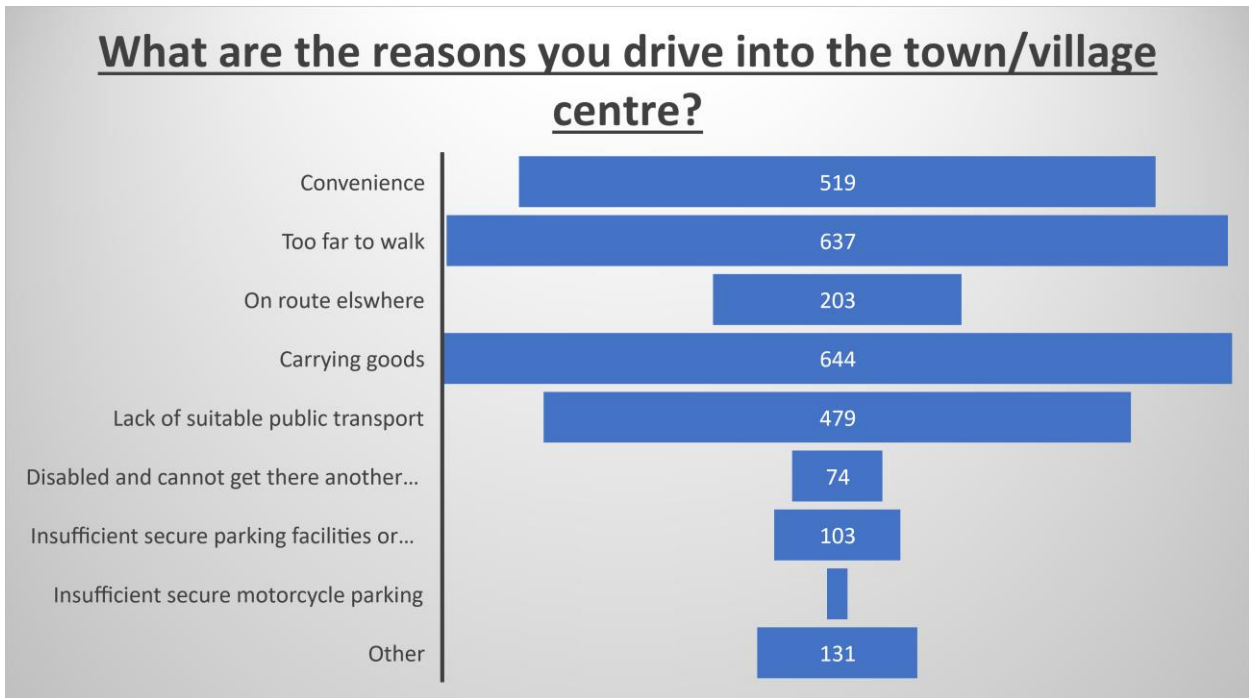


Figure 8 – Reasons for driving

Figure 8 above, shows that there are a wide range of reasons why respondents used vehicles to travel into towns / villages. The most selected response was the reason carrying goods which was selected 644 times, the next most selected response was too far to walk at 637 selections. These are selections which allude to the fact that ease and functionality are key for a lot of respondents when it comes to why they use their vehicles. This highlights that if someone owns a car then they will use it most of the time when given the choice to travel to a town / village centre.

3.29 QUESTION 9 ASKED WHEN YOU DRIVE WHERE DO YOU NORMALLY PARK?

This multi selection question received 1,229 responses meaning 19 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 9 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on data around where they parked when driving into a town.

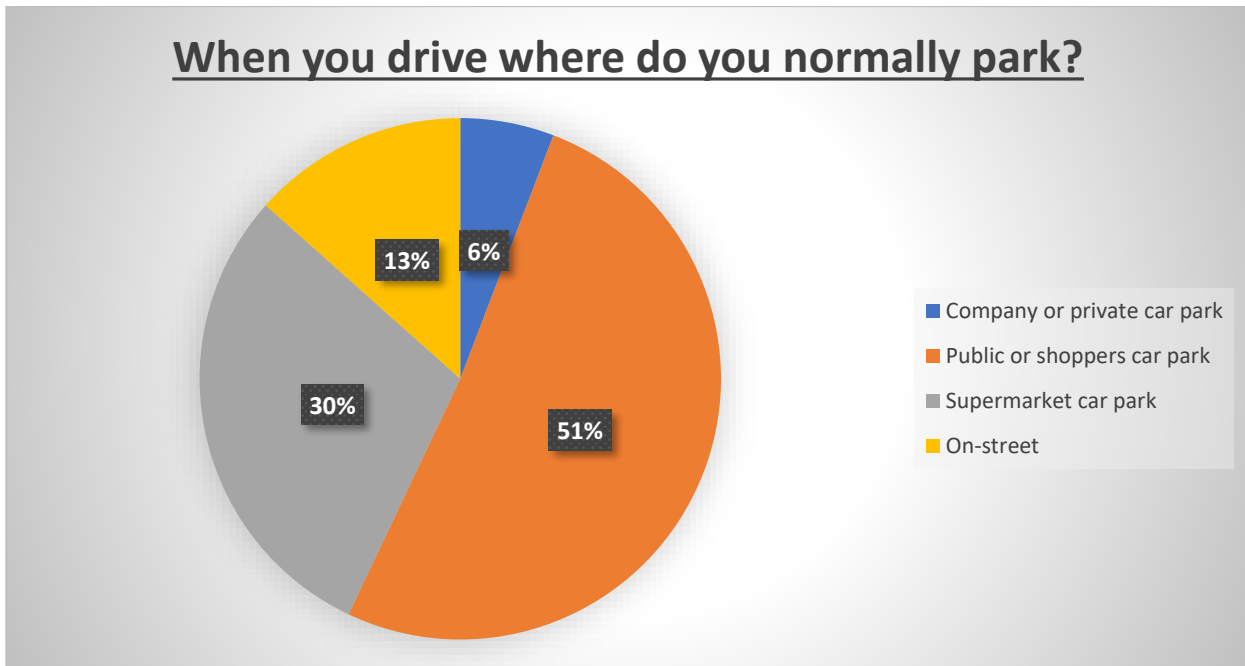


Figure 9 – Locations respondents park

The purpose of this question is to determine where respondents are parking their vehicle when they come into a particular town. This is an important question in that it identifies particular preferences for where respondents like to park. This data can be used to support data that has been collated from car park occupancies and on street vehicle volume numbers. This data helps support the overall conclusions that will be found once all data is analysed and recorded.

3.210 QUESTION 10 ASKED IF YOU PARK ON THE STREET WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON FOR DOING SO?

This multi selection question received 1,100 responses meaning 148 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 10 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on why they choose to park on-street.

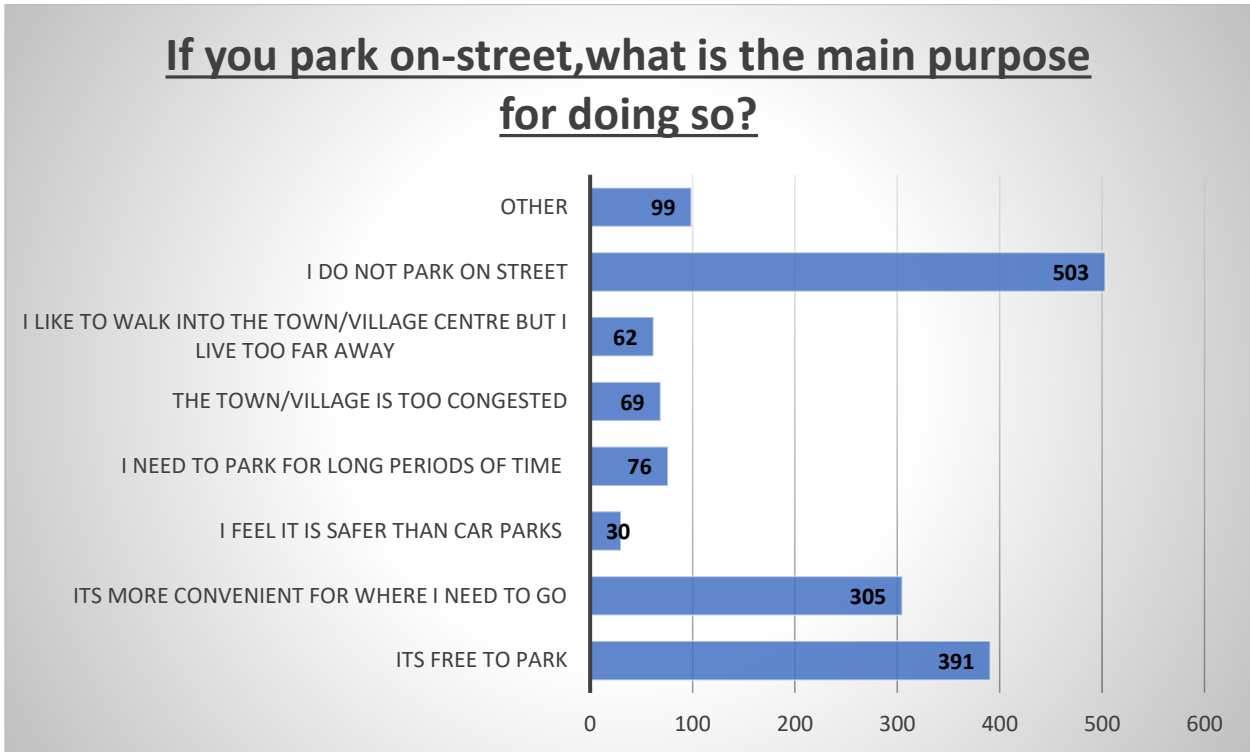


Figure 10 – Purpose for parking on-street

This question was posted to determine the reasons respondents park on-street. There are eight pre-determined responses that the respondent can select and the one selected most was I do not park on street. The next most selected reason was it is free to park. This determines that for a lot of respondents the cost of parking is a big motivator when it comes to the decision to choose where to park. It is important to determine why people who park on-street choose to do this.

3.211 QUESTION 11 ASKED IF YOU CHOOSE PUBLIC OR SHOPPERS CAR PARKS WHICH TOWN/VILLAGE DID YOU USE?

This multi selection question received 1,176 responses meaning 72 respondents not answering the question.

Figure 11 below shows the breakdown of responses based on which town or village centre location they parked when using a public or shoppers car park.

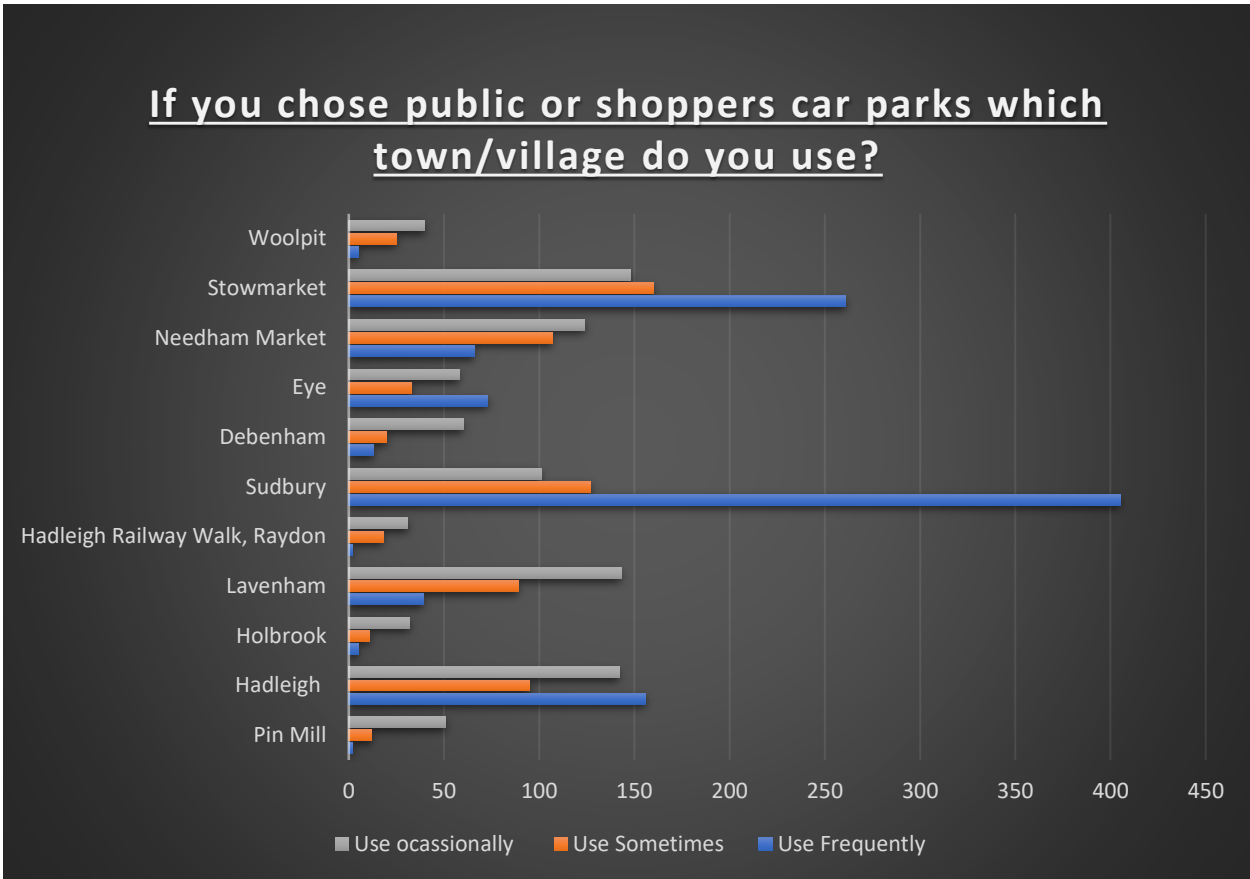


Figure 11 – Locations across Babergh & Mid Suffolk where respondents park

The data above shows where respondents parked when they used shoppers or public car parks. The most frequently used car parks chosen by those respondents that participated were the ones located in Sudbury. This shows that car parking is frequently used in Sudbury by the people that responded. The next most frequently selected as ‘Use frequently’ was Stowmarket. These are both prominent places in Babergh and Mid Suffolk respectively. Overall, the distribution of responses is fairly well spread with all towns and villages having some representation by respondents. It is key to have respondents from all areas of the two districts to give a greater understanding of parking for all.

3.212 QUESTION 12 ASKED HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY PARKING PROBLEMS AT ANY OF OUR CAR PARKS?

This single selection question received 1,218 responses with 30 respondents not answering this question.

Figure 12 below shows the breakdown of responses based on if the respondents have experienced any problems at the car parks.



Figure 12 – Breakdown on parking issues within car parks

The purpose of asking this question is to understand the percentage of users that experience problems in council operated car parks. Traditionally, the higher the percentage stating they experience problems in car parks, the more likely there will be a series of issues as different users will identify different issues. For instance, some users could experience issues with capacity if they visit car parks at peak times, whereas others may experience issues with using payment machines for example.

This question demonstrate that more users do not experience problems compared to those that do.

3.213 QUESTION 13 ASKED WHAT TOWN DOES THE ISSUES FROM QUESTION 12 RELATE TO?

This multi selection question enabled received 601 responses meaning 647 respondents chose not answer this question. It is important to note, that this is in line with the ratio of those that indicated that they had not experienced any issues in car parks as per question 12.

Figure 13 below shows the breakdown of towns where parking issues have been experienced.

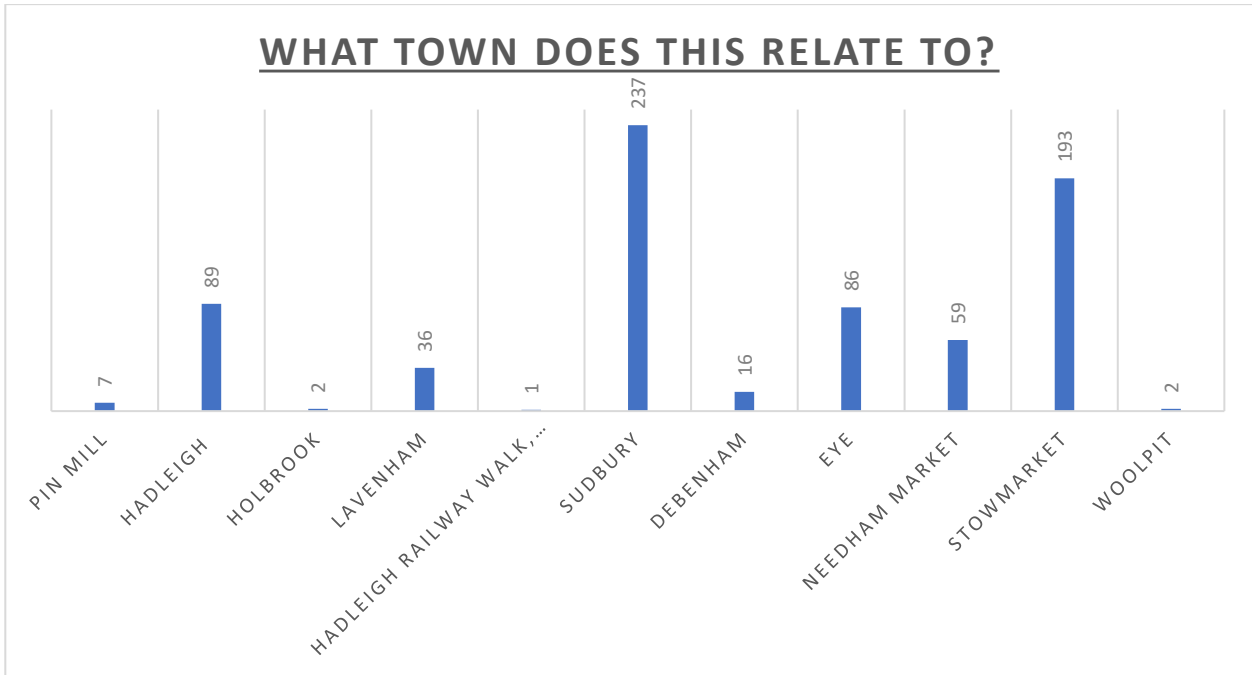


Figure 13 – Breakdown of towns where parking issues experienced

The results of figure 13 illustrate that the two most common towns where issues are experienced are Sudbury and Stowmarket. As the two largest towns, this is not a surprise. Interestingly there are some smaller towns that have a relatively high rate of issues compared to others such as Eye with 86 responses and Hadleigh with 89.

3.214 QUESTION 14 ASKED RESPONDENTS TO IDENTIFY THE ISSUES THAT RELATE TO THEIR VISIT

This multi selection question received 715 responses with 533 respondents not answering this question.

Five pre-determined answers for this question were included for respondents to consider as well as an “other” option, which enabled respondents to provide more detail. Figure 14 provides a breakdown of the pre-determined answers for the question.

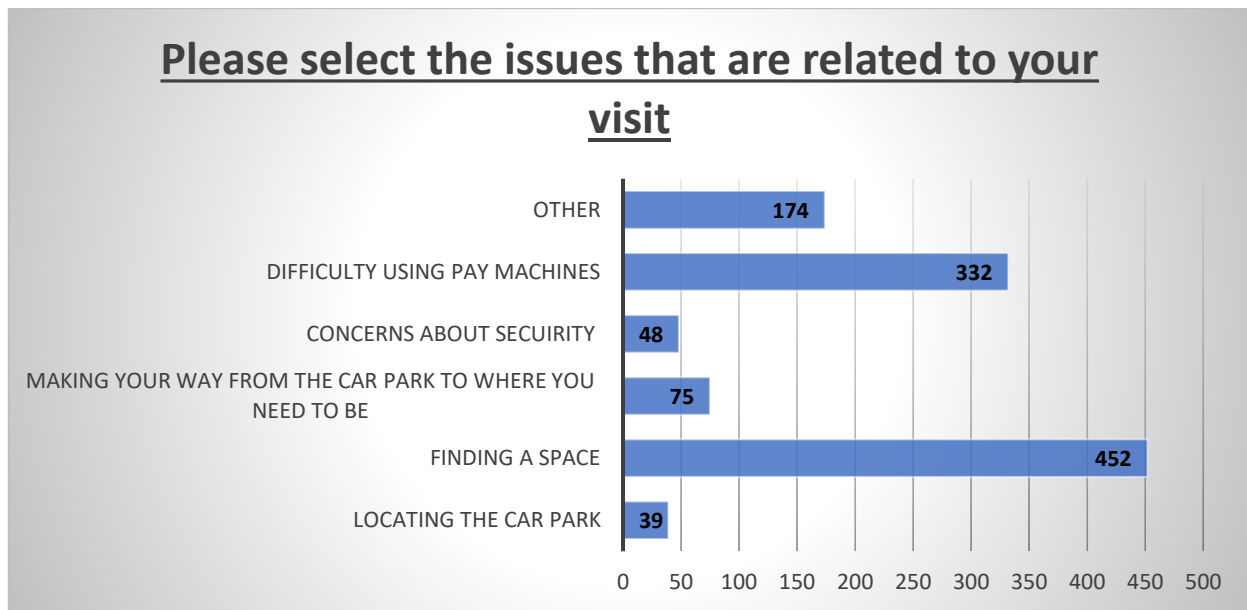


Figure 14 – The issues that cause problems for respondents

Finding a space, is by far the most common issue that respondents have when using the car parks with nearly 65% of respondents selecting this reason. Finding a space is the most common cause for experiencing issues in car parks as at peak periods this has the likelihood to occur. Whilst this may give the indication that there is insufficient parking capacity, in reality, this is only likely to be during peak periods.

The second most common reason for experiencing issues in car parks, is having difficulty using the payment machines. This could involve purchasing a ticket (if required), the understanding the instructions, or locating the payment machines. Over 45% of respondents chose this as an issue.

The third most common reason for experiencing issues in car parks was the “other” option with 174 respondents selecting this option. From the comments received, the majority made reference to the payment machines being old, broken, and in need of replacement. Combining these with the 332 responses that stated this as the pre-defined option, there is a clear thought from stakeholders that the payment machines are not up to the required standard. Other common comments included reference to a lack of disabled parking spaces, the cost of parking, and the length of stay, and a lack of parent child spaces.

3.215 QUESTION 15 ASKED HOW OFTEN THE PROBLEMS ARE EXPERIENCED?

This single selection question allowed respondents to select an option on how often the problems are experienced and gave four options from every visit to only once. This question received 730 responses meaning 518 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 15 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on the four options.

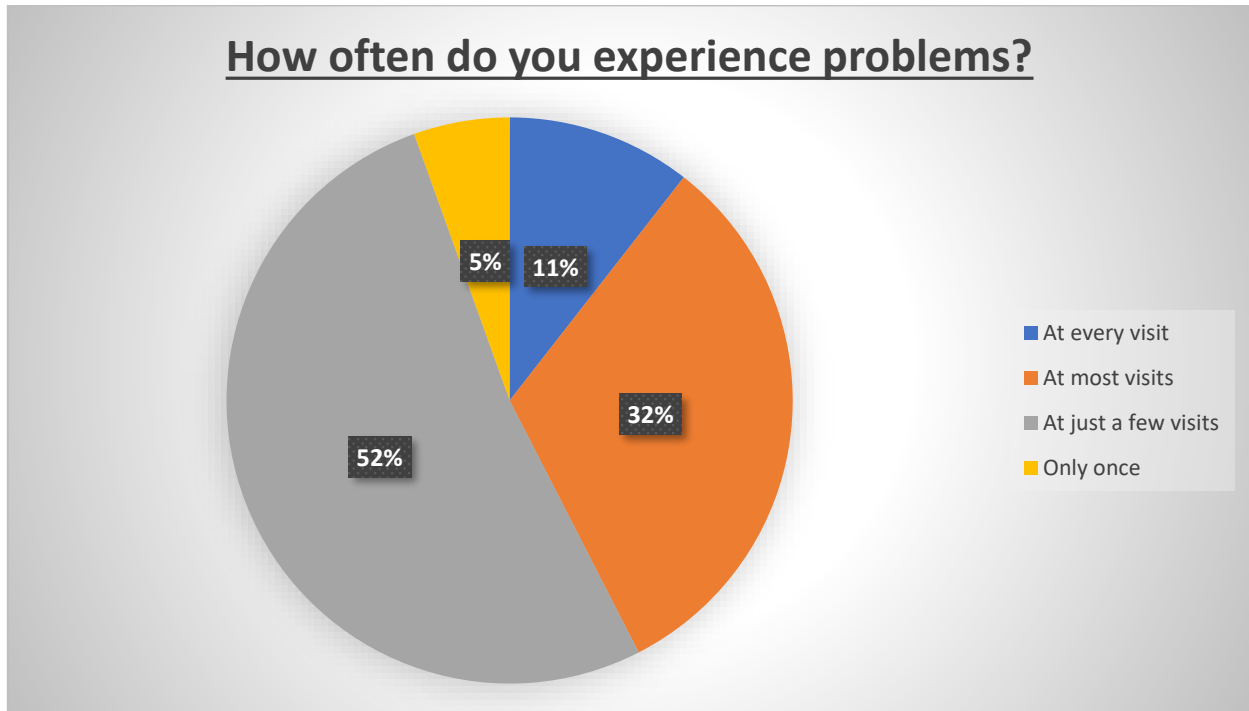


Figure 15 – How often issues are experience in car parks

The results to this question demonstrate that over 50% of respondents only experience issues in car parks at just a few visits. This supports the common issues of locating a parking space and difficulty using payment machines as these can be sporadic issues such as no parking spaces being available during peak periods and payment machines being out of order on occasion. Following on from this option, the second most common response was those choosing “at most visits” with 32% of respondents selecting this. Based on this it could be assumed that if there was a further option in-between these two options, this may be the most common answer. The “every visit” and “only once” options were the two least common answers with only 16% of respondents choosing one of these two.

3.216 QUESTION 16 ASKED RESPONDENTS IF THERE IS ENOUGH OVERALL PARKING ACROSS THE DISTRICTS?

This single selection question allowed respondents to select an option on whether they believe there is enough parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk. There were three options available- 1) there is always enough parking, 2) usually sufficient parking apart from peak periods, and 3) there is not enough parking generally. An “other” option was also included to allow for comments.

Figure 16 below shows the breakdown of respondents based their thoughts on whether there is enough parking across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

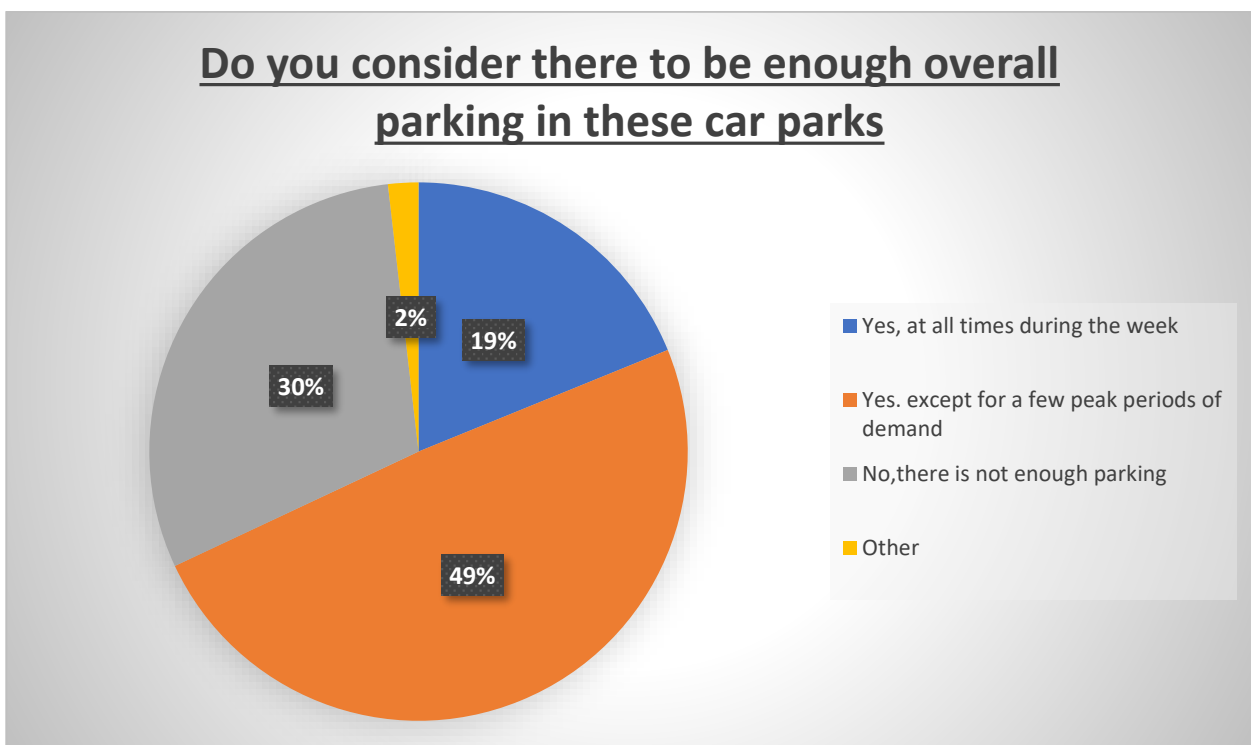


Figure 16 – Respondents views on level of parking in the districts

Figure 16 demonstrates that the majority of respondents believe there is sufficient levels of parking capacity across the districts except for a few peak periods of demand. This response supports the previous questions feedback where finding a parking space was an issue but only at a few visits.

There were 22 comments within the “other” option which made reference to insufficient parking in residential areas, issues with parking on grass verges, and a need to have more parking in public transport stations ie rail and bus.

3.217 QUESTION 17 COMMENCED THE SECTION OF QUESTIONS ON THE PARKING EXPERIENCE AND THE FIRST QUESTION ASKED RESPONDENTS HOW THEY WOULD RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS?

This question was designed to allow respondents to rate the quality of the car parks within the districts. Respondents were able to select an option for each town / village where there are car parks located meaning there could be 11 choices per response. If the respondent does not visit the location specified there was an “N/A” option - this has not been included within the analysis.

Figure 17 illustrates the quality of car parks based on the options described above for each of the towns / villages within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

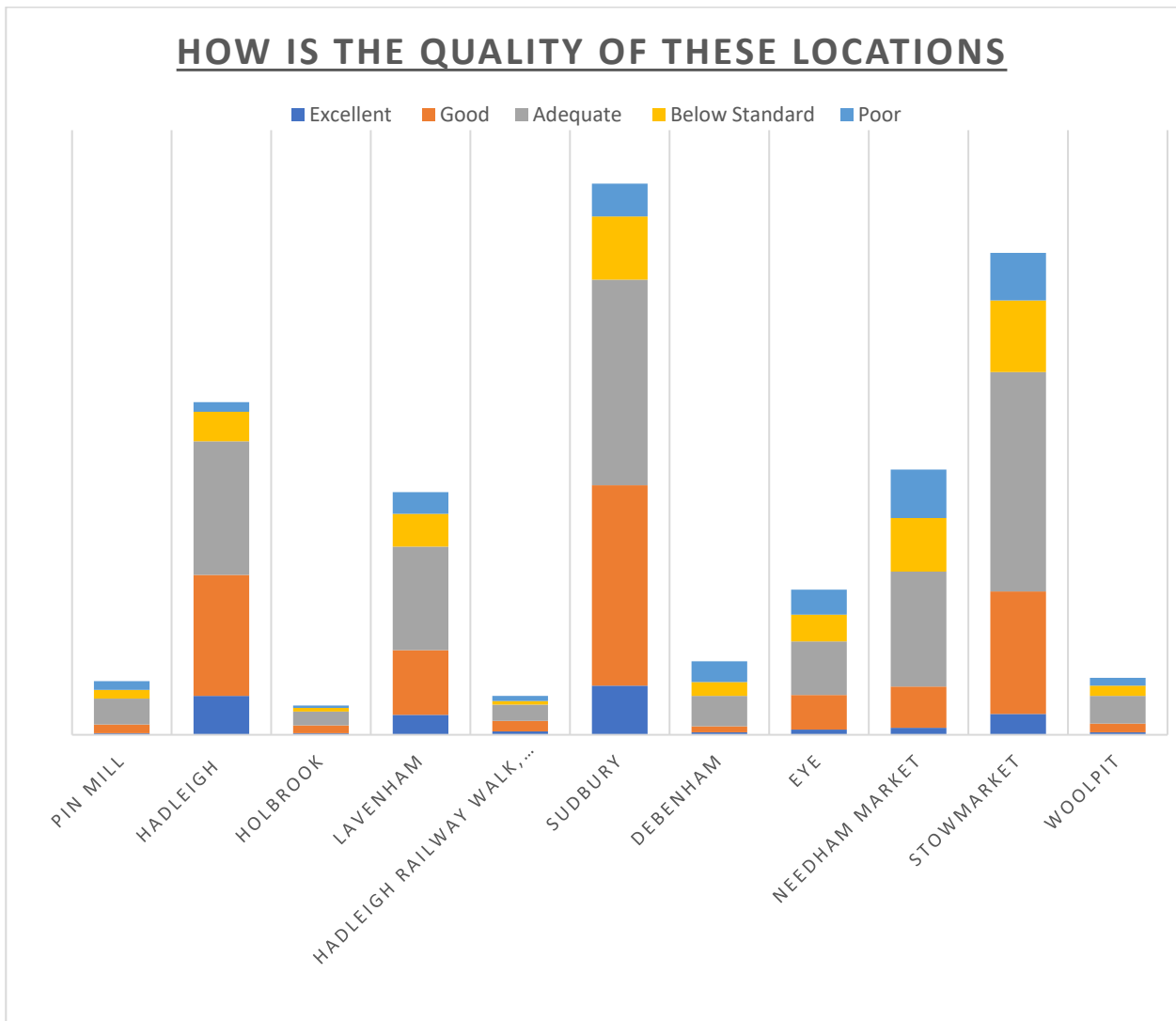


Figure 17 – Feedback on the quality of car parks in Babergh & Mid Suffolk

To provide more clarity on figure 17 above, table 2 provides the raw data to demonstrate the response rate for each of the towns / villages.

Answer Choices	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Below standard	Poor
Pin Mill	0.49% 2	2.43% 10	7.28% 30	2.43% 10	2.43% 10
Hadleigh	7.40% 45	23.03% 140	25.49% 155	5.59% 34	1.81% 11
Holbrook	0.51% 2	2.28% 9	4.06% 16	1.02% 4	0.76% 3
Lavenham	4.42% 23	14.42% 75	23.08% 120	7.31% 38	4.81% 25
Hadleigh Railway Walk South	1.01% 4	3.04% 12	4.81% 19	1.01% 4	1.52% 6
Sudbury	7.01% 57	28.54% 232	29.27% 238	8.98% 73	4.67% 38
Debenham	0.73% 3	1.70% 7	8.52% 35	3.89% 16	5.84% 24
Eye	1.26% 6	8.40% 40	13.03% 62	6.51% 31	6.09% 29
Needham Market	1.55% 8	9.32% 48	25.83% 133	12.04% 62	10.87% 56
Stowmarket	3.37% 24	19.94% 142	35.67% 254	11.66% 83	7.72% 55
Woolpit	0.77% 3	2.56% 10	8.18% 32	3.07% 12	2.30% 9

Table 2 – Raw data for question 17

The results from figure 17 / table 2 illustrate that the most common responses to this question fall within the “adequate” or “good” categories meaning that the car parks are usable and there are not many issues with the day-to-day operation such as appearance, safety, accessibility, and location. As demonstrated in other questions, Sudbury, and Stowmarket are the most common towns selected by respondents. Both these locations have a similar breakdown of quality categories.

Sudbury achieved the overall best score for this question with over 35% of responses falling within the excellent category (7%) or good category (29%). Hadleigh and Stowmarket were the next highest with Needham Market rated poorly overall.

3.218 QUESTION 18 ASKED RESPONDENTS WHAT THEY LIKE MOST ABOUT THE PARKING FACILITIES?

This single selection question allowed respondents to select what their most favoured part of the parking facilities were from the pre-determined list of options. There was also an

“other” option to capture any comments on the list. There were 1,169 responses to this question meaning 79 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 18 demonstrates the breakdown of responses for this question.

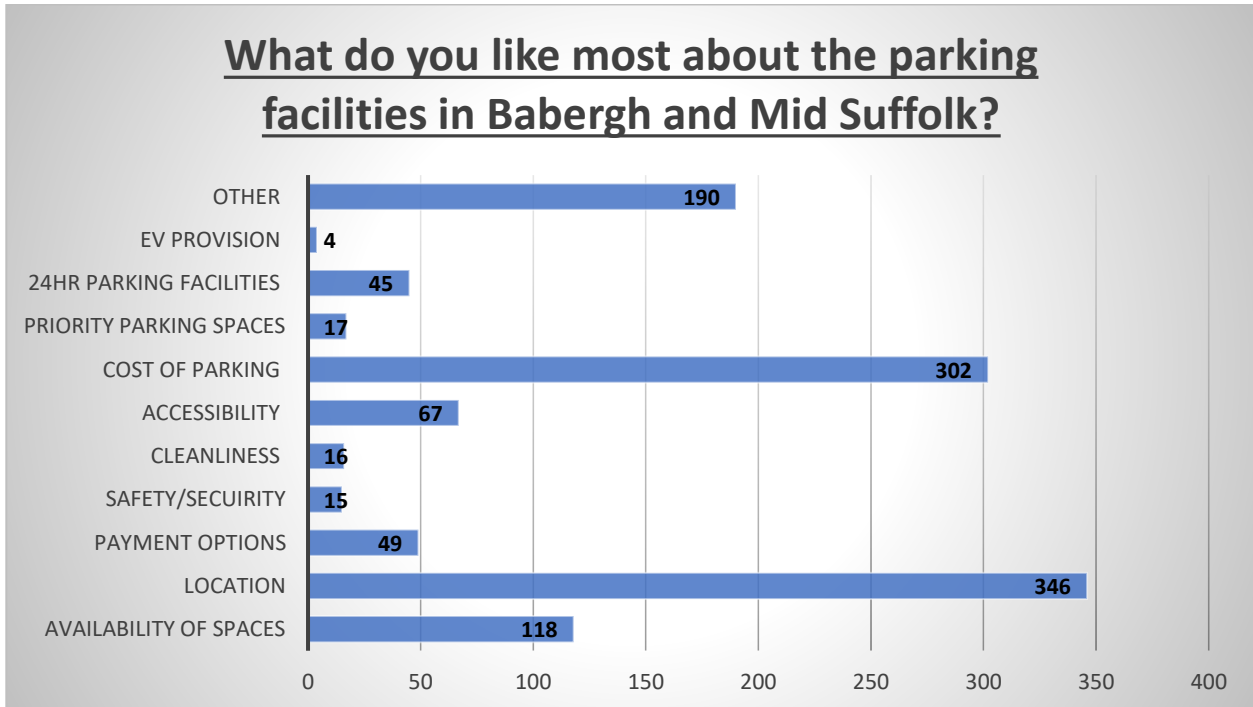


Figure 18 – Breakdown of responses for respondents most favoured part of parking

The results demonstrate that the location of parking across Babergh and Mid Suffolk is the most liked aspect of the parking facilities with 346 respondents (30%) choosing this option. This would suggest that respondents feel the parking facilities are located near to the key trip generators such as town centres, which can be considered the most important consideration for a strong local economy. The second most liked aspect of the parking facilities was the cost of parking with 302 respondents (26%) choosing this option.

The third most liked aspect of the parking facilities was classified as the “other” option with 190 respondents choosing this. The majority of comments within this field are related to the free parking. If these were added to the cost of parking option, this would probably become the most liked option within the question.

3.219 QUESTION 19 ASKED RESPONDENTS WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED WITHIN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK CAR PARKS?

This single selection question allowed respondents to select what they would like to see improved within car parks in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. There was also an “other” option

to capture any comments on the list. There were 1,024 responses with 224 respondents who did not answer the question.

Figure 19 demonstrates the breakdown of responses for this question.

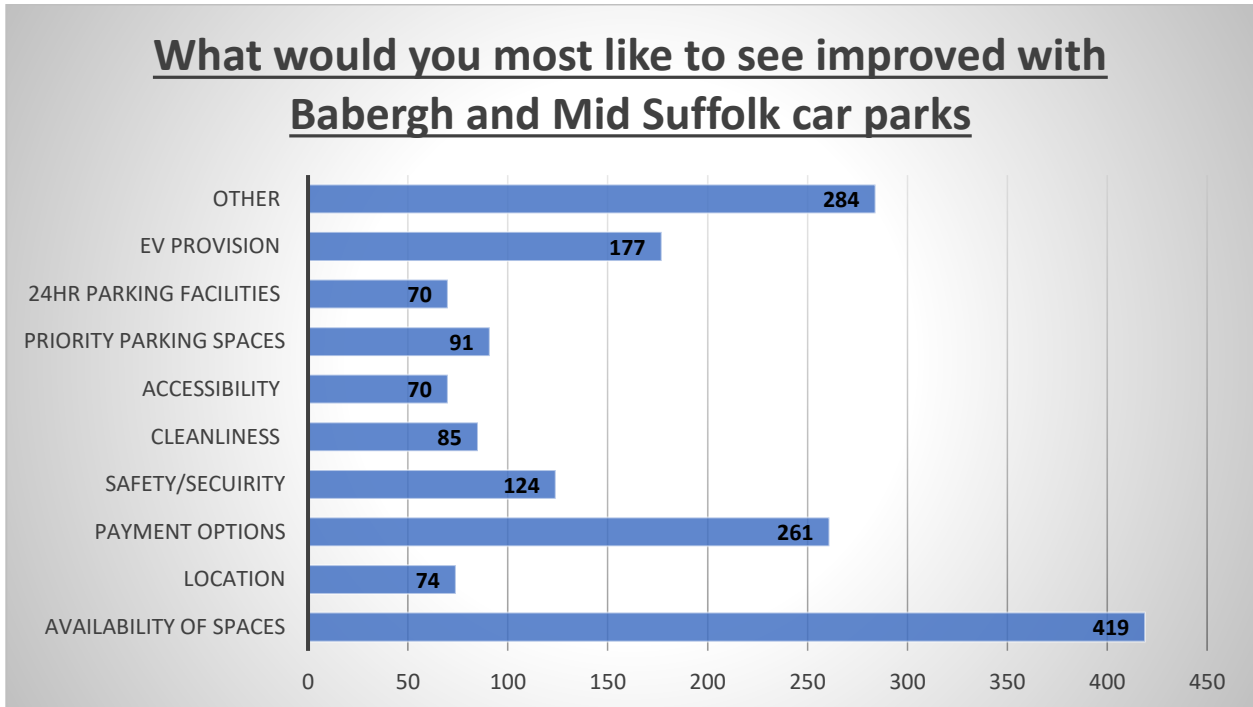


Figure 19 – Breakdown of responses based on most required improvements

Interestingly, the most common option for what should be improved in our car parks is the availability of spaces, with 419 choosing this as their favoured option. Section 4 provides a breakdown of responses based on Babergh and Mid Suffolk, which will determine if this is a district level point or specific to towns and villages.

The second most common option was the “other” option with 284 comments provided. The majority of these comments were used for reference to the need for free parking in Babergh to remain. Other comments included requests for parking tariffs to be made cheaper, the requirement for residents parking, and to fix broken payment machines.

3.220 QUESTION 20 ASKED RESPONDENTS HOW THEY WOULD RATE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF THE OFF-STREET CAR PARKS?

This question required respondents to choose one option from 12 rows that included a variety of parking aspects based on the criteria developed to rate each car park as part of the investigation stage of the parking strategy. There were 1,167 responses received with 81 respondents not answering the question.

Figure 20 demonstrates the breakdown of responses for this question.

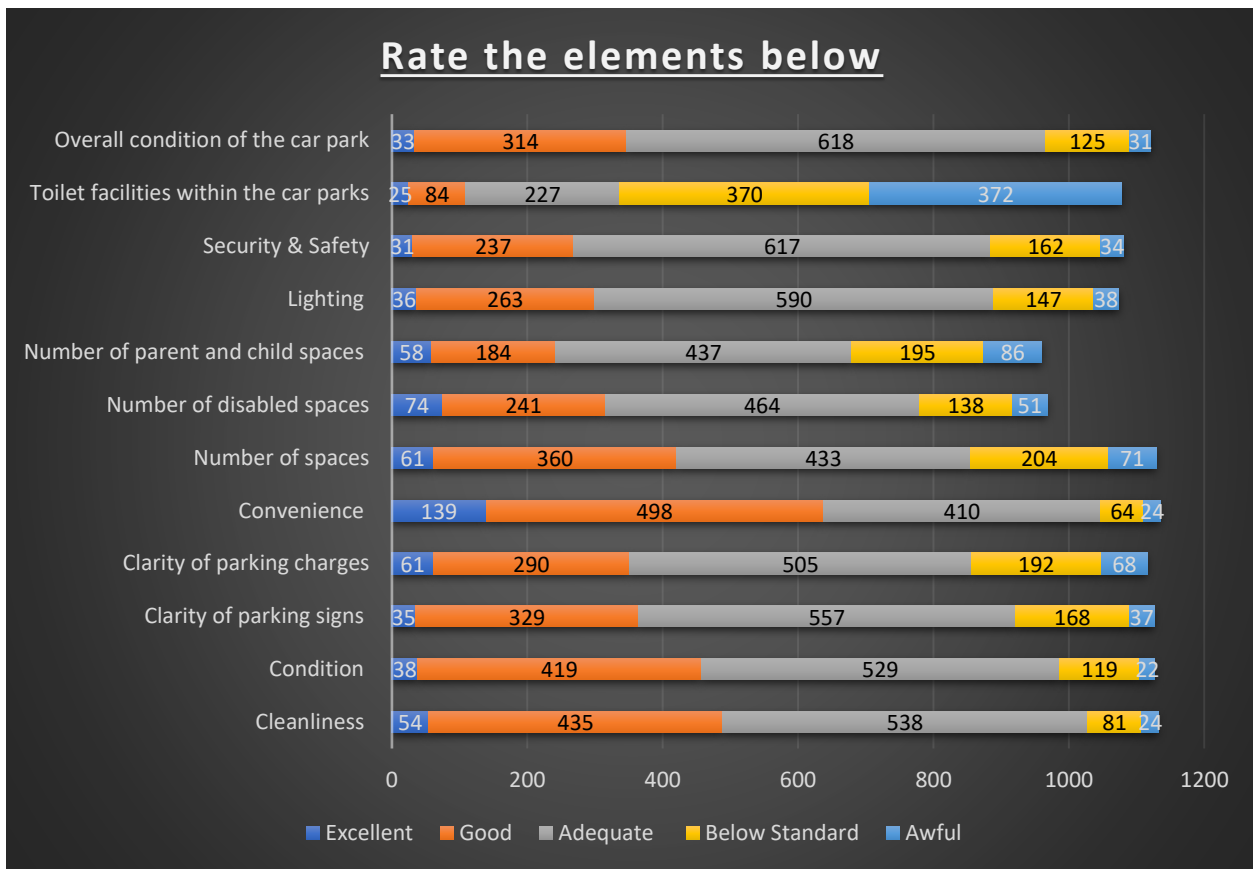


Figure 20 – Rated aspects of car parks in Babergh and Mid Suffolk

To provide more clarity on figure 20 above, table 3 provides the raw data to demonstrate the response rate for each of aspects included in the question.

Answer Choices	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Below standard	Awful
Cleanliness	4.77% 54	38.43% 435	47.53% 538	7.16% 81	2.12% 24
Condition	3.37% 38	37.18% 419	46.94% 529	10.56% 119	1.95% 22
Clarity of parking signs	3.11% 35	29.22% 329	49.47% 557	14.92% 168	3.29% 37
Clarity of parking charges	5.47% 61	25.99% 290	45.25% 505	17.20% 192	6.09% 68
Convenience	12.25% 139	43.88% 498	36.12% 410	5.64% 64	2.11% 24
Number of spaces	5.40% 61	31.89% 360	38.35% 433	18.07% 204	6.29% 71
Number of disabled spaces	7.64% 74	24.90% 241	47.93% 464	14.26% 138	5.27% 51
Number of parent & child parking spaces	6.04% 58	19.17% 184	45.52% 437	20.31% 195	8.96% 86
Lighting	3.35% 36	24.49% 263	54.93% 590	13.69% 147	3.54% 38

Security & Safety	2.87% 31	21.92% 237	57.08% 617	14.99% 162	3.15% 34
Toilet facilities within the car parks	2.32% 25	7.79% 84	21.06% 227	34.32% 370	34.51% 372
Overall condition of the car park	2.94% 33	28.01% 314	55.13% 618	11.15% 125	2.77% 31

Table 3 – Raw data for question 20

Convenience is the most liked aspect of parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk and supports the responses in question 18 where the location of car parks was the most favoured aspect of parking. Cleanliness also rated highly with 38% of respondents selecting “good”.

Toilet facilities within the car parks was the worst scoring aspect of parking facilities with nearly 35% of respondents choosing this option as “awful” and 34% choosing the option as “below standard” suggesting that respondents may welcome more toilet facilities within car parks. The number of parent child spaces was also scored poorly with 9% choosing this option as “awful” and 20% choosing the option as “below standard” again reinforcing comments elsewhere in the consultation that state there is insufficient parent child spaces.

3.221 QUESTION 21 ASKED HOW YOU WOULD RATE THE QUALITY OF SIGNAGE PROVIDING DIRECTIONS TO THE VARIOUS DIFFERENT CAR PARKING OPTIONS?

This slider scale selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1,248 responses with no respondents declining to answer this question.

Figure 21 below shows the breakdown of respondents rated the quality of signage providing directions to the various car parking options.

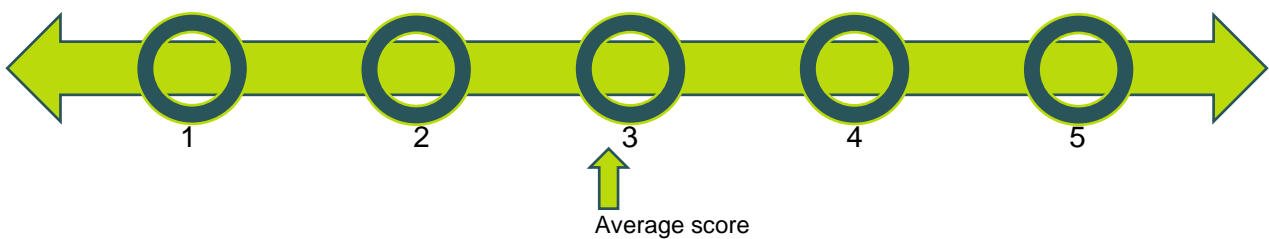


Figure 21 – Average score for quality of signage to parking

The purpose of this question is to understand the functionality of the existing car park signage which exists in their area. The average response recorded was 2.96 which shows that signage is sufficient to a degree but changes could be made to improve user experience.

3.222 QUESTION 22 ASKED PLEASE RANK HOW IMPORTANT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES ARE TO YOU?

This question provided respondents with the opportunity to rank five parking priorities based on preference from 1-5. Respondents ranking the priorities generated a score, which in turn provided a total score across the consultation. This question received 1,219 responses with 29 respondents not answering this question.

Table 4 below shows the total score and the overall rank for each priority based on how important respondents felt the particular priority was.

Priority	Total Score	Overall Rank
Convenient, well-located parking close to shops and amenities	4904	1
Fairly-priced car parking that helps manage demand	4151	2
Safety and security of car parks	3943	3
Information provided prior to the car parks such as signs and spaces available	2709	4
Useful town centre car parking information contained on Council website such as locations, & pricing	2577	5

Table 4 – Parking priorities score by rank

The score was generated by allocating a number of points to each response:

- 5 points to every response that was ranked 1st
- 4 points to every response that was ranked 2nd
- 3 points to every response that was ranked 3rd
- 2 points to every response that was ranked 4th
- 1 point to every response that was ranked 5th.

The results demonstrate that convenient well-located parking close to shops and amenities was the greatest priority for respondents. This scored considerably higher than the second-place priority, which was fairly priced car parking that helps manage demand. These two highest scoring priorities support feedback from other questions within the consultation on what is important to respondents. Safety and security of car parks scored similarly to fair pricing but much higher than the last two options, with a score over 1,000 higher. This suggests that these two options are not a high priority to respondents.

3.223 QUESTION 23 ASKED WHEN WOULD YOU PREFER TO PAY FOR YOUR PARKING?

This single selection question received 1,168 responses with 80 respondents not answering this question.

Figure 22 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on at what time they would prefer to pay for their parking.

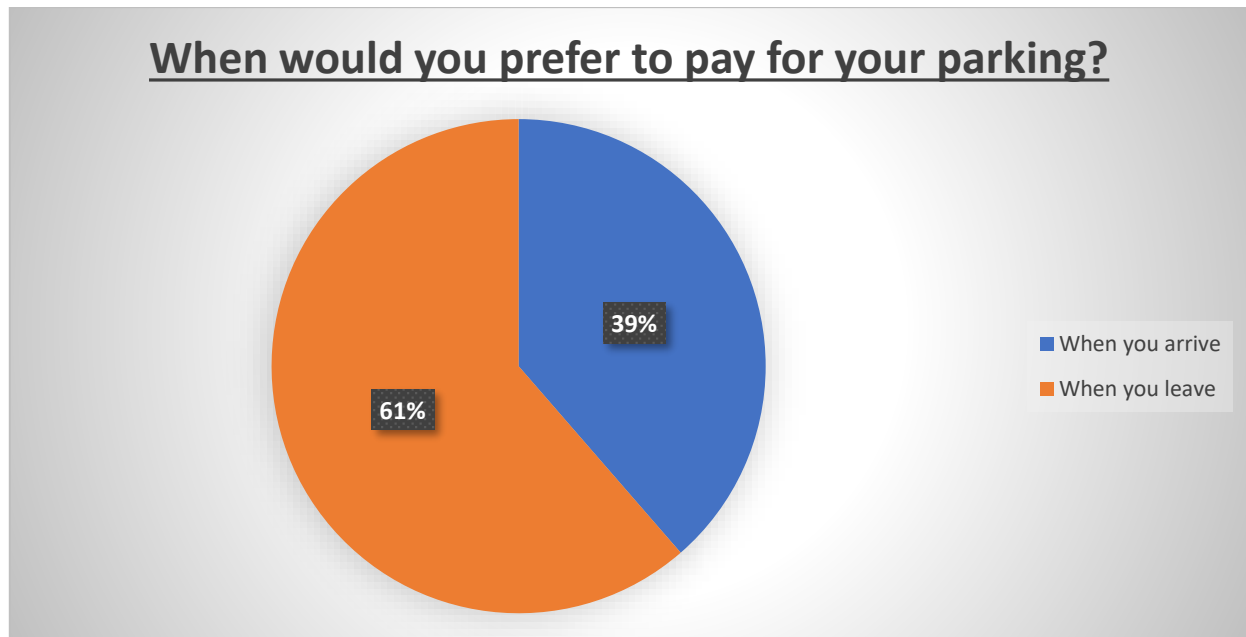


Figure 22 – Preference on respondents paying for parking

It is widely acknowledged that there is a greater preference to pay for parking when leaving the destination rather than paying upon arrival. Whilst there are currently no car parks within Babergh or Mid Suffolk where users can pay for parking when leaving, there is a benefit in asking this question to understand whether this is technology that could be introduced into car parks where there are parking charges.

The results have found that 61% of the overall respondents declared that they would choose to pay when they leave the car park whereas 39% of respondents would prefer to pay on arrival. This information coupled with data collected already can be used to support changes or installation of improved infrastructure.

3.224 QUESTION 24 ASKED HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO PAY FOR YOUR PARKING?

This multi selection question received 1,179 responses meaning 69 respondents did not answer the question.

Figure 23 below shows the breakdown of respondents based how they would like to pay for their parking.

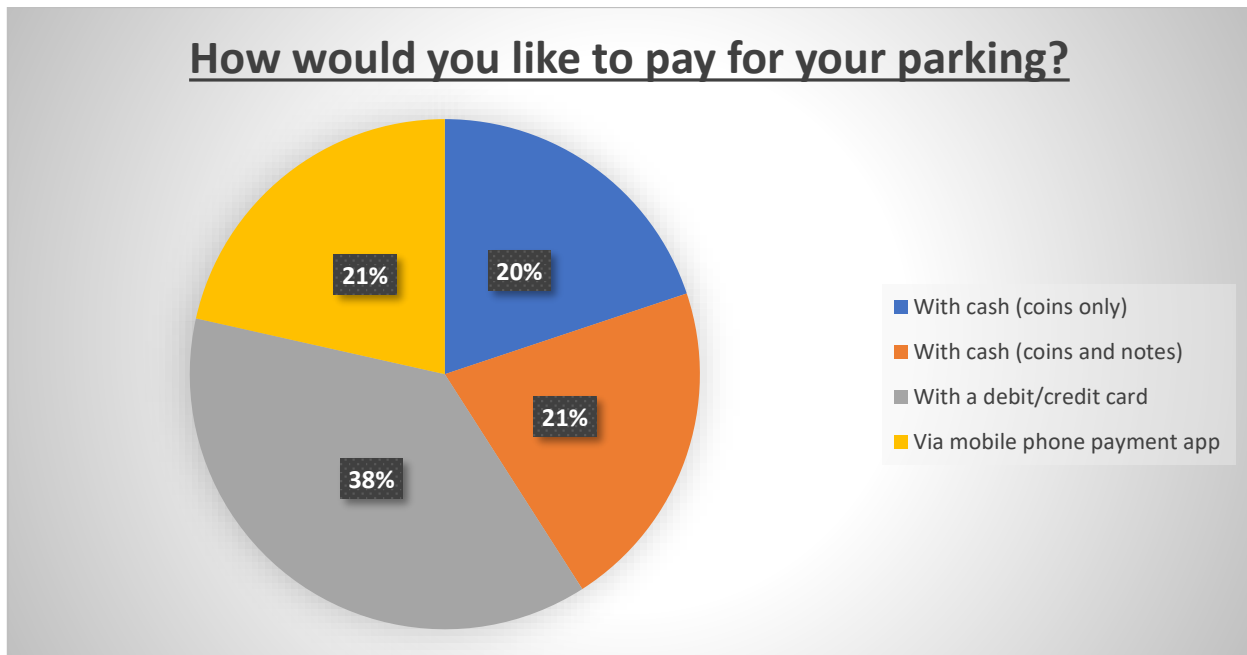


Figure 23 – Preference on methods to pay for parking

The method of paying for parking needs to be efficient and easy to use. It is important to offer a wide selection of payment methods to ensure everyone's needs are met. The purpose of this question is to understand the popularity of each payment method and use this data to contribute to a possible improvement in service.

The results show that the method of debit or credit card was the most selected option at 38% of the overall respondents. The next most selected response was a joint placement at 21% of both cash (coins and notes) and via a mobile phone app. The final method was cash (coins only) which was selected by 20% of the respondents. The data collected from this question shows that all payment methods seem important in offering the largest selection of people the correct facility to be able to pay for their parking.

3.225 QUESTION 25 ASKED HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE AMOUNT CURRENTLY CHARGED FOR LONG STAY PARKING IN CAR PARKS THAT CHARGE?

This single selection question received 384 responses with 864 respondents choosing not to answer this question.

Figure 24 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on how they felt about the amount currently charged for long stay parking in car parks that charge.

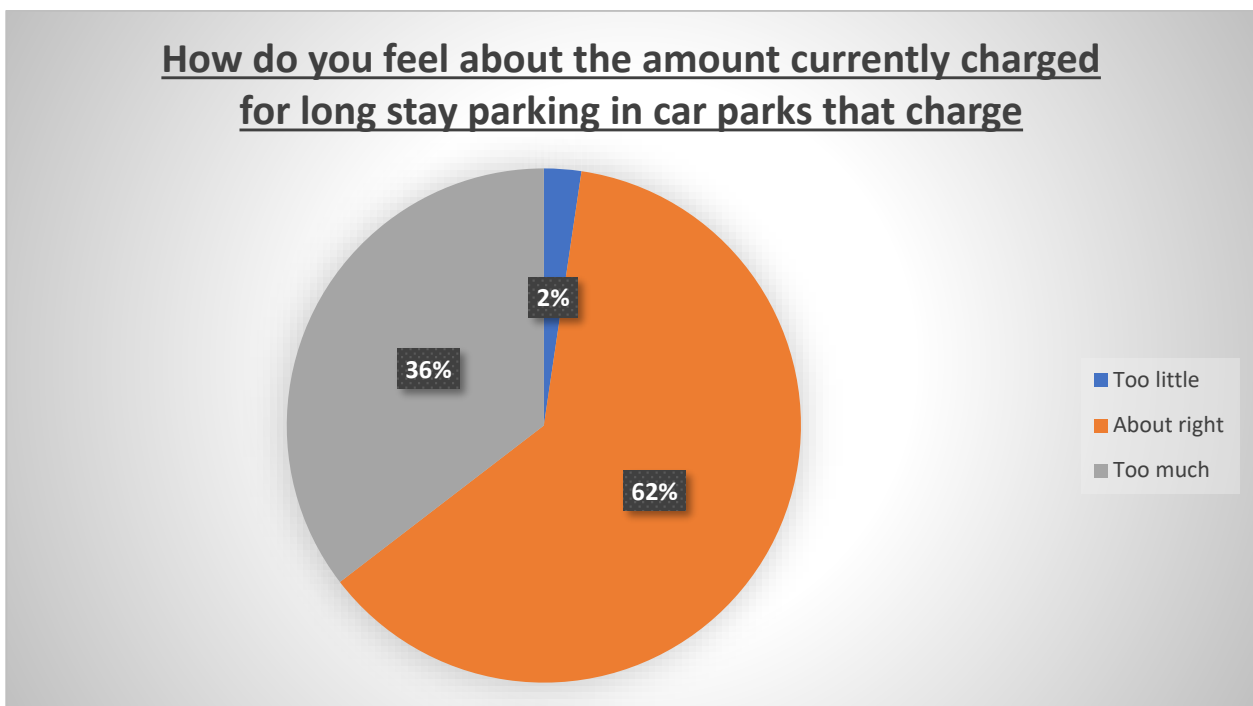


Figure 24 – Breakdown of responses views on long-stay parking charges

The purpose of this question is to understand how respondents feel about the amount that is charged for long term parking in the car parks. This data helps to understand if the right amount is charged in car parks. The results found that 62% of respondents believed the long-term charges to be about right. The next most selected response was too much at 36% and then finally too little at 2%. This shows that nearly two thirds of respondents believe the current charges for long-term parking to be about right.

Based on the experience of 2020 Consultancy in undertaking parking consultations, a question on parking charges usually results in a 50/50 ratio when charges are considered about right. Therefore, the ratio shown in figure 24 would suggest that respondents would potentially accept a small increase in parking charges if a tariff was increased. This

assumption is only based on previous data collection and consultation exercises on parking.

3.226 QUESTION 26 ASKED HOW DO YOU THINK THE CURRENT PARKING CHARGES COMPARE TO NEIGHBOURING TOWNS AND CITIES?

This single selection question received 1,191 responses with 57 respondents not answering this question.

Figure 25 below shows the breakdown of respondents on how they perceive the parking charges compare to neighbouring towns and cities.

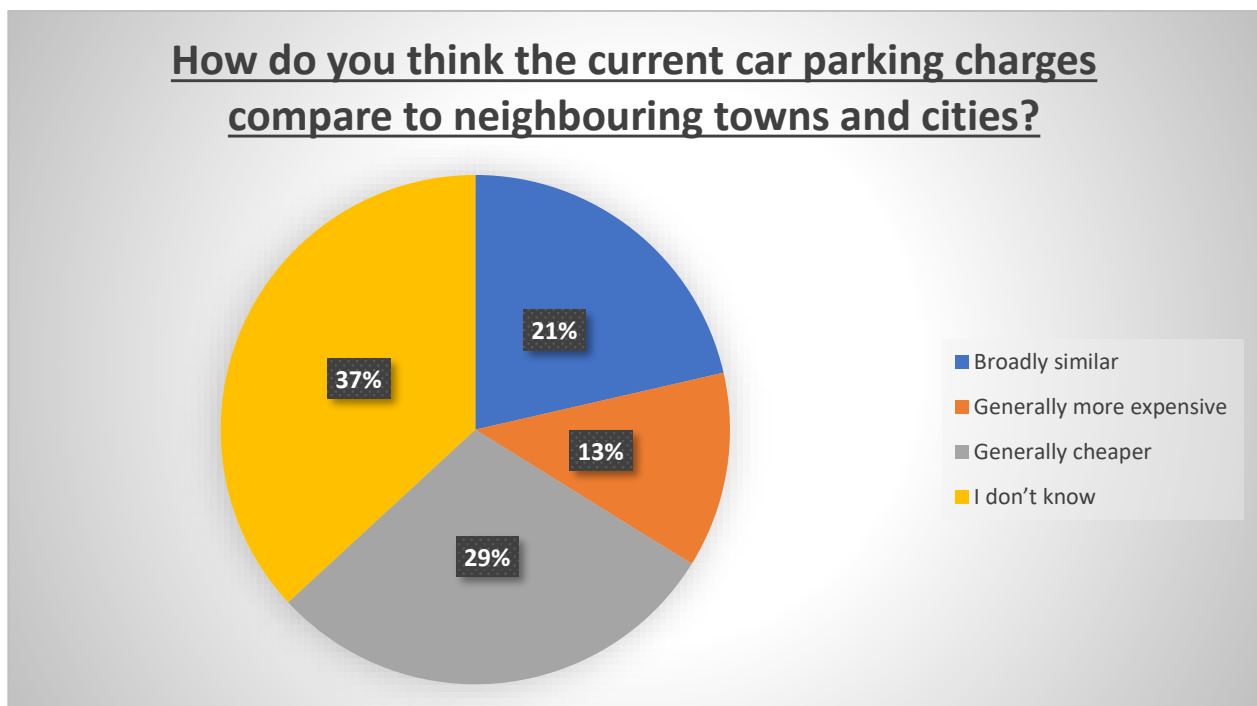


Figure 25 – Breakdown of responses based on comparison to nearby towns / cities

The purpose of this question is to gather understanding on how the current parking charges in Babergh and Mid Suffolk compare to neighbouring towns. It is important in maintaining a competitive and fair charge for parking for all and to maintain a good understanding of the surrounding areas offering so as not to lose any commercial attractiveness.

The results have found that 37% of the respondents do not know how the charges compare. The next most selected response was that it is generally cheaper at 29%. Broadly similar was selected most next at 21% and then finally generally more expensive at 13%.

3.227 QUESTION 27 ASKED DO YOU HAVE A DISABILITY OR LIMITED MOVEMENT?

This single selection question received 1,187 responses meaning 61 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 26 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on if they have a disability or limited movement.

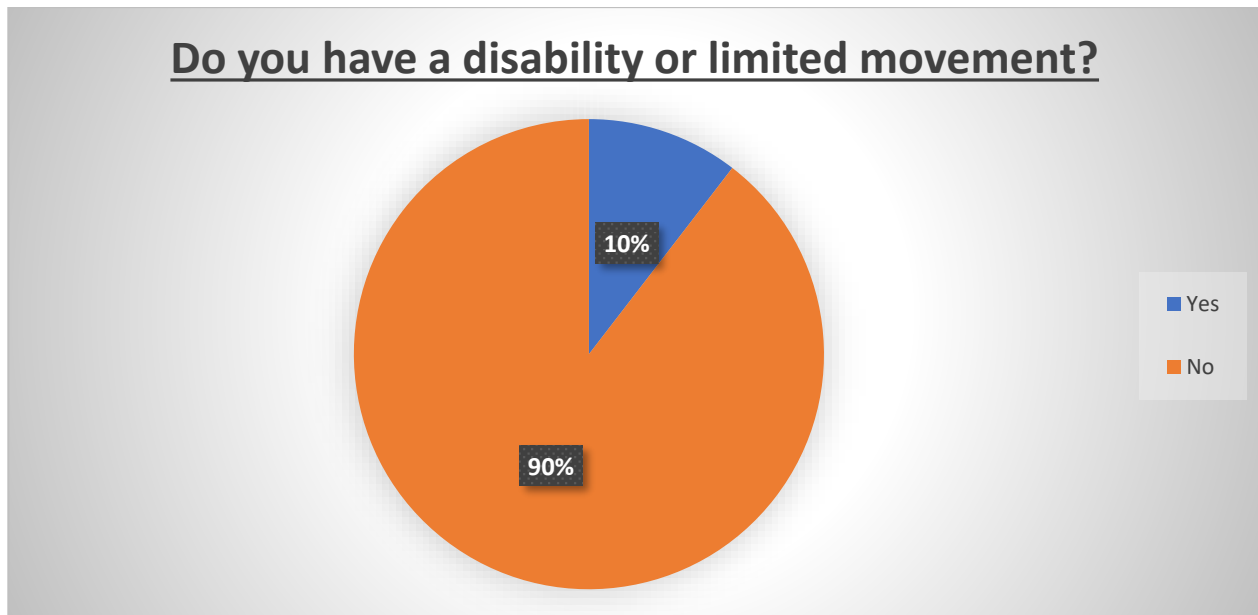


Figure 26 – Breakdown of respondents with disability or limited movement

This question was asked to gain an understanding of how many respondents have limited movement. This information helps contribute to a dataset that can help support any changes that may be required. It is important for a location to offer the correct number of disabled spaces based upon the general need. The results show that 90% of the total 1,187 respondents do not have a disability or limited movement compared to 105 respondents (apx 10%) that do have a disability or limited movement. This information will help calculate the correct number of spaces required for a particular area / the districts.

3.228 QUESTION 28 ASKED HOW EASY DO YOU FIND IT TO LOCATE A BLUE BADGE PARKING SPACE IN ANY OF THE CAR PARKS IN TOWN CENTRE?

This single selection question received 256 responses with 992 respondents not answering this question.

Figure 27 below shows the breakdown of respondents on how easy they find it to locate a blue badge space.

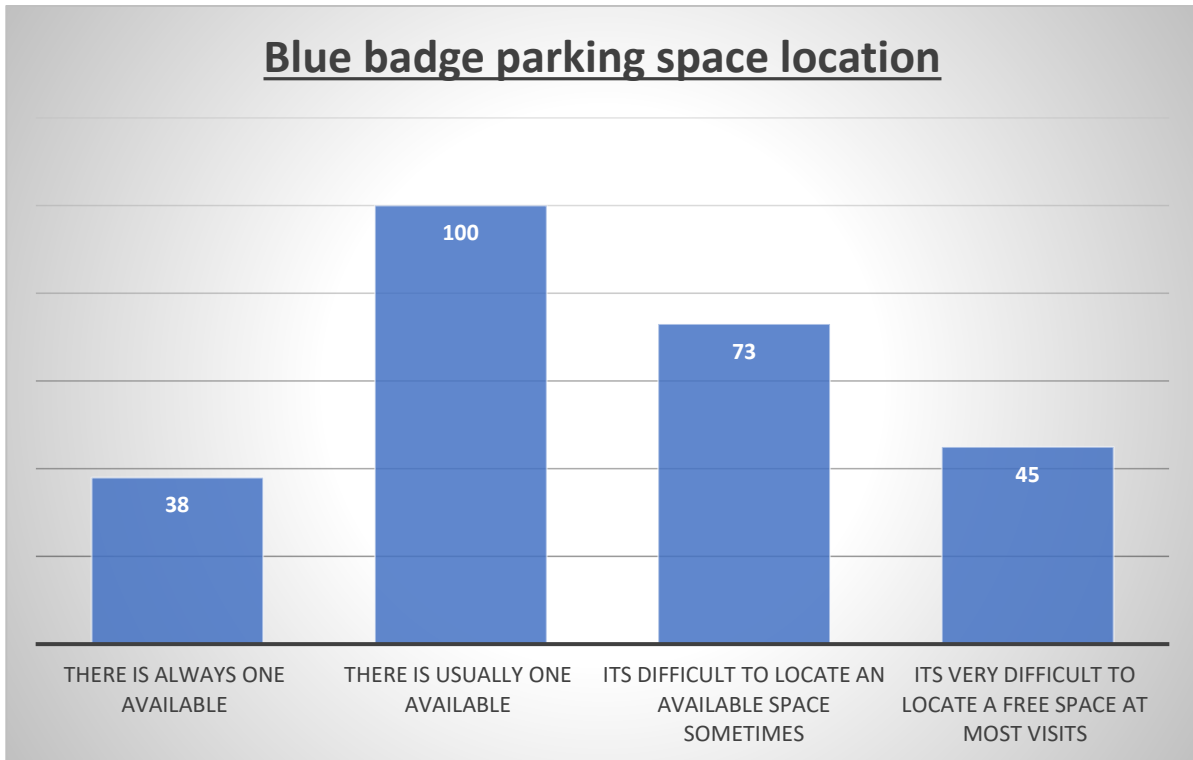


Figure 27 – Respondents views on blue badge parking

The purpose of this question is to identify if the Blue Badge space offering across the districts is sufficient for the demand. This gives valuable data in understanding the broad overview of priority spaces and the problems that may be faced in locating a space. The results show that there is usually a space available which accounted for 100 respondents of the 256 that were submitted.

3.229 QUESTION 29 ASKED DO YOU DRIVE AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE ON A REGULAR BASIS?

This single selection question received 1,191 responses meaning 57 did not answer this question.

Figure 28 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on whether they drive an electric vehicle on a regular basis.

Do you drive an electric vehicle on a regular basis?

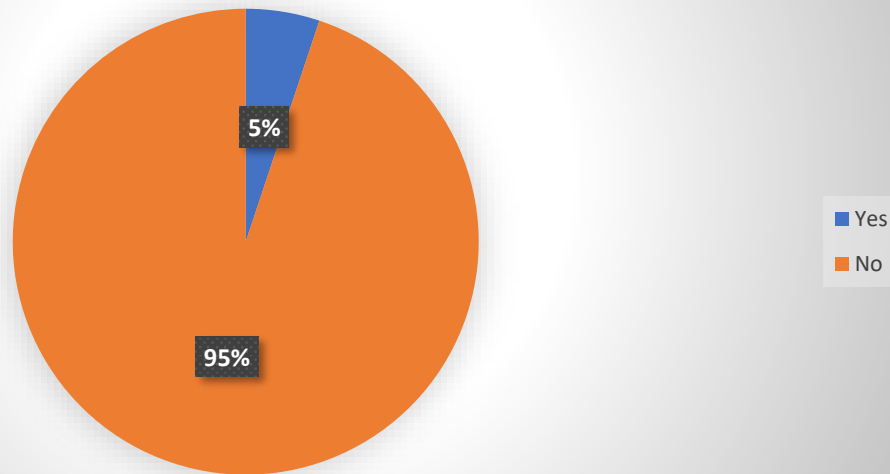


Figure 28 – Respondents who drive an EV

The purpose of this question is to gain an understanding of existing ownership of electric vehicles within Babergh and Mid Suffolk and to understand if there is sufficient provision for charging within car parks. The results found that 95% of the 1,191 respondents do not drive an electric vehicle meaning that 5% (61 respondents) do. Sustainable forms of traffic are becoming more and more popular and the EV Charge point offering is fundamental in supplying sustainable infrastructure.

Whilst the 5% figure appears low, it is worth noting that this is likely to start to increase at a far greater rate over the next five years as some mainstream car manufacturers have confirmed their intention to only make electric vehicles by specific years.

3.230 QUESTION 30 ASKED IF SO, WOULD YOU USE CHARGE POINTS IN TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS?

This single selection question received 213 responses meaning 1,035 respondents skipped this question.

Figure 29 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on if they would use charge points in the town centre.

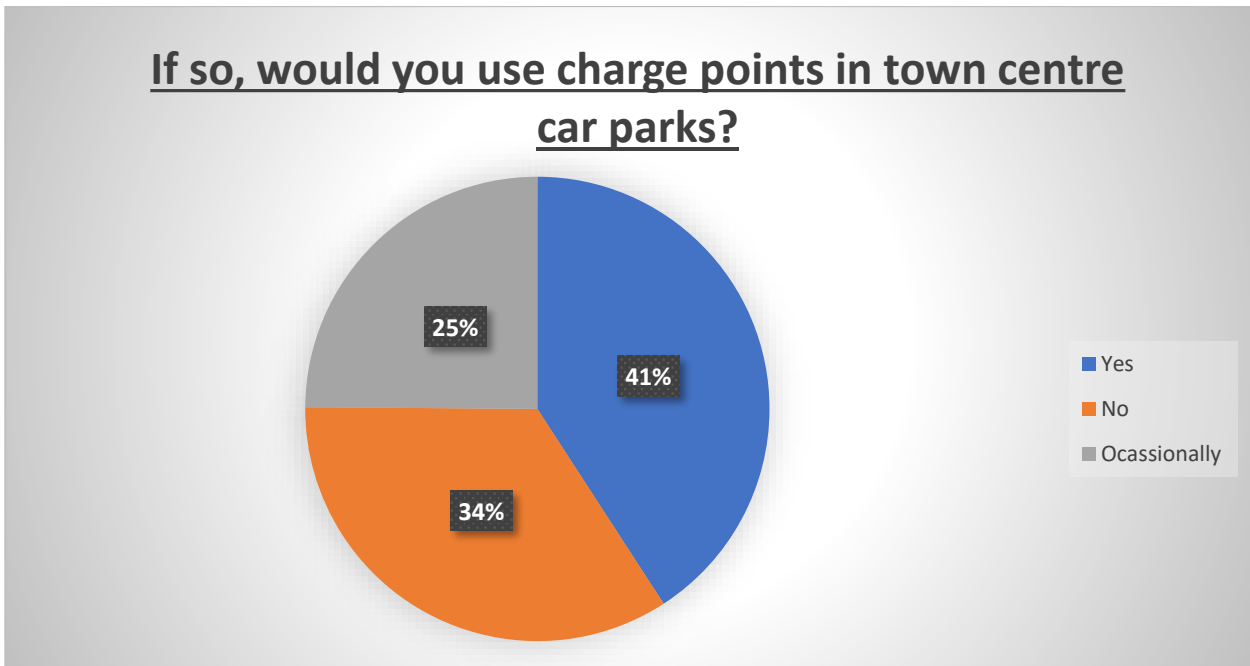


Figure 29 – Breakdown of respondents that would use EV charge points

This question was asked to gain a further understanding of the results from question 29. There was only 213 responses of the overall 1,248 responses, which is a smaller sample size than desired. The results found that 41% of the respondents would use charge points in the town centre, 25% of respondents would use the town EV facilities occasionally and the remaining 34% of respondents would not use the EV charge points on offer.

These results provide justification for investigating whether there is sufficient opportunity within the districts to charge vehicles in car parks as two thirds of respondents stated they would use the infrastructure either frequently or occasionally. As referred to section 3.230 EV charging infrastructure is likely to increase over coming years, which provides strong support for planning for this growth in the short-term.

3.231 QUESTION 31 ASKED WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE EV POINTS INSTALLED WITHIN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK?

This single selection question received 1,039 responses with 209 respondents not answering this question.

Figure 30 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on if they would like to see more EV charge points installed within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Would you like to see more EV points installed within Babergh and Mid Suffolk

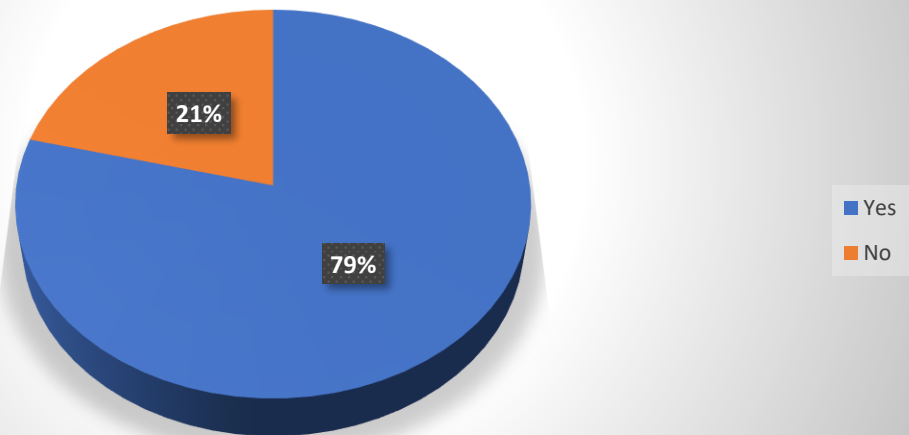


Figure 30 – Breakdown on the need for additional EV charge points

The purpose of this question is to understand the general need from respondents for increased numbers of EV charging points. This information is important in being able to futureproof Babergh and Mid Suffolk with regard to EV Charging provision. The need to supply the correct number of charging points is critical in striking the balance between conceding general use spaces and having the correct amount of EV points.

The results show that 79% of respondents would like to see more EV charge points in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This is a large majority and shows that the need for investment in EV points is important and supports initial thoughts generated by questions 29 and 30.

3.232 QUESTION 32 PROVIDED RESPONDENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPLY ANY SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS RELATED TO PARKING IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK

This was a free text box that allowed respondents the opportunity to provide additional information about off-street and on-street parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

590 respondents provided comments. The comments provided have been reviewed in detail and included within the overall analysis. Due to the number of comments received, these have not been included within this report. However, it has been established that the majority of comments fall within specific themes. The most common themes (with at least 10 comments) are shown below in table 5.

Type of Comment	Number of Comments
Parking Charges specifically in the Babergh district	178
Overall more spaces required in various locations	33
Residential on-street parking issues	28
Payment machines in poor state and needing repair	25
The need for a wide range of payment options	18
Access and exit issues	17
Commuter parking in Sudbury	16
Lack of Parent and child priority spaces	13
Parking bay sizes are too small and need to be widened	12
Disabled Parking spaces poor positioned	11

Table 5 – Comment themes from supplementary free text box for Q32

4.0 LOCAL PREFERENCE

4.1 ANALYSIS

Section 3 focused on the overall responses that were received across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. As part of this section, closer analysis has been undertaken to determine views from each district separately.

To compare the results of the questionnaire, postcodes have been used as a filter to provide the results which can be shown in graph format. The following questions have been specifically selected as they offer the best data analysis opportunities when looking at each district.

4.11 QUESTION 2 – ARE YOU RESPONDING AS?

The data obtained is conducive of allowing for further analysis from a district level. This information allows for further analysis into the positions that are represented by the responses. It is important to gain responses from a wide range of positions to obtain the broadest possible understanding of parking experiences in the specific districts.

Figure 31 below shows the results of the questionnaire for question 2 for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

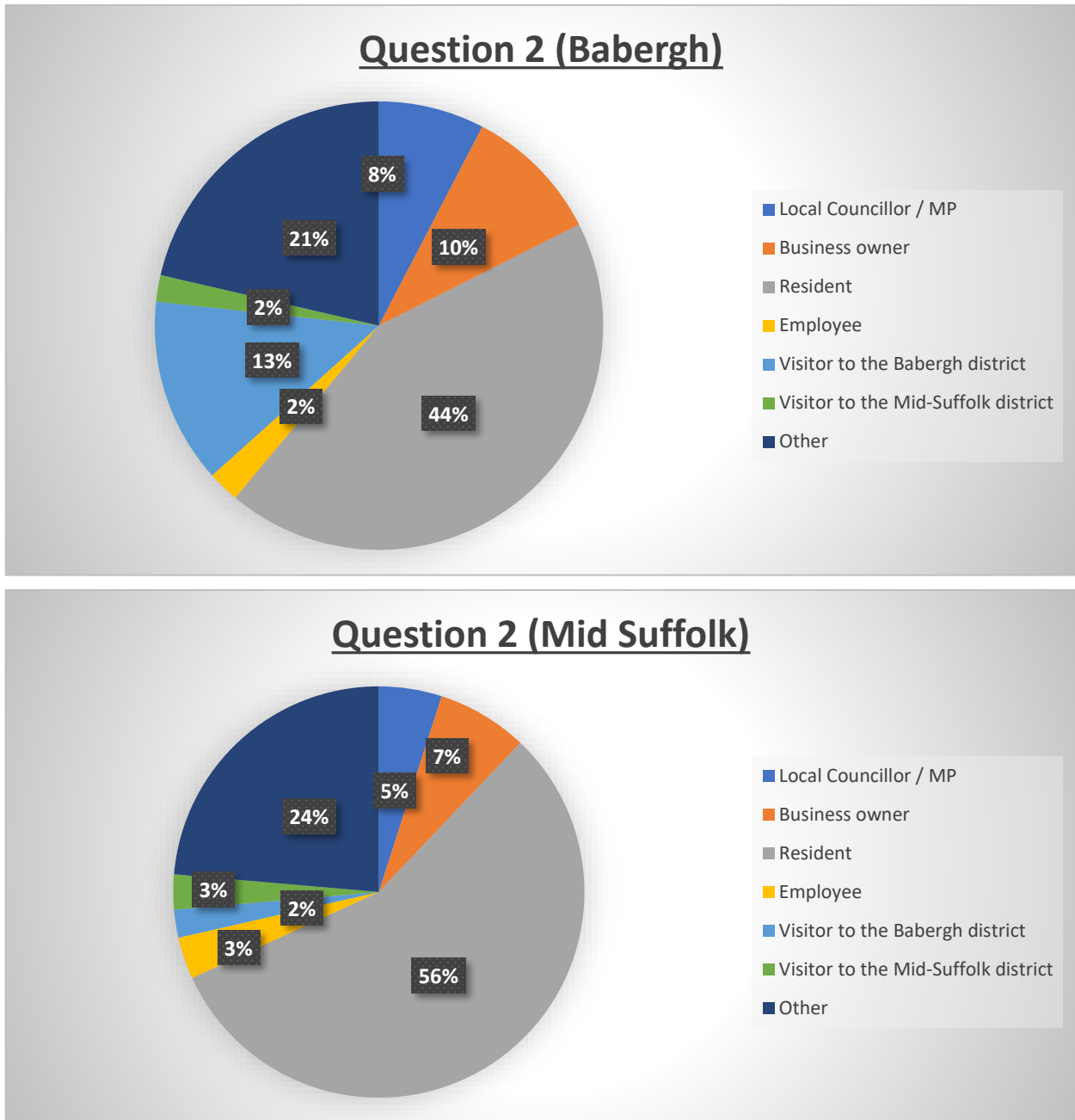


Figure 31 – Comparison of question 2

The results of this breakdown show a fairly even distribution of responses across all positions. In Babergh 44% of responses came from residents and in Mid Suffolk this was 56%. The remaining results are broadly similar in total responses with the most considerable difference being visitors. In Babergh, the responses from visitors to Babergh made up 13% of the overall response whereas in Mid Suffolk district this was 3%.

4.12 QUESTION 6 – GENERALLY HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRAVEL INTO A TOWN CENTRE BY CAR?

This question asks how often the respondent travels into the town centre. It is important to be able to compare the districts on travel habits and other key issues.

Figure 32 below shows two graphs that depict the results for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

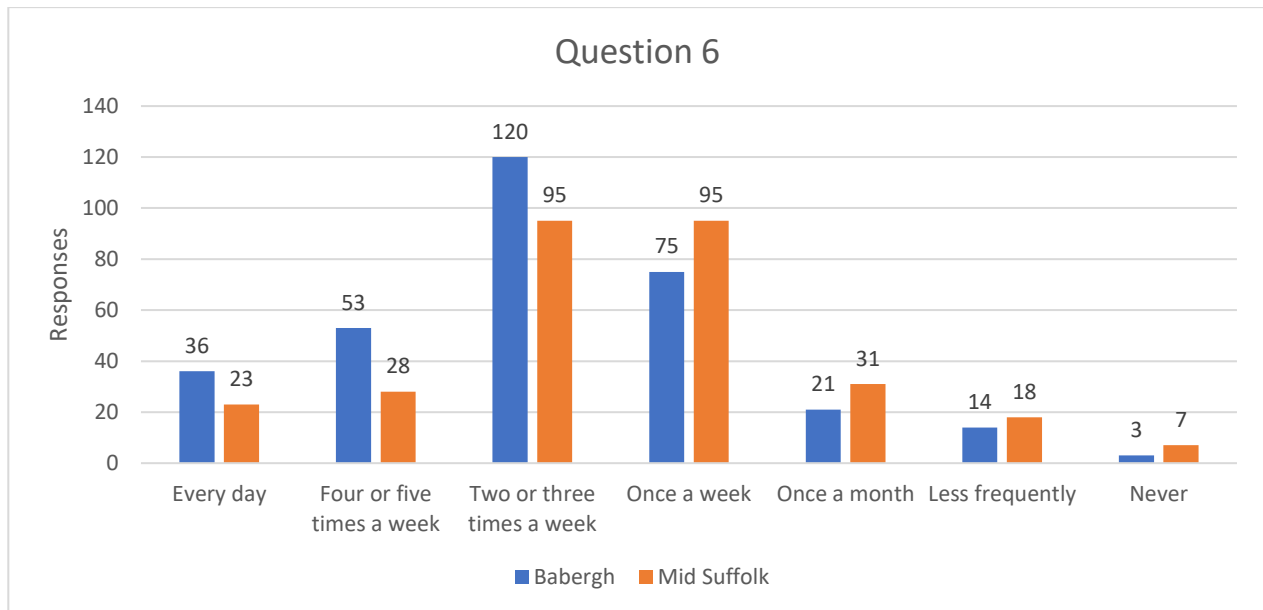


Figure 32 – Comparison of question 2

There are similarities in the two districts in that the two most popular options were two or three times a week and once a week. This is a positive number of trips into the town centres for local and district economies and means that even with the Covid-19 pandemic the town centres are fairly well supported by visits from residents and others. It also highlights that a higher volume of trips is made in Babergh compared to Mid Suffolk.

4.13 QUESTION 7 – WHAT ARE THE MAIN REASONS FOR VISITING THE TOWN CENTRE?

The breakdown for this question allows for analysis at a district level and helps support the districts individual attributes.

Figure 33 below shows the breakdown of responses for question 7 for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

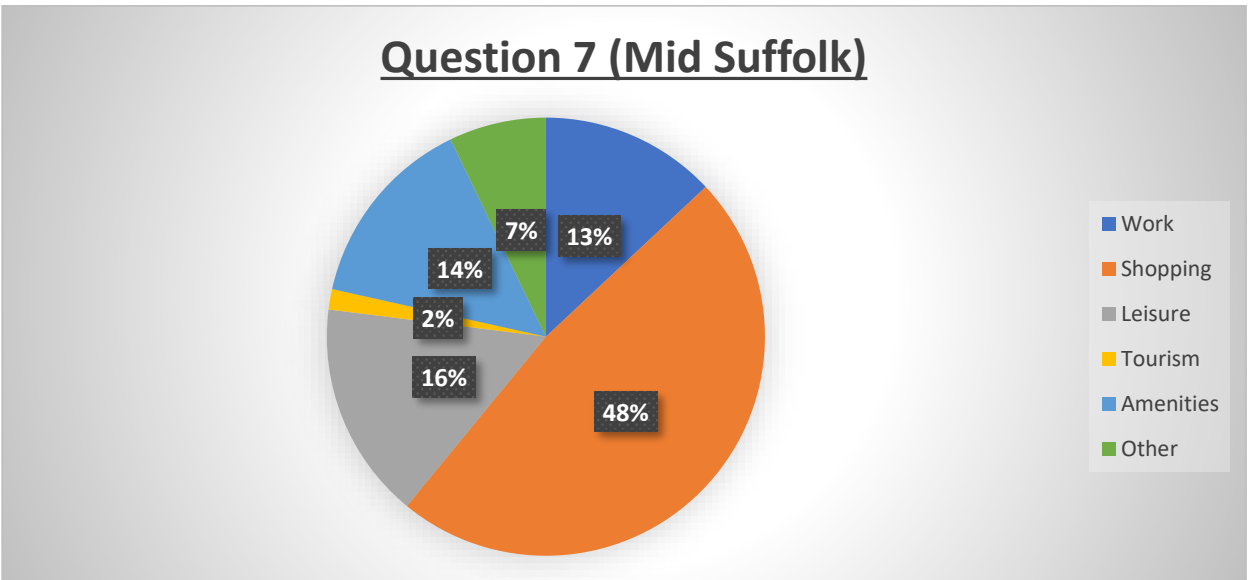
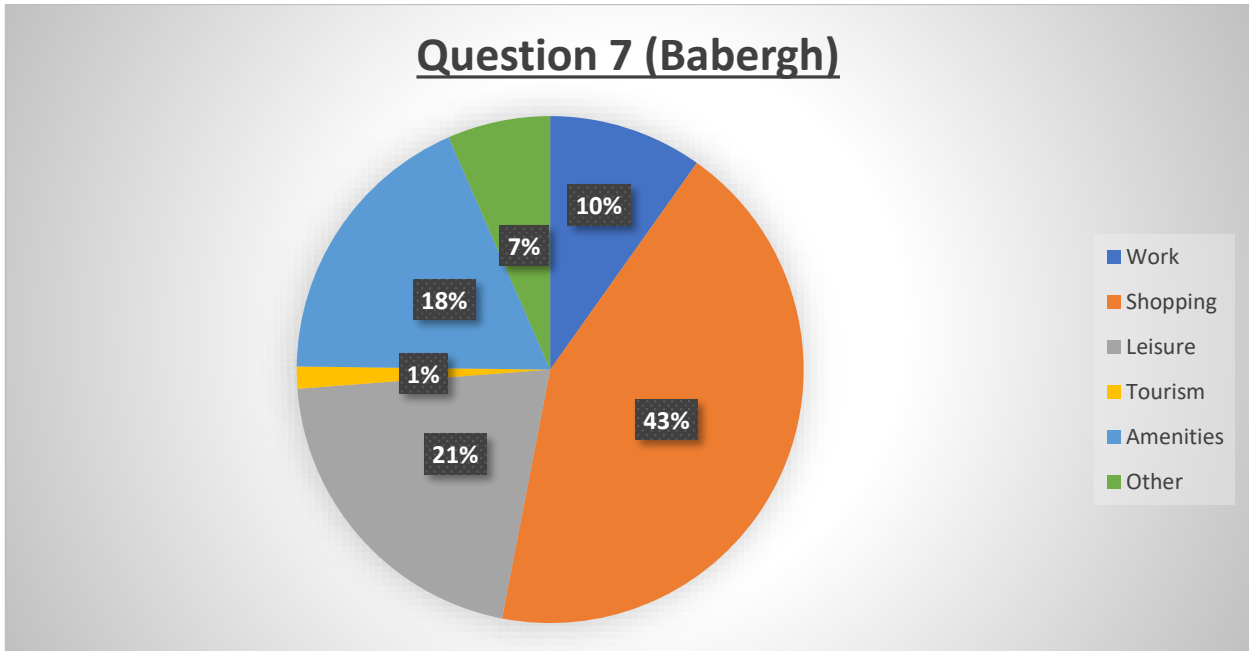


Figure 33 – Comparison of question 7

The results of this district breakdown show that the range of different reasons for travelling into town centres is well supported. The most popular reason to visit town / village centres for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk is shopping with 43% and 48% respectively. The next most popular reason for visiting the town centres is for leisure reasons with 21% for Babergh and 16% for Mid Suffolk. The similarities in total selection percentage continues for the remaining selections.

The data that is obtained from district breakdown of question 7 allows gives information that can determine the need for particular aspects of car parking to be improved.

4.14 QUESTION 8 – WHAT ARE THE REASONS WHY YOU DRIVE INTO A TOWN CENTRE?

This question helps determine why the reasons for driving into the town centre is a popular modal choice. The responses could lead to further analysis that may contribute to changes that will support alternative means of travel via improved facilities or general safety improvements.

Figure 34 below show the breakdown of responses for each district.

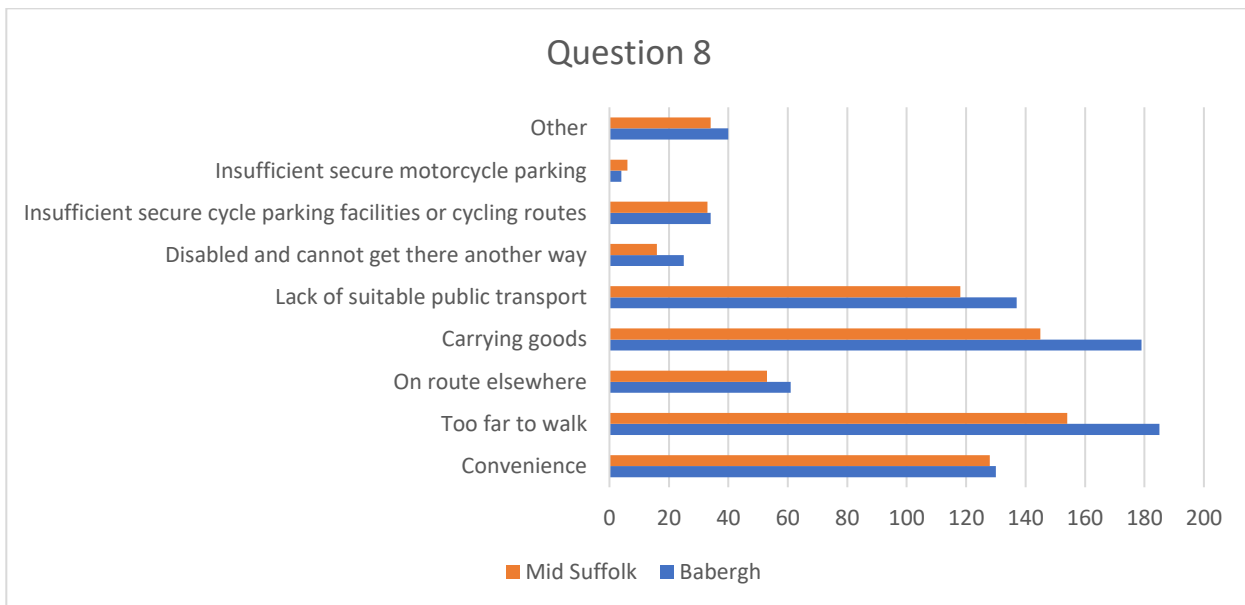


Figure 34 – Comparison of question 8

The results of this district breakdown show that the two most popular reasons for why respondents drive into the town centres is for carrying goods and that it is too far to walk. This is the case for both districts and the next most popular reasons are lack of suitable transport and convenience. The reasons for the use of cars as a means to get into town can be generally attributed to user habit and choice therefore would be hard to introduce or improve infrastructure that would improve this.

4.15 QUESTION 10 – IF YOU PARK ON-STREET, WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE FOR DOING SO?

This question is fundamental in supplying the indication as to the purpose for parking on-street is favourable over the option to park off-street. The data has been filtered into the postcodes that fit into each district and the results have been condensed into a graph below.

Figure 35 below shows the results of question 10 from Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

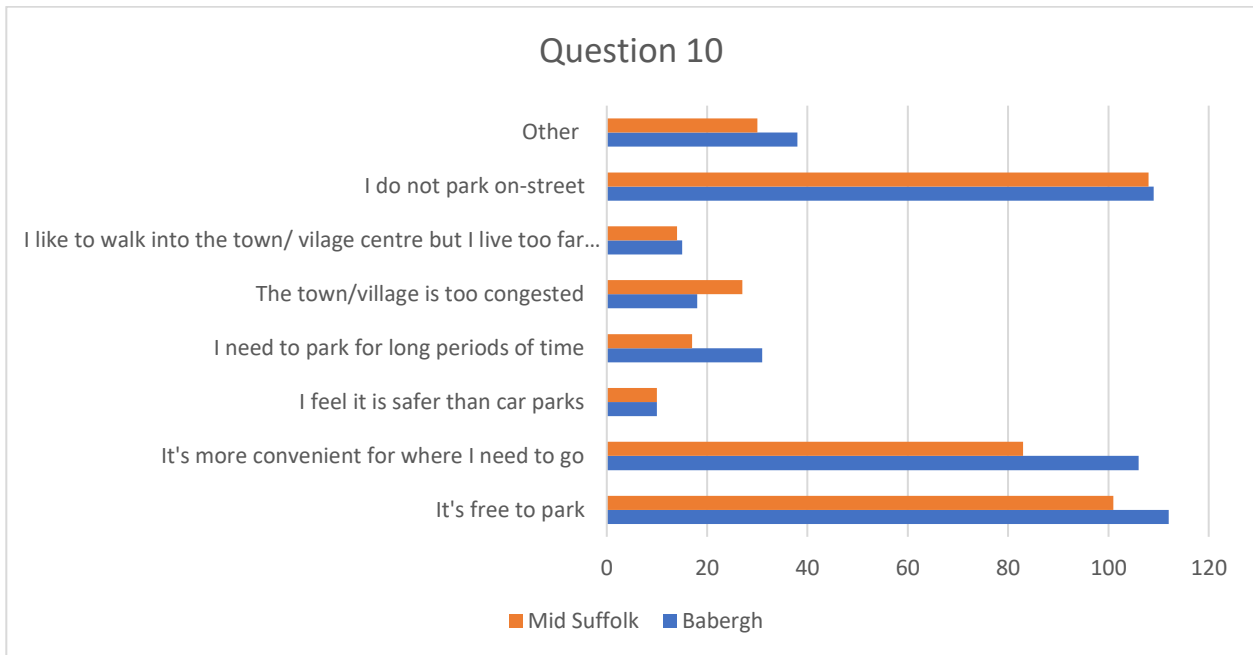


Figure 35 – Comparison of question 10

The results for each district above show that a high proportion of respondents selected “I do not park on-street” with 109 responses for Babergh and 108 for Mid Suffolk. The next most selected option was “it is free to park” which shows cost of parking is a driving factor for where a particular person decides to park. Continuing from this, the next most selected option for both districts was “its more convenient for where I need to go”. This information shows that convenience of onward travel is key in the decision making of the location for parking for many respondents. It is key to acknowledge that the option “the town is too congested” was low for both districts which is encouraging when looking at potential car volume levels in the town centres.

4.16 QUESTION 16 – DO YOU CONSIDER THERE TO BE ENOUGH OVERALL PARKING IN THESE CAR PARKS

This question gives a view on the volume of traffic or perceived infrastructure capabilities based on respondents’ experiences. This information is important in gaining an understanding on the level of use coupled with occupancy data already collected.

Figure 36 below shows two number graphs depicting the results for question 16 broken into district region.

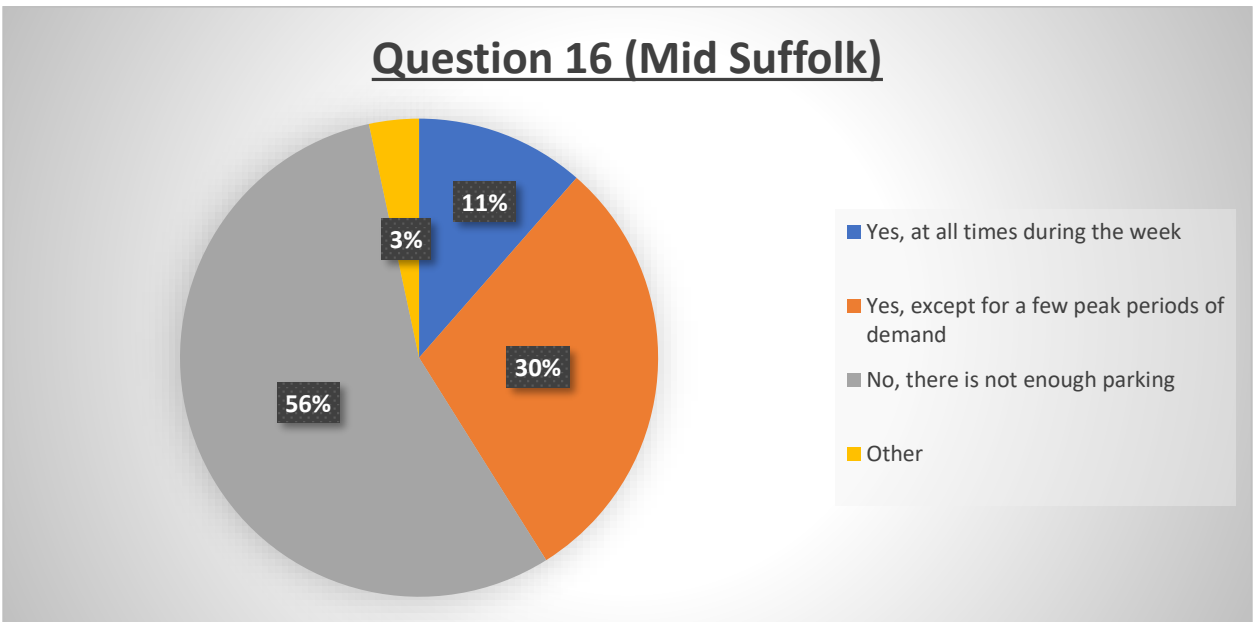
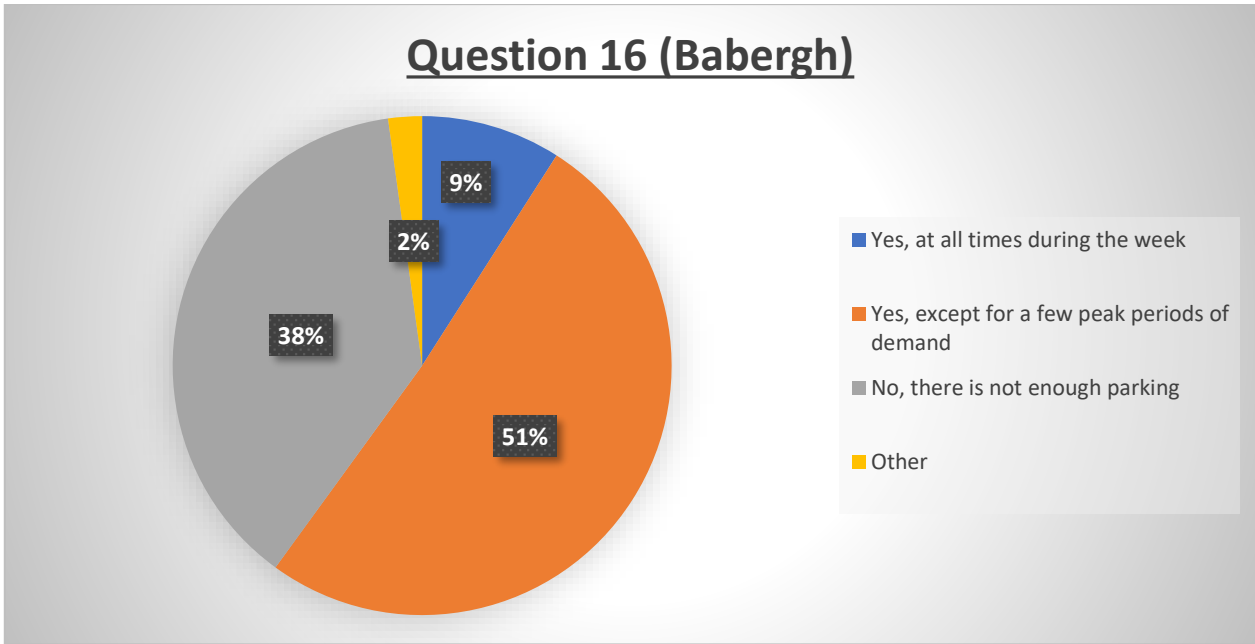


Figure 36 – Comparison of question 16

The results above show that 38% of respondents for Babergh believe that there is not enough parking compared with 56% in Mid Suffolk. In Babergh, 56% of respondents believe that there to be enough parking capacity apart from a few peak periods, in Mid Suffolk the response was 30.

4.17 QUESTION 18 – WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THE PARKING FACILITIES YOU HAVE USED IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK

The purpose of this question is to get an understanding on whether the respondents believe that the parking facilities they have used are of an acceptable standard. This information is important to gain data that can help support the need for changes.

Figure 37 below shows a graph for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk and the breakdown of responses for each selection.

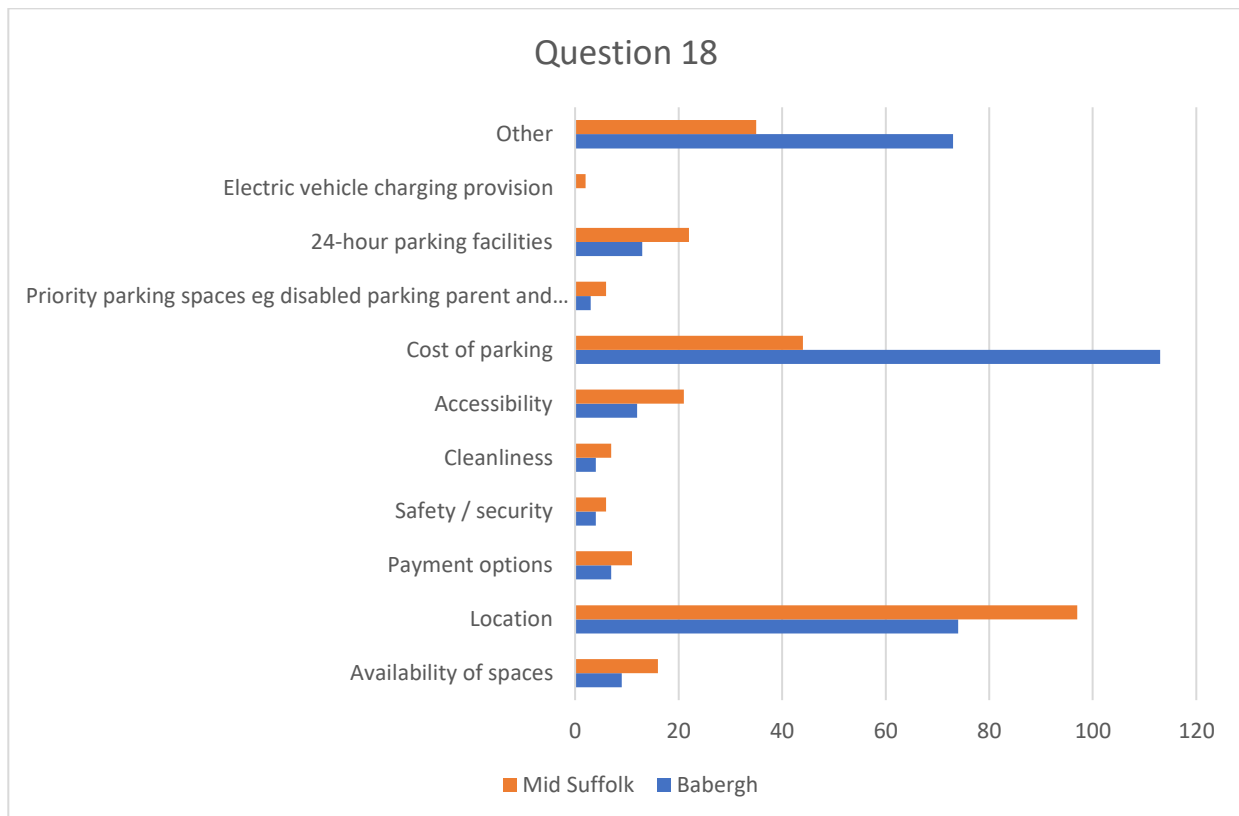


Figure 37 – Comparison of question 18

The results for Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been transposed into the above graph. For both districts, the most liked elements of car parking facilities were the cost of parking and location. This demonstrates that parking in both districts is well located as a popular choice for all respondents.

A point to note, that the remaining selections were quite evenly selected by respondents which can support the notion that car park facilities are of a good standard in that most of the facilities have been selected well by respondents.

4.18 QUESTION 19 – WHAT WOULD MOST LIKE TO SEE IMPROVED WITH BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK CAR PARKS

The purpose of this question is to understand from respondents a breakdown of what they would most like to see improved. These can be accurately broken down into districts and data further analysed.

Figure 38 below shows a graph that depicts the results from question 19 into the two districts.

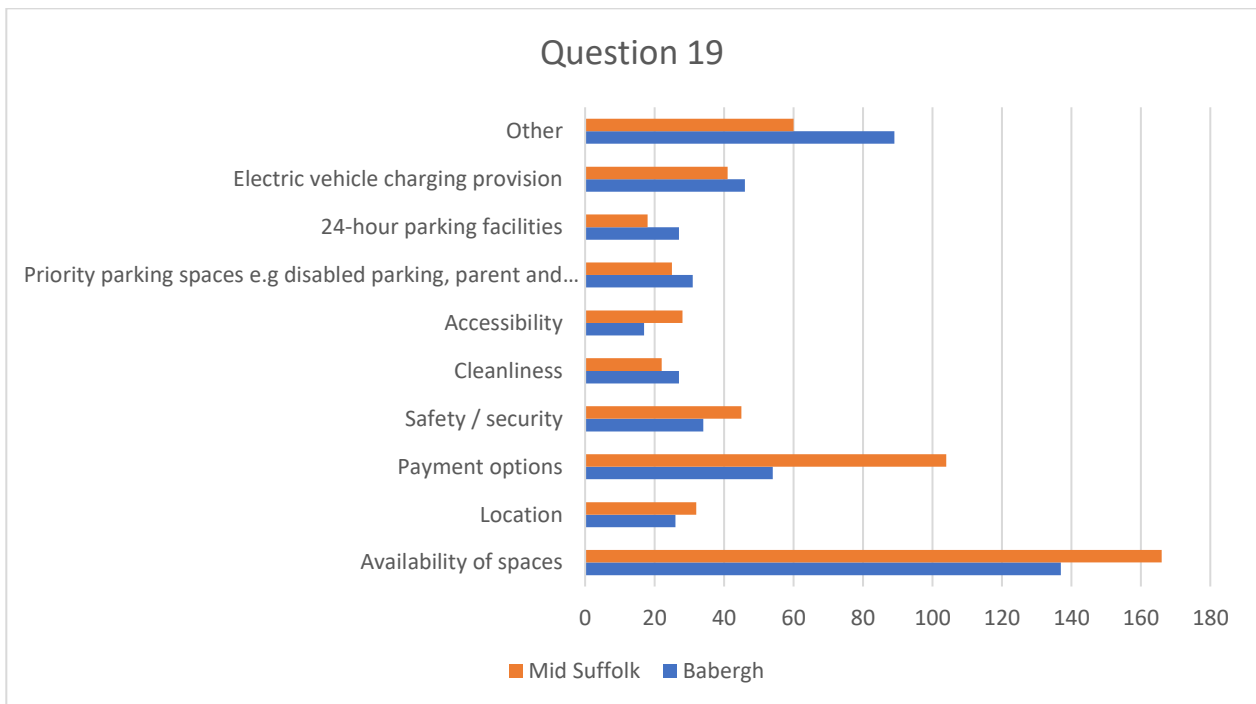


Figure 38 – Comparison of question 19

The results for both districts as shown above demonstrates that the offering respondents would most like to see improved is the availability of spaces. This was selected by 137 respondents in Babergh and 166 tin Mid Suffolk indicating that respondents in both districts feel that there is a need for improvements to be made to the availability of spaces. This is slightly against other questions where the availability of spaces (in Babergh) was not considered to be a major issue. Outside of this question, there is a good spread of respondents wishing for improvement in all areas meaning there is not an obvious issue.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

This consultation exercise has been undertaken to enable the 2020 Consultancy project team gain an understanding of the current situation with regards to off-street and on-street parking within the districts to support the parking strategy. The feedback received from stakeholders will assist the project team to identify potential interventions that can be made to both council's parking services and operations.

A series of potential interventions will now be refined based on the investigation and survey work carried out into parking across the Babergh and Mid Suffolk district, and feedback received as part of this consultation. This will result in a list of potential interventions that will form part of the Councils parking strategy.

There will be a further consultation exercise, which will enable stakeholders to view potential interventions and provide feedback. This will further enable the development of prioritised interventions that can be implemented subject to approval processes by the Councils and Suffolk County Council as the highways authority.

The next phase of consultation will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to meet with the project team face to face, to discuss interventions in greater detail and provide feedback. This is subject to guidance provided by central government on restrictions due to Covid-19.

Table 6 provides a high-level summary of the next steps involved in this project.

Task	Estimated Completion Date
Stage 1 (Existing situation) consultation	Complete
Stage 2 (parking strategy intervention) consultation	February 2022
Reporting of stage 2 consultation	May 2022

Table 6 – Key milestones for parking strategy

6.0 CONCLUSION

This stage 1 public consultation has given stakeholders an opportunity to express their views about off-street and on-street parking across Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts that will feed into the development of the parking strategy currently in the investigation stage. There were six virtual stakeholder workshops held during the consultation process which

enabled stakeholders to raise queries and gain a better understanding of parking and the impact for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk population.

Across the six virtual stakeholder workshops, 40 stakeholders attended. From the feedback received during the stakeholder workshops, it was felt that they were useful and informative for those who attended. Some concerns were raised with regards to the structure of the events and that it did not provide sufficient detail for each location. It was explained that the strategy is being developed at a strategic level meaning individual location questions would not be suitable.

There were 1,248 completed questionnaires submitted during the consultation period, these were completed either online or via paper copies sent out in the post. There was a further 393 questionnaires that were incomplete, which have not been included in the analysis to avoid a potential bias to certain questions. Taking into account, the purpose of the consultation and the stage of the project, combined with the efforts to publicise the public consultation, participation is considered to have been very good. The target engagement for the questionnaire was 1,000 completed responses and this was exceeded by 248 responses.

The results of the questionnaire demonstrate that shopping trips are by a considerable distance the most common reason for respondents to park in towns and villages across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The choice to use a vehicle is broadly based on the goods that need to be collected and being too far to walk. Finding a parking space is generally the most likely issue that respondents will encounter, which is the same for both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. Both districts also have concerns with parking in residential areas.

The location of parking spaces scored well across both districts, which is encouraging as this is vitally important for town and village economies.

APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION LEAFLET

PARKING
Consultation

Have your say!

We want to hear your views,
to help us shape our parking strategy

Take part at
www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/parkingstrategy2021

Closes 15 October 2021

 *Find full details via the link above*
Anyone without internet access, can request a paper copy by calling 02392 432756
Queries can be emailed to parking_strategy@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

APPENDIX B – COPY OF THE WORKSHOP PRESENTATION



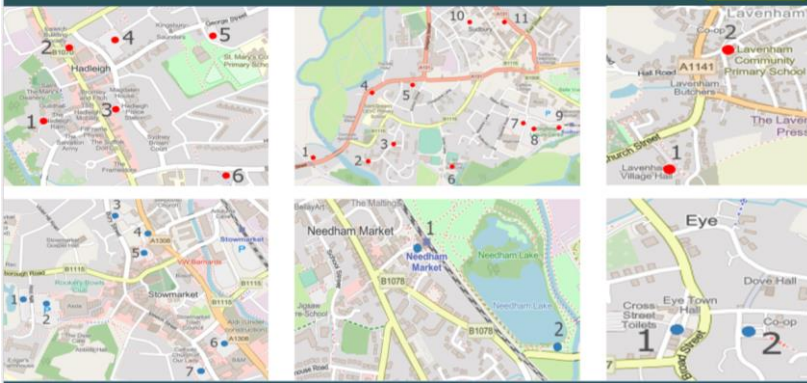
INTRODUCTION 2020

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have commissioned 2020 Consultancy to produce a new car parking strategy to provide a comprehensive route map that guides the long-term approach to off-street parking and on-street parking provision across the two districts.

As part of the development of the car park strategy, it's important to engage with stakeholders on the existing car park provision to understand views and identify where potential improvements can be made to enhance the parking experience for residents, businesses, and visitors.

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

INTRODUCTION 2020



BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

PURPOSE OF PROJECT & OBJECTIVES **2020**

The purpose of the project is to:

- Understand the existing parking provision in town centres (off-street and on-street) across the two districts;
- Evaluate and interpret current car parking behaviours;
- Understand the role each car park plays in the districts offering;
- Ensure Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts are providing the correct level of parking provision in the locations that people want and need it;
- Recognise the potential impact Covid-19 may have had on town centre car parks;
- Identify improvements that will achieve a better parking experience which will safeguard local businesses and tourism;
- Protect future investment in car parking infrastructure through use of technological advances;
- Support the Councils aims to achieving a more sustainable provision such as Electric Vehicle charging in car parks;
- Develop recommendations that are supported with a robust evidence base.

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

PURPOSE OF PROJECT & OBJECTIVES **2020**

The objectives of the project is to:

- Support the relevant overarching strategies and policies;
- Ensure that parking supports economic growth aspirations including regeneration opportunities;
- Provide appropriate parking provision that meets the different needs of residents, shoppers, commuters and businesses and takes into account the variable seasonal demand and population growth over the next 20 years;
- Ensure car parking information is available for users when they need it;
- Support initiatives to promote sustainable modes of travel;
- To ensure that car parks are easy to locate and access, reducing the need for traffic circulation;
- Provide opportunities for disabled people to park in convenient locations close to their end destination;
- Ensure the on-street parking provision is utilised in the most appropriate way to protect key areas across the districts.

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

EXISTING CAR PARKS IN BABERGH **2020**

There are 24 car parks within Babergh that have been reviewed as part of the baseline assessment.



BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

EXISTING CAR PARKS IN MID SUFFOLK 2020

There are 13 car parks within Mid Suffolk that have been reviewed as part of the baseline assessment.










BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

EXISTING CAR PARKS IN BABERGH 2020

Name of Car Park	Area	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (further destinations)	Overall Condition	Offering Electric Facilities	Priority Spaces	24hr Facility	Total
Ballingsdon Street	Sudbury	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	NO	1DIS 0	0	24
Blackfriars (North)	Sudbury	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	NO	NO	0	27
Blackfriars (South)	Sudbury	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	NO	NO	0	27
Girling Street	Sudbury	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	NO	2DIS 2	0	15
Great Eastern Road "Roy's"	Sudbury	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	NO	1DIS 1	0	15
Mill Lane	Sudbury	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	3	3	2	NO	2DIS 1	0	22
North Street	Sudbury	1	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	NO	11DIS 3	0	11
Quay Lane	Sudbury	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	NO	NO	0	25
Station Road (Kingfisher)	Sudbury	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	YES	6DIS 3	0	8
Station Road (Lorry Park)	Sudbury														
Stour Street	Sudbury	2	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	NO	1DIS 0	0	23
The Station (Railway Station)	Sudbury	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	3	2	NO	3DIS 0	0	13
Prentice Street	Lavenham	1	2	1	0	1	1	2	3	3	1	YES*	2DIS 1	0	15
The Cock Horse Inn	Lavenham	1	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	YES 2	2DIS 0	3	23
High Street (Barclays Bank)	Hadleigh	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	NO	3DIS 0	0	13
Magdalen Road (Long)	Hadleigh	2	1	3	3	1	1	2	2	3	2	NO	3DIS 0	0	20
Magdalen Road (Short)	Hadleigh	2	1	3	3	1	1	2	2	3	2	NO	4DIS 1	3	20
Maiden Way	Hadleigh	1	3	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	2	YES 2	1DIS 0	0	19
Railway Walk - North	Hadleigh	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	2	NO	NO	0	19
Stonehouse Road	Hadleigh	2	0	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	NO	2DIS 0	0	18
Toppersfield Hall	Hadleigh	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	2	NO	3DIS 0	0	21
Railway Walk - South	Raydon	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	NO	NO	0	27
Pin Mill	Chelmondston	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	NO	NO	0	23
Lower Holbrook	Holbrook	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	NO	NO	0	27

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

EXISTING CAR PARKS IN MID SUFFOLK 2020

Name of Car Park	Area	Accessibility	Surveillance and CCTV	Boundaries and Perimeters	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (further destinations)	Overall Condition	Offering Electric Facilities	Priority Spaces	24hr Facility	Total
Cross Green	Debenham	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	NO	1DIS 1	0	24
Buckhorn Lane	Eye	1	3	1	3	0	2	3	3	2	2	NO	3DIS 0	0	20
Cross Street	Eye	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	3	1	YES 2	3DIS 1	0	16
Elurstlea Road	Needham Market														
Station Yard	Needham Market	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	NO	1DIS 0	0	22
Needham Lakes Visitors	Needham Market	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	NO	4DIS 1	0	26
Bury Street	Stowmarket	2	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	NO	NO	0	19
Gipping Way Coach & Lorry Park	Stowmarket														
Liffe Way	Stowmarket	2	3	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	NO	NO	0	22
Ipswich Road/ Regal Theatre	Stowmarket	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	YES 2	4DIS 4	0	9
Meadow Centre/ Asda	Stowmarket	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	NO	16DIS 16	0	7
Milton Road/Morrisons	Stowmarket	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	NO	8DIS 6	0	10
Union Street	Stowmarket	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	NO	NO	0	22
Union Street West	Stowmarket	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	NO	4DIS 4	0	8
The Street	Woolpit	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	NO	NO	0	30

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

CAR PARKING QUESTIONNAIRE

2020

A car parking questionnaire has been developed to allow us to understand stakeholder views on parking within Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts and what improvements should be considered.

The questionnaire contains 31 questions. The topics covered include:

- The location(s) of the car park or road you use;
- Finding a space and any issues in doing so;
- Whether there is sufficient parking;
- The parking experience including directional signage, safety, and locations;
- The cost of parking;
- When and how you would like to pay for parking;
- How Babergh & Mid Suffolk compare to neighbouring districts / areas.

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

CAR PARKING QUESTIONNAIRE

2020

To date, there has been 1189 completed questionnaires. The key headlines include:

<p>Approximately 70% of respondents state they have access to off-street parking, either a drive or garage</p>	<p>Parked vehicles near junctions and causing obstructions to traffic flow the most common issues in residential streets</p>	<p>Carrying goods (52%) and too far to walk (51%) most common reasons for using car parks in the town centres</p>
<p>More respondents (52%) haven't experienced parking problems in car parks compared to those who have (48%)</p>	<p>Respondents believe Sudbury provides highest quality car parks (33%) followed by Hadleigh (30%). Needham Market has the worst</p>	<p>29% of respondents who are aware of parking charges in nearby towns believe charges are generally cheaper in Babergh and Mid Suffolk (13% more expensive)</p>

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

2020

- Car parking consultation extended until October 15th 2021;
- Detailed analysis of completed questionnaires will follow, which will be summarised in a feedback report;
- 2020 Consultancy will produce the draft car park strategies, which will include recommendations based on the findings of our investigation studies and results of the consultation process;
- Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council will review the draft strategies, providing feedback to 2020 Consultancy;
- Draft parking strategies will be subject to consultation with stakeholders as part of a second consultation, which is likely to occur in late winter early spring 2022;
- The draft parking strategies will be updated and issued to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council for final review;
- Finalised strategies will be approved by both Councils.

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP



- STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK** 2020
- Potential points for conversation**
- Your views on the existing parking provision across Babergh and Mid Suffolk
 - What are your parking experiences / those of your residents across the districts?
 - Has Covid-19 changed the way you travel within the districts?
 - What are the key on-street parking issues that should be looked into in greater detail?
 - Should car parks provide more integration i.e. active travel / motorhomes etc?
 - What works well at the moment?
 - How does parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk compare to neighbouring districts / areas?
 - What would you like to see improved in the future?
 - Other parking matters that individuals would like to discuss.
- BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK PARKING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

APPENDIX C – COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE



Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Parking Consultation

1.

Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils are producing a new parking strategy which needs to identify parking demand and supply across the districts for the next 5–10 years. It will help ensure suitable levels of car and other vehicle type parking facilities are available to support town centre regeneration (both commercial and residential) and enable access to towns as well as rural villages. To do this usefully the strategy must take into account private as well as public parking provision, public transport, and transport trends.

As part of this work, the councils want to hear from you – their residents, businesses, and visitors about your experiences of parking in the districts.

The questionnaire contains 31 questions with majority being multiple choice and should take no longer than about 10-15 minutes to complete unless you have further comments. The topics covered include:

- Reasons for visiting and mode of transport;
- The location(s) of the car park or road you use;
- The type of vehicle you wish to park (car, motorcycle, bike, caravan, etc.)
- Finding a space and any issues in doing so, such as a disability;
- Whether there is sufficient parking in the town centres;
- The parking experience including directional signage, safety, and locations;
- The cost of parking;
- When and how you would like to pay for parking;
- How the towns in Babergh & Mid Suffolk compare to neighbouring towns.

If the survey is not submitted, it will not be possible to include the feedback within the review that will occur after the consultation.

Survey Privacy Notice

Any personal information shared with Babergh and Mid-Suffolk District Councils whilst completing this survey will be processed, protected and disposed of in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018. In some circumstances however we may need to disclose your personal details to a third party in order to deliver the service to you (for example analyse the survey results), and in limited circumstances we may disclose your information for other lawful purposes. Any information about you that we pass to a third party will be held securely by that party. For more information on how we do this and your rights in regards to your personal information and how to access it, visit our website: [Your Right to Information](#)

1. Please provide your postcode below so we have an idea of where you are responding from. *

2. Are you responding as? (Tick all that apply)

- Local Councillor / MP
- Business owner
- Resident
- Employee
- Visitor to the Babergh district
- Visitor to the Mid-Suffolk district
- Other (please specify): _____

3. Where do you currently park your vehicle(s) at the following times? (Tick all that apply)

	On the road	On my drive	In a garage	In a marked disabled bay	In an allocated parking space	My vehicle is normally at work	I do not have a vehicle
Monday to Friday during the day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monday to Friday after 5pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weekends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. How would you rate the following issues regarding parking in your street?

	It's a big problem	It's quite a big problem	It's not really a problem	It's not a problem at all
Parked vehicles causing an obstruction at junctions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parked vehicles obstructing driveways	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vehicles obstructing bus stops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parked vehicles obstructing traffic flow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enforcement of existing parking restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your ability to park close to your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability of visitors to park close to your home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Do you think the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way you travel into the Babergh and Mid Suffolk regions and how often you visit the town centres?

- Yes - I will travel into the towns more but will use my car less
- Yes - I will travel into the towns less but will use my car more
- Yes - I will travel into the towns more and use my car more
- Yes - I will travel into the towns less and use my car less
- No - I will visit the towns the same using the same transport

2. YOUR VISIT

6. Generally how often do you travel into a town centre by car? (tick one box only)

- Every day
- Four or five times a week
- Two or three times a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Less frequently
- Never

7. What are the main reasons for you visiting a town centre? (tick as many as apply)

- Work
- Shopping
- Leisure
- Tourism
- Amenities
- Other (please specify): _____

8. What are the reasons why you drive into a town centre/village centre? (tick as many as apply)

- Convenience
- Too far to walk
- On route elsewhere
- Carrying goods
- Lack of suitable public transport
- Disabled and cannot get there another way
- Insufficient secure cycle parking facilities or cycling routes
- Insufficient secure motorcycle parking
- Other (please specify): _____

9. When you drive where do you normally park? (tick as many boxes as apply)

- Company or private car park e.g. rail or bus station
- Public or shoppers car park
- Supermarket car park
- On-street (please list road name in comments field)

Comments: _____

10. If you park on-street, what is the main purpose for doing so? (Please tick all that apply)

- It's free to park
- It's more convenient for where I need to go
- I feel it is safer than car parks

- I need to park for long periods of time
- The town/village is too congested
- I like to walk into the town/village centre but I live too far away
- I do not park on-street
- Other (please specify): _____

- Hadleigh
- Holbrook
- Lavenham
- Hadleigh Railway Walk (South)
- Sudbury
- Debenham
- Eye
- Needham Market
- Stowmarket
- Woolpit

11. If you chose public or shoppers car parks which town / village centre do you use? (tick as many boxes as apply)

Please note - full details of all the Councils car parks including location maps can be located on our website - www.babergh.gov.uk/environment/parking/babergh-car-and-lorry-parks or www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/parking/babergh-car-and-lorry-parks

	Use frequently	Use sometimes	Use occasionally
Pin Mill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadleigh	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holbrook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lavenham	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadleigh Railway Walk, South (Ravdon)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sudbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debenham	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eye	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needham Market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stowmarket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woolpit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Please select the issues that are related to your visit (tick all that apply)

- Locating the car park
- Finding a space
- Making your way from the car park to where you need to be
- Concerns about security
- Difficulty using pay machines i.e. purchasing a ticket, understanding the instructions, or locating the payment point
- Other (please specify): _____

15. How often do you experience problems?

- At every visit
- At most visits
- At just a few visits
- Only once

3. FINDING A SPACE

12. Have you experienced any parking problems at any of our car parks? (If not go to Q16)

- Yes
- No

13. If yes, which town/village location does this relate to? (tick as many that apply)

- Pin Mill

16. Do you consider there to be enough overall parking in these car parks? (tick one box only)

- Yes, at all times during the week
- Yes, except for a few peak periods of demand
- No, there is not enough parking
- Other (please specify): _____

4. QUALITY OF PARKING EXPERIENCE

17. How would you rate the overall quality of our off-street car parks in the following locations? Overall quality will include the appearance, safety, accessibility, location, shelter, and payment options of the car park. Please select one answer for each row.

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Below standard	Poor	N/A
Pin Mill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadleigh	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Holbrook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lavenham	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hadleigh Railway	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walk South	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sudbury	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Debenham	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eye	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Needham Market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stowmarket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Woolpit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. What do you like most about the parking facilities you have used in **Babergh** and Mid Suffolk?

- Availability of spaces
- Location
- Payment options
- Safety / security
- Cleanliness
- Accessibility
- Cost of parking
- Priority parking spaces e.g. disabled parking parent and child parking
- 24-hour parking facilities
- Electric vehicle charging provision
- Other (please specify): _____

19. What would you most like to see improved within **Babergh** and Mid Suffolk car parks?

- Availability of spaces
- Location
- Payment options
- Safety / security
- Cleanliness
- Accessibility
- Priority parking spaces e.g. disabled parking, parent and child parking
- 24-hour parking facilities
- Electric vehicle charging provision
- Other (please specify): _____

20. How would you rate the following elements of the off-street car parks? If you have any specific comments regarding this question, please use the box below.

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Below standard	Awful
Cleanliness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarity of parking signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clarity of parking charges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convenience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of disabled spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of parent & child parking spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Security & Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilet facilities within the car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall condition of the car park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

21. How would you rate the quality of signage providing directions to the various different car parking options?

(1 = poor, 5 = excellent)

- Broadly similar
- Generally more expensive
- Generally cheaper
- I don't know

22. Please rank how important each of the following issues are to you (rank 1 = most important, 5 = least. Please note, the options will move as you rank the answers)

- Convenient, well-located parking close to shops and amenities
- Safety and security of car parks
- Useful town centre car parking information contained on Council website such as locations, & pricing
- Information provided prior to the car parks such as signs and spaces available
- Fairly-priced car parking that helps manage demand

Comments:

5. PARKING CHARGES

23. When would you prefer to pay for your parking?

- When you arrive
- When you leave

24. How would you like to pay for your parking (tick all that apply)

- With cash (coins only)
- With cash (coins and notes)
- With a debit/credit card
- Via mobile phone payment app

25. How do you feel about the amount currently charged for long stay parking in car parks that charge?
(Please see FAQs for car park prices)

- Too little
- About right
- Too much

26. How do you think the current car parking charges compare to neighbouring towns and cities?

6. DISABLED PARKING

27. Do you have a disability or limited movement? (If no please ignore next question)

- Yes
- No

28. How easy do you find it to locate a blue badge parking space in any of the car parks in the town centres (note this question relates only to off-street car parks and does not include on-street parking)?

- There is always one available
- There is usually one available
- Its difficult to locate an available space sometimes
- It's very difficult to locate a free space at most visits

7. ELECTRIC VEHICLES

29. Do you drive an electric vehicle on a regular basis? (If no, please move onto question 31)

- Yes
- No

30. If so, would you use charge points in town centre car parks?

- Yes
- No
- Occasionally

31. Would you like to see more EV charge points installed within Babergh and Mid Suffolk town centre car parks?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

8. SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS

32. If you have any other comments regarding car parking in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, please use the box below.

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Basepoint Business Centre
Andersons Road
Southampton
Hampshire

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Tenacity House
11 Osborne Place
Dundee
DD2 1BE

023 9243 2756

info@2020consultancy.co.uk

www.2020consultancy.co.uk

**ACTIVE TRAVEL &
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT**

**TRAFFIC
ENGINEERING**

**PARKING
CONSULTANCY**

**TRANSPORT
PLANNING**

ROAD SAFETY

HIGHWAY DESIGN

PUBLIC REALM

**STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT**

INTERIM STAFF



Phase 2 - Parking Strategy Consultation Feedback Report

Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	2
2.0	CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS	4
2.1	REQUIREMENT FOR CONSULTATION.....	4
2.2	CONSULTATION MATERIAL.....	4
2.3	CONSULTATION APPROACH.....	4
2.4	CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE.....	6
2.5	PUBLIC CONSULTATION ROADSHOWS.....	6
3.0	QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS	9
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	9
3.2	QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS.....	10
3.21	LOCATION.....	10
3.22	QUESTION 3 ASKED ARE YOU RESPONDING AS	11
3.23	QUESTION 4 ASKED WHAT IS YOUR AGE?.....	12
3.24	QUESTION 5 ASKED DO YOU SUPPORT THE AIMS OF A PARKING STRATEGY FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK.....	13
3.25	PARKING CAPACITY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	14
3.26	QUALITY OF CAR PARK RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
3.27	PARKING CHARGES RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
3.28	CAR PARKING DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS.....	20
3.28	CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21
3.29	LAND USE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23
3.210	SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND INTEGRATION RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25
3.211	PARKING IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	27
3.212	SUSTAINABLE HIGHWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS.....	29
3.213	ON-STREET PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS.....	31
3.214	PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFF-STREET PARKING.....	32
3.215	PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ON-STREET PARKING.....	33
4.0	LOCAL PREFERENCE	34
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	34
4.2	DISTRICT ANALYSIS.....	35
4.21	QUESTION 5 ASKED DO YOU SUPPORT THE AIMS OF A PARKING STRATEGY FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK.....	35
4.22	PARKING CAPACITY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	36
4.23	QUALITY OF CAR PARK RECOMMENDATIONS.....	36
4.24	PARKING CHARGES RECOMMENDATIONS.....	37

4.25	CAR PARKING DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS.....	38
4.26	CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS.....	38
4.27	LAND USE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
4.28	SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND INTEGRATION RECOMMENDATIONS ...	40
4.29	PARKING IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	40
4.210	SUSTAINABLE HIGHWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS	41
4.211	ON-STREET PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS	41
4.3	TOWN / VILLAGE ANALYSIS	42
4.31	SUDBURY ANALYSIS.....	45
4.32	HADLEIGH ANALYSIS	47
4.33	LAVENHAM ANALYSIS.....	49
4.34	STOWMARKET ANALYSIS	51
4.35	EYE ANALYSIS	53
4.36	NEEDHAM MARKET ANALYSIS.....	55
4.4	SUMMARY OF LOCAL ANALYSIS	57
5.0	CONCLUSION	59
	APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION LEAFLET	61
	APPENDIX B – QUESTIONNAIRE.....	63

1.0 INTRODUCTION

2020 Consultancy was commissioned by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to undertake a car park study and prepare parking strategy covering off-street car parks and the provision of on-street parking. The Councils are seeking to develop a parking strategy that align with the Councils vision, which is designed to shape the future growth of the districts, set out opportunities for enhancing the quality of the local environments and the range of different uses it offers, and provide a prospectus for investment in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The District Councils consider the parking strategy to be a key means of enhancing what are already strong and vibrant districts, and its preparation underscores the importance as an asset for residents of Babergh and Mid Suffolk, visitors to the district, and those who work in the district.

A phase 1 consultation was undertaken on the parking strategy between the 31st August and 15th October 2021, enabling stakeholders to have their say on a variety of parking matters such as on-street parking, reasons for using the car parks, the availability of parking spaces in car parks, and improvements that can be made to car parks. The phase 1 consultation received 1,248 completed responses and supported the formulation of recommendations that have been included in the districts first parking strategy.

To support this parking strategy, a second phase of consultation was undertaken, which enabled stakeholders to have their say on all the recommendations that have been included in the parking strategy. The recommendations have been broken down into off-street i.e. council owned car parks, and on-street parking recommendations. Both sets of recommendations have been grouped into themes to assist in the management of the strategy and the consultation process. See figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1 off-street (car park) recommendation themes.



Figure 1 – Car park recommendation themes

Figure 2 on-street parking recommendation themes.

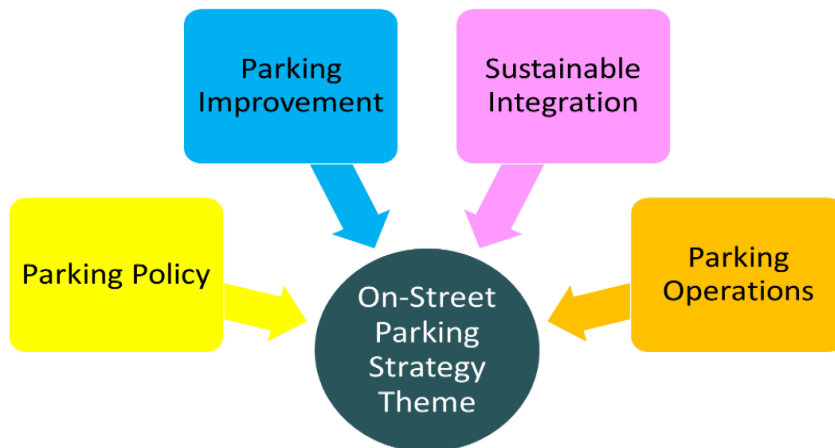


Figure 2 – On-street parking recommendation themes

2.0 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 REQUIREMENT FOR CONSULTATION

The requirement for an effective consultation for the parking strategy is essential to understand the level of support for each of the recommendations. The parking strategy has been created at a strategic level to encompass both districts. However, the recommendations will be applied at a local level. Therefore, understanding support for each recommendation will enable prioritisation of the parking strategy action plan. Recommendations with high support are more likely to be delivered than those subject to lower support. The results of the consultation have been reviewed at both district and local level to better understand any contrasting views that stakeholders have across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

2.2 CONSULTATION MATERIAL

To promote the consultation, both the on-line questionnaire and the roadshow events, materials were produced i.e. posters and roller banners. The council's website was also updated, and various forms of social media used. Appendix A provides a copy of the posters used.

Supporting material such as useful policies / strategies, and examples of recommendations were taken to the roadshow venues to allow attendees the opportunity to view the supporting information that may inform their views on the recommendations.

2.3 CONSULTATION APPROACH

Placing great emphasis on engagement throughout the development of parking strategy, a four-stage consultation process was agreed. This allowed Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to undertake focused engagement with the variety of stakeholders that were included in the project, providing the sufficient detail where required. Without the four-stage consultation process, there was a risk that key information may be missed, or information may lose relevance to stakeholders. The consequence of this could have been a reduced level of engagement.

Figure 3 illustrates the four-stage consultation process used for the parking strategy.

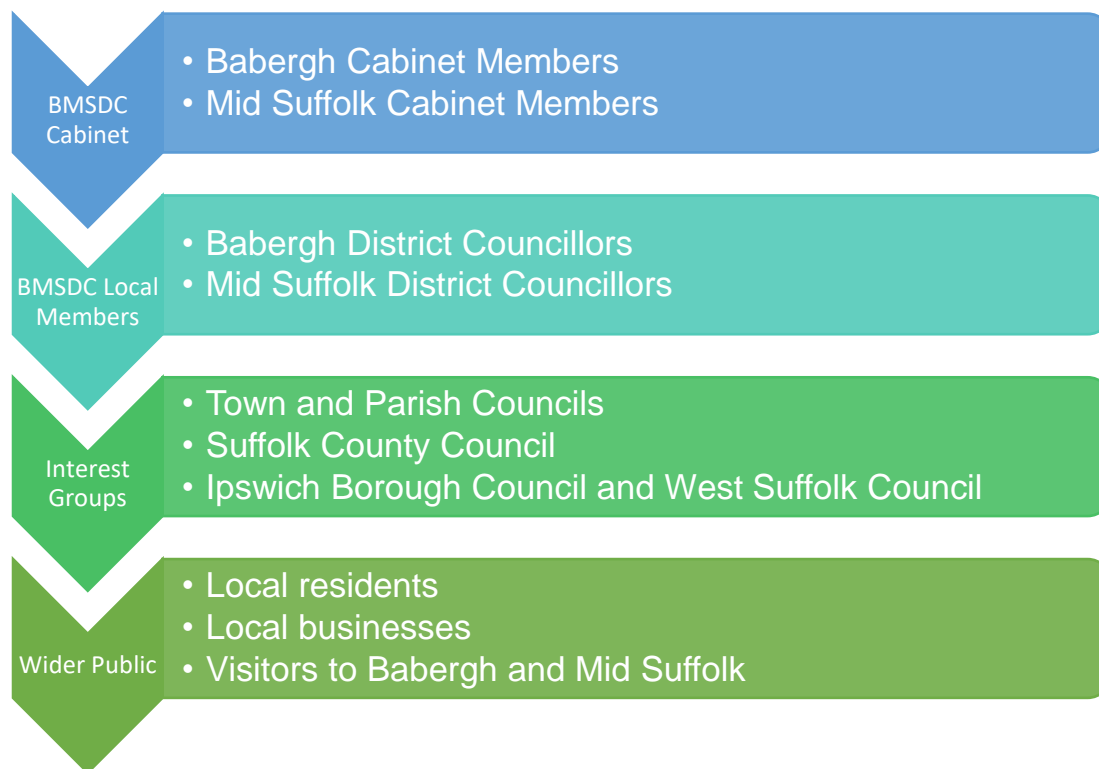


Figure 3 – Four-stage consultation process for parking strategy

Stage 1 involved briefing both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Cabinets which occurred virtually, using Microsoft Teams to deliver a presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. The presentation covered the following topics:

- Background to the parking strategy, including the objectives
- Data collection, and future forecasting
- Summary of the first consultation carried out in 2021
- The strategy recommendations split into themes and whether they are likely to be short-term, medium-term, or long-term delivery aspirations
- Timescales for the remainder of the consultation process and strategy commission.

Stage 2 followed the same process as for stage 1, but the invitation was extended to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councillors.

Stage 3 involved consultation with interest groups including town and parish councils, Suffolk County Council as the local highway authority, and Ipswich Borough Council, and West Suffolk Council as the councils that provide enforcement across the districts

via a Service Level Agreement. The meetings held with town and parish councils were in-person and either part of a scheduled town or parish meeting or a dedicated session to discuss the parking strategy.

Stage 4 involved a wider public consultation across both districts. A consultation questionnaire was prepared that enabled respondents to provide their level of support or opposition for each recommendation. The questionnaire was available on-line, with paper copies available for those stakeholders without internet access. As mentioned previously, the questionnaire was supplemented with a series of roadshow events, which involved the project team travelling to a number of locations across the two districts. This is discussed further in section 2.5 below.

Stages 1-3 were classified as pre-consultation, with stage 4 marking the commencement of the consultation process. Stage 4 began on 7th June 2022, and lasted seven weeks, closing on the 2nd August 2022.

2.4 CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The consultation questionnaire sought stakeholder views on each of the parking strategy recommendations for car parks, and on-street. It provided the opportunity for respondents to say whether they supported the aims of the parking strategy. The questionnaire, a copy of which is located in Appendix A of this report, had pre-determined answers to make completion as straight forward as possible. Each question also had a comments box which enabled respondents to include anything else they felt was relative to the parking strategy. All comments provided as part of this consultation phase have been incorporated into one document entitled [Phase 2 – comments from the consultation](#) which is available on the councils' website.

2.5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ROADSHOWS

To support the consultation process, the project team that included council officers, staff from 2020 Consultancy, and the Portfolio holders, travelled across Babergh and Mid Suffolk to numerous locations to enable local residents and businesses the opportunity to discuss parking within their towns and villages, and understand how the parking strategy can support the locations once approved. The consultation

roadshows commenced on the 21st June, and ran until the 28th June (with no events on Friday 24th and Sunday 26th).

Table 1 and 2 lists details of those locations visited across the districts.

Location	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Sudbury	Tuesday	21 June	10:00 - 13:00	Sudbury Town Hall
Long Melford	Tuesday	21 June	14:00 - 16:00	The Old School, Long Melford (Chamberlain Room)
Lavenham	Tuesday	21 June	17:00 - 19:00	Lavenham Village Hall, Church St, Lavenham, Sudbury, CO10 9QT (St Peter & St Paul room)
Lavenham	Wednesday	22 June	10:00 - 12:30	Lavenham Village Hall, Church St, Lavenham, Sudbury, CO10 9QT (St Peter & St Paul room)
Hadleigh	Saturday	25 June	13:00 - 15:00	Hadleigh Pool & Leisure, Stonehouse Road, Hadleigh, IP7 5BH (social room)
Sudbury	Saturday	25 June	16:00 - 17:30	Kingfisher leisure Centre, Station Road, Sudbury, CO10 2SU
East Bergholt	Monday	27 June	10:00 - 12:00	The Lambe School Charitable Trust, Gaston Street, East Bergholt, CO7 6SD
Holbrook	Monday	27 June	19:00 - 21:00	Holbrook Village Hall, The Street, Holbrook, IP9 2PZ
Hadleigh	Tuesday	28 June	17:30 - 20:00	Hadleigh Leisure Centre

Table 1 – Roadshow details for Babergh

Location	Day	Date	Time	Venue
Woolpit	Wednesday	22 June	14:00 - 16:00	Woolpit Village Hall, Mill Lane, Woolpit, IP30 9QX
Thurston	Wednesday	22 June	17:00 - 19:00	New Green Avenue, Thurston, Bury Saint Edmunds IP31 3TG
Needham Market	Thursday	23 June	10:00 - 12:30	Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, IP6 8BB (The Green Room)
Debenham	Thursday	23 June	14:00 - 16:00	Debenham Community Centre, Gracechurch Street, Debenham, Suffolk, IP14 6BL
Eye	Thursday	23 June	17:00 - 19:30	Eye Town Hall, Broad Street, Eye, IP23 7AF
Stowmarket	Saturday	25 June	10:00 - 12:00	The Mix, 127 Ipswich St, Stowmarket IP14 1BB
Great Blakenham	Monday	27 June	13:30 - 15:30	Village Hall, Mill Lane, Great Blakenham, IP6 0NJ.
Needham Market	Monday	27 June	16:00 - 18:00	Community Centre, School Street, Needham Market, IP6 8BB (The Green Room)
Eye	Tuesday	28 June	10:00 - 12:00	Eye Community Centre, Magdalen Street, Eye, IP23 7AJ
Stowmarket	Tuesday	28 June	13:30 - 16:00	The Mix, 127 Ipswich St, Stowmarket IP14 1BB

Table 2 – Roadshow details for Mid Suffolk

The locations visited were chosen based on the location in relation to the districts, and the population size. The aim was to minimise the amount of travelling time for any interested stakeholder regardless of their location. The target was to prevent travelling for more than 15 minutes in each direction to reach a venue. Whilst this wasn't possible for all stakeholders due to the geography of the districts, there were no settlements that fell outside this theory.

Figure 4 illustrates the location venues selected for the roadshows, and a three-mile radius that represents a 10-15 minute travel time.

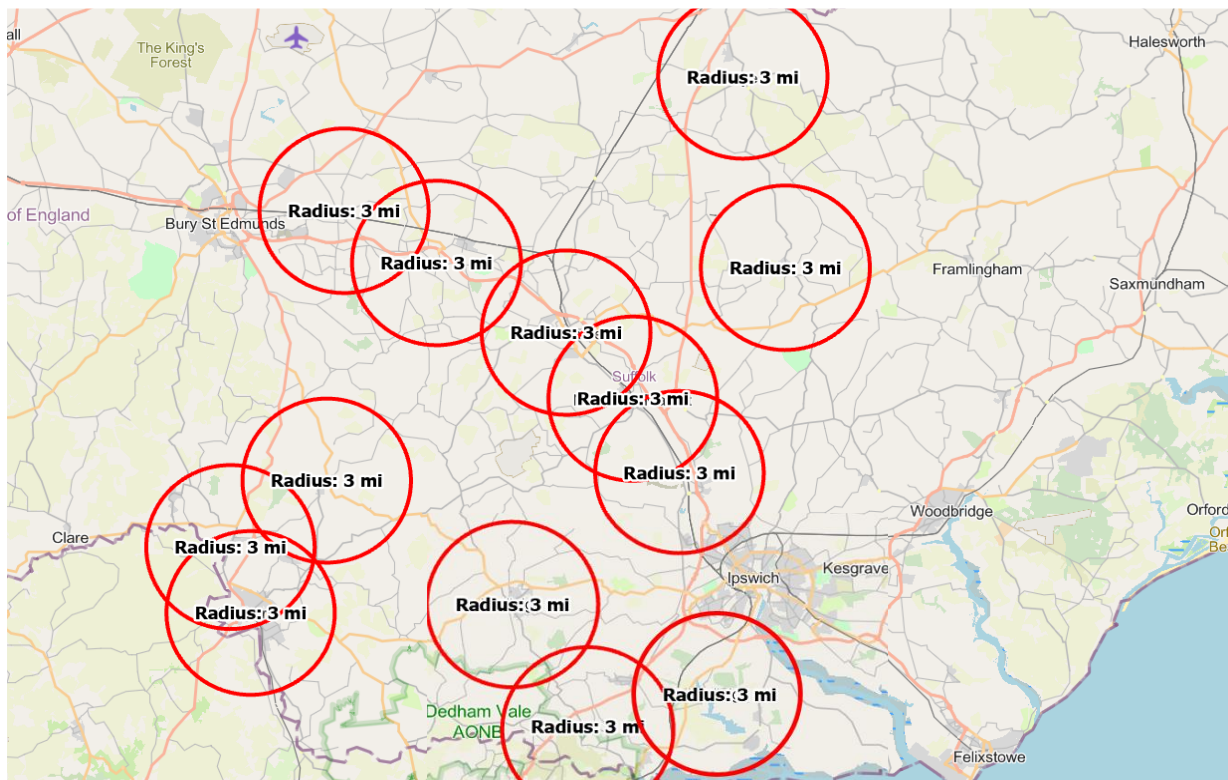


Figure 4 – Roadshow venue locations and 10-15 minute travel time distances

All towns were included as locations due to population size, meaning a higher level of interest. It was agreed that the town locations would be subject to two visits during the roadshows. This would enable a daytime visit, and either an early evening or Saturday visit, providing greater flexibility for stakeholders to attend.

175 stakeholders attended the roadshow event (111 in Babergh and 64 in Mid Suffolk) across the 13 venues.

Table 3 summarises the feedback received from the roadshow events.

Theme	Feedback Received
Parking capacity	Lack of parking (on-street and off-street)
	Car park used for commuters, reducing space for visitors / tourists
	Additional car parks needed
Road safety	Concerns with road safety due to inconsiderate parking on-street
Insufficient parking controls	Excessive long-stay parking reducing space for visitors and tourists
	A need for resident permit parking bays
	Additional parking controls needed
	A detailed review is required for on-street parking to maximise capacity
	Inappropriate limited waiting bays impacting local economies
Parking signage	Poor quality signage for car parks
Verge / pavement parking	Concerns around verge and pavement parking
Parking charges	Need to avoid parking charges as this will have negative impact on economy
	Core on-street parking charges would help boost local economy
Enforcement	Lack of enforcement in rural areas
	Issues with parking during school drop-off and pick-up times for residents
Sustainability	Improvements must be made to public transport to reduce demand on cars
	Car club schemes would work well
Strategic	New development sites need to provide more car parking spaces
	Strategy should incorporate all car parks not just Council owned

Table 3 – Summary of feedback received during roadshows

3.0 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the consultation exercise, a questionnaire was included, enabling respondents to outline the level of support or opposition for each of the parking strategy recommendations, as well as supporting or opposing the strategy aims. Ample opportunity was also given to provide comments around the questions,

including a general free text opportunity at the end of the survey. This section reviews the 2,004 completed questionnaires that were received during the consultation period.

A copy of the questionnaire is located in Appendix B of this report. The overall responses are considered here. Section 4.2 includes a breakdown of responses received from stakeholders within Babergh and Mid Suffolk separately to compare views on parking across the two districts, and section 4.3 provides a breakdown of responses received from towns and villages across both districts where there are council owned car parks provide detail at a local level for comparison.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

3.21 LOCATION

The questionnaire began with a request for the respondent to provide their post code and street name. This information allowed the responses to be identified with a proximity to an area within the district. Figure 5 provides a heatmap of completed responses based on the location of the stakeholder. This demonstrates that responses were received across most areas of both districts, which is encouraging to confirm that the consultation promotion was district wide. As expected, it shows a core concentration of responses gathered around the larger towns such as Sudbury, Stowmarket, and Hadleigh, although there were good numbers received from smaller towns and most villages. There were no settlements across both districts that had a low response rate. This confirms the importance of parking to these stakeholders.

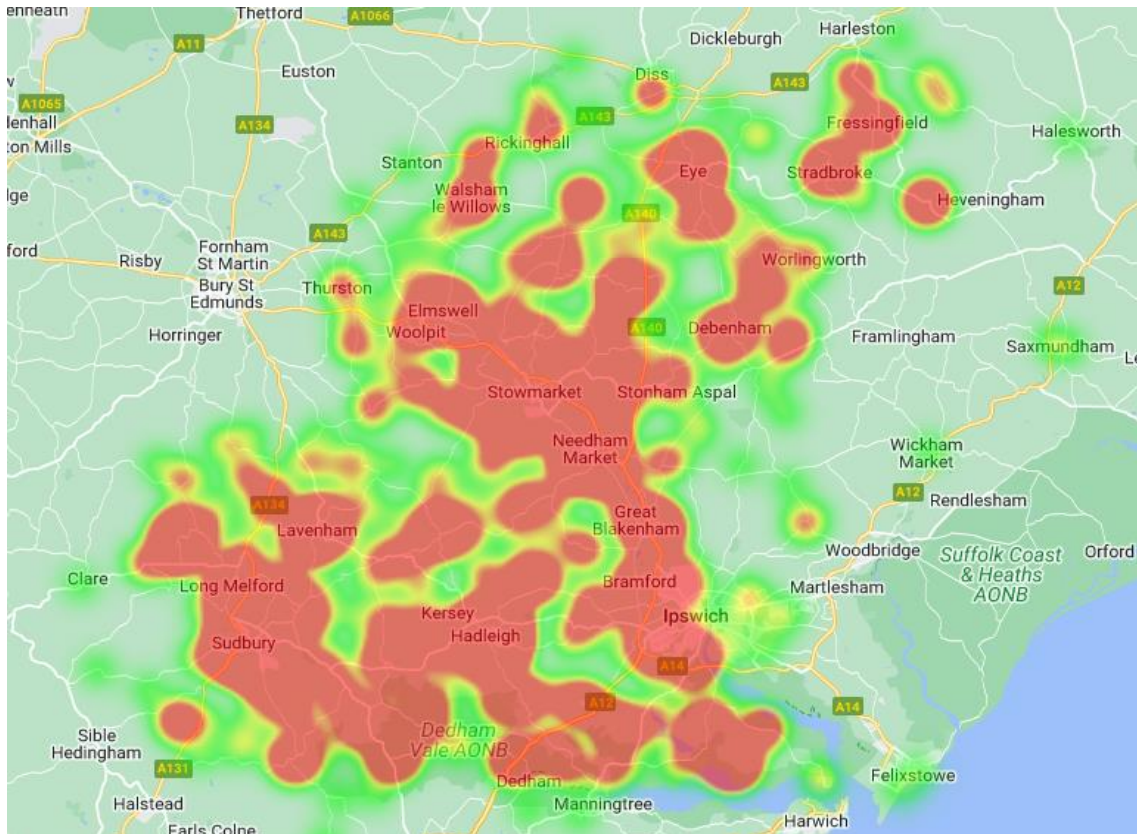


Figure 5 – Heatmap of consultation responses

The questionnaire contained a further 18 open and closed format questions, the responses and data has been assessed and is summarised on the following pages. As previously stated, there was also an opportunity to submit further views by means of a comments box section located at the end of the questionnaire. The following is a selection of questions from the questionnaire and an indication of the key responses that were provided.

3.22 QUESTION 3 ASKED ARE YOU RESPONDING AS ...

This single selection question received 1,997 answers meaning that 7 respondents did not answer this question.

Figure 6 below shows the breakdown of responses based on the criteria stated.

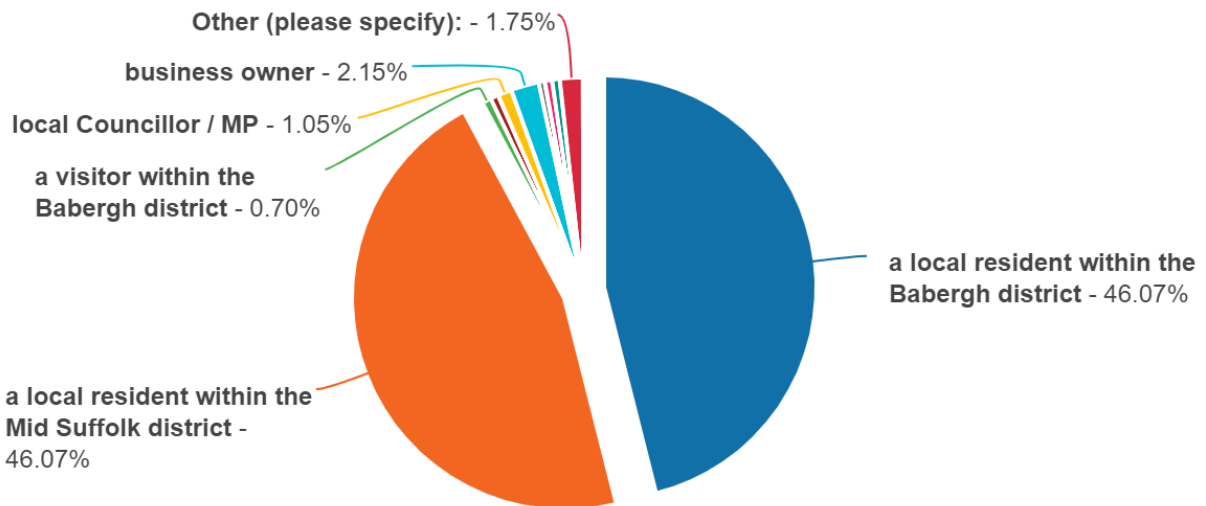


Figure 6 – Type of respondent

The purpose of this question was to understand who was completing the questionnaire. As shown above the two most selected options were local residents within Babergh (46.07%) and Mid Suffolk (46.07%). The remaining options make up the final 7.86% with Business owners making up almost a third at 2.15%.

3.23 QUESTION 4 ASKED WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

This single selection question received 1,991 answers meaning 13 respondents chose not to answer this question.

Figure 7 below shows the breakdown of responses based on the criteria provided.

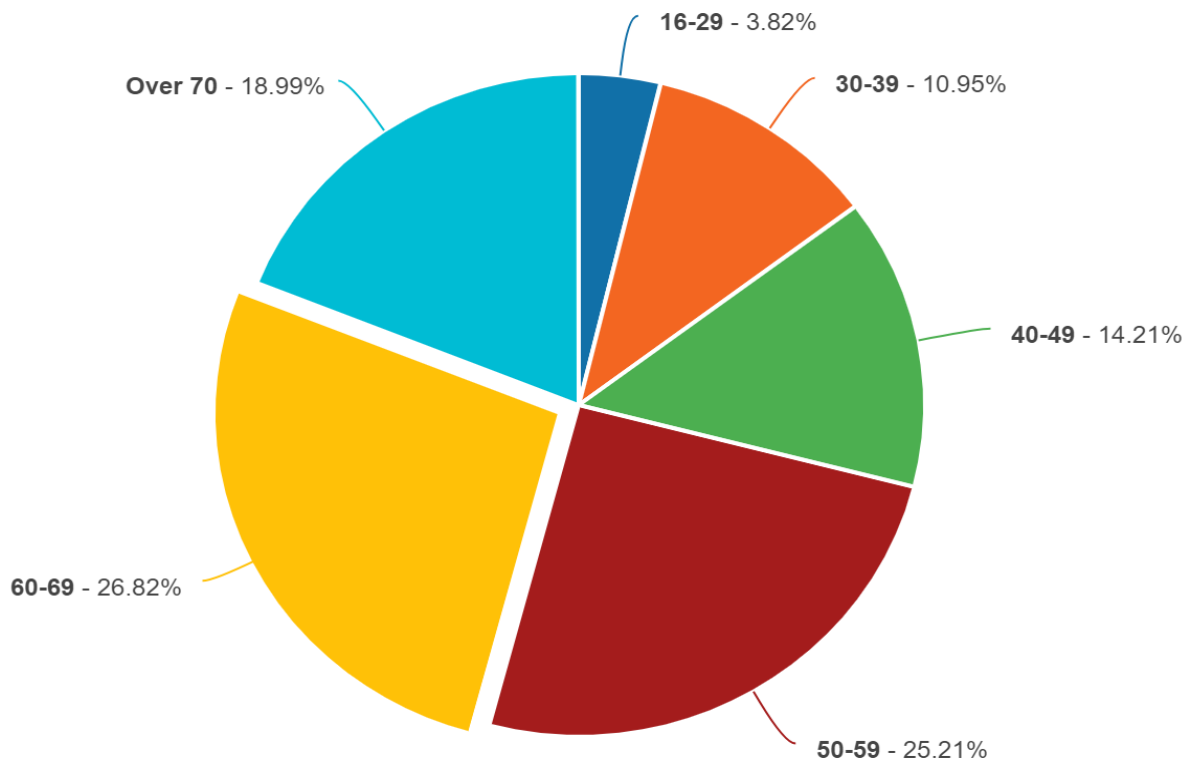


Figure 7 – Age bracket of respondent

The age range selected by the greatest number of respondents was 60-69 at 27% of the overall response. From the 1,991 overall responses, 1,441 responses came from people 50 years and above, which shows that the subject of parking resonates greatly within this age demographic.

During the consultation process, some stakeholders raised concerns with the priority given to digital forms of consultation, with concerns around the older demographic that may not have the ability or understanding to access and complete the survey. However, nearly half the responses (46%) were submitted by stakeholders over the age of 60, (and 19% were submitted by stakeholders over the age 70), which indicates this was not an issue on this occasion.

3.24 QUESTION 5 ASKED DO YOU SUPPORT THE AIMS OF A PARKING STRATEGY FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK

This question enabled respondents to either choose yes or no with a supplementary question for those selecting no, asking for any reasons why they chose no. The question received 1,947 responses with 57 respondents not answering the question.

Figure 8 below illustrates the level of support and opposition to the parking strategy aims.

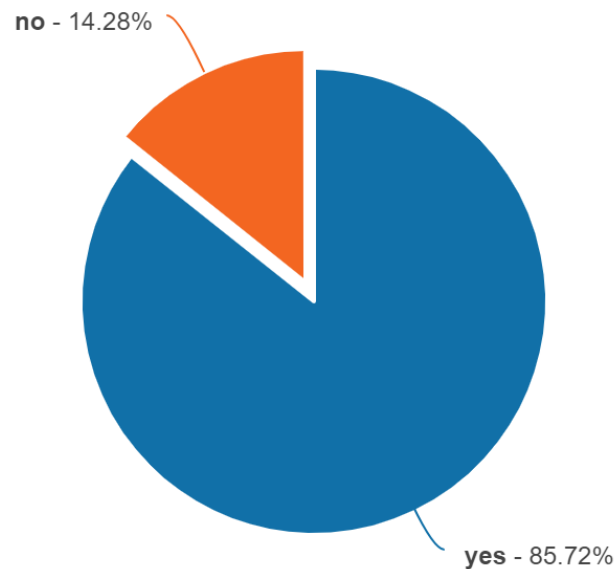


Figure 8 – Support and opposition to the parking strategy aims

86% of the respondents who submitted a response are in support of the parking strategy leaving 14% not supportive of the strategy. This is considered an excellent level of support for the project and provides justification for the high level of stakeholder engagement undertaken, which has informed stakeholders of what the council is trying to achieve in the future.

For respondents that chose no, 291 comments were received. A full breakdown is located on the councils' website. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Objection to parking charges
- Lack of parking opportunities
- Concern for parking with new development sites not providing enough parking.

3.25 PARKING CAPACITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 6 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the parking capacity theme. This theme had three recommendations as shown below:

- There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks

- Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible
- Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking

1,637 respondents provided an answer meaning 367 respondents skipped the question. Table 4 provides a breakdown for each of the recommendations, based on the level of “strongly support”, “support”, “neither support or oppose”, “oppose”, and “strongly oppose”. The table also highlights the engagement percentage for the question, the overall support for the recommendation (calculated by combining strongly support, and support), and the overall opposition for the recommendation (calculated by combining the oppose, and strongly oppose).

Parking Capacity	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	601	462	397	143	24	1,627	81	65	10
Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible	531	526	311	183	71	1,622	81	65	16
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	1,319	263	30	10	5	1,627	81	97	1

Table 4 – Breakdown of parking capacity theme

Figure 9 provides a comparison between each of recommendations. This demonstrates that the recommendation “potential development sites should include appropriate car parking” has considerably more support than the other recommendations. In fact, this recommendation has the highest amount of support when comparing all recommendations from the parking study, with 97% of respondents supporting this. Both other recommendations within this theme have similar amounts of support, although Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible has slightly higher opposition (16% compared to 10%).

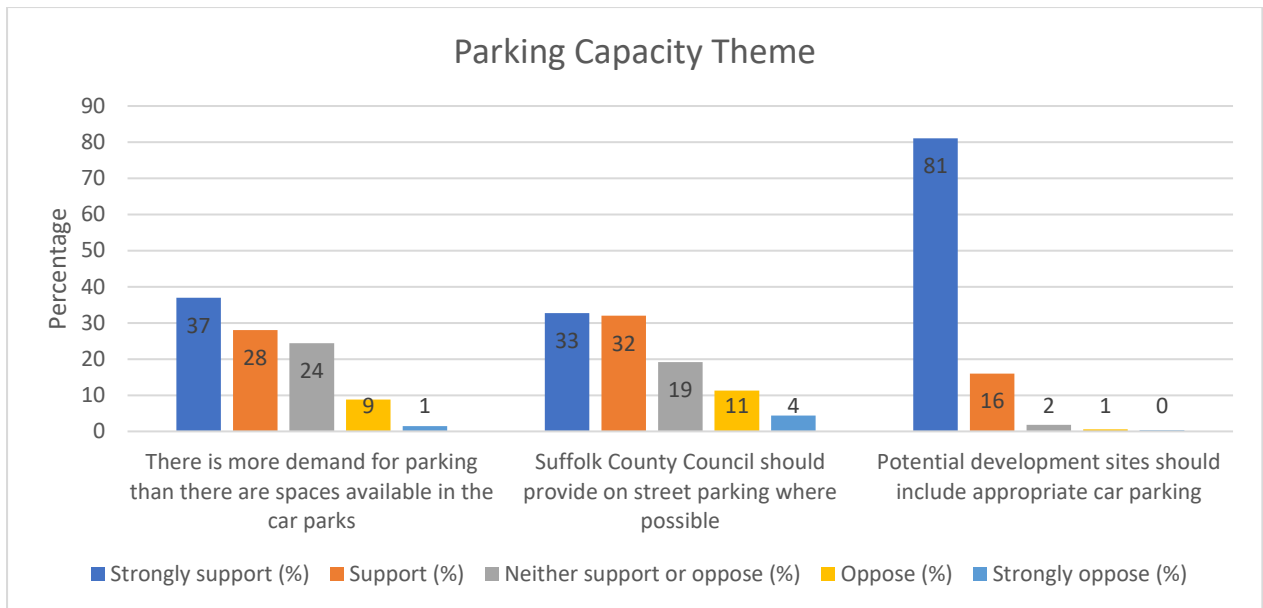


Figure 9 – Parking capacity recommendation comparison

As part of this question, there were 457 supplementary comments provided, again a full breakdown is located on the councils’ website.. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Need for more electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Pavement and verge parking becoming a greater problem
- Abuse of parking restrictions and a lack of enforcement

3.26 QUALITY OF CAR PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 7 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the quality of car parks theme. This theme had five recommendations as shown below:

- Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme;
- Undertake a detailed parking signage review;
- Increase safety within car parks;
- Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs;
- Upgrade the Pay & Display machines.

1,627 respondents provided an answer to this question with 377 respondents not answering the question. Table 5 provides a breakdown for each of these recommendations.

Quality of Car Parks	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	646	689	242	32	5	1614	81	83	2
Undertake a detailed parking signage review	481	589	451	67	16	1604	80	67	5
Increase safety within car parks	500	542	512	34	9	1597	80	65	3
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	513	592	416	69	17	1607	80	69	5
Upgrade the Pay & Display machines	453	447	470	112	120	1602	80	56	14

Table 5 – Breakdown of quality of car parks theme

Figure 10 provides a comparison between each of recommendations. This demonstrates that the recommendation “develop an ongoing car park improvement programme” has more support than the other recommendations, with 83% of respondents supporting this. Three of the other four recommendations have a similar level of support in the mid to high 60’s, and similar levels of opposition, which is low at just 3-5%. Upgrading the pay and display machines is subject to lower levels of support (56%) and higher opposition (14%).

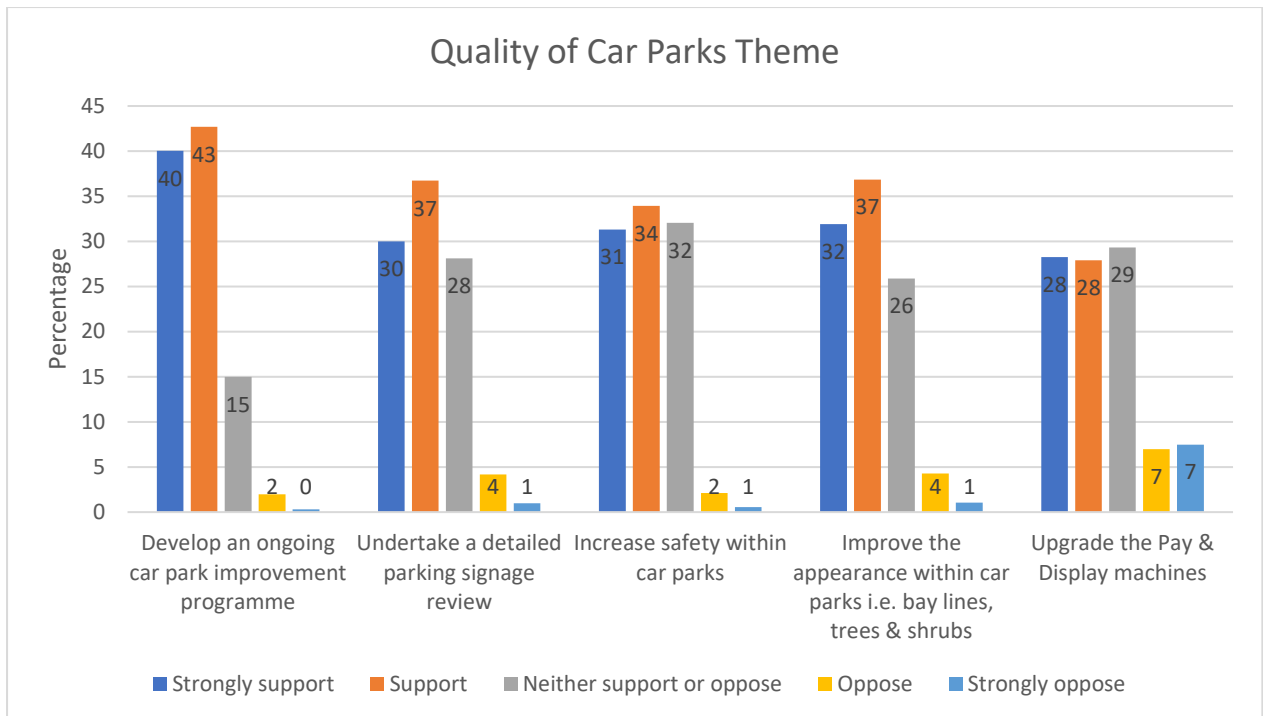


Figure 10 – Quality of car parks recommendation comparison

As part of this question, there were 429 supplementary comments provided. A full breakdown is located on the councils' website.. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Poor quality payment machines
- Need to improve car park markings and signage
- Cash options for car parks is essential

3.27 PARKING CHARGES RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 8 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the parking charges theme. This theme had three recommendations, which are shown below:

Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge;

Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas;

Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas.

1,621 respondents provided an answer to this question, meaning 383 respondents skipped the question. Table 6 provides a breakdown for each of these recommendations.

Parking Charges	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	476	593	266	107	167	1609	80	66	17
Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas	330	533	460	121	149	1593	80	54	17
Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas	421	575	330	132	155	1613	81	62	18

Table 6 – Breakdown of parking charges theme

Figure 11 provides a comparison between each of recommendations. This demonstrates that the recommendation “offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge” has the highest level of support compared to the other two recommendations, with 66% of respondents supporting this. “Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas” was subject to the lowest amount of support, with 54% of respondents supporting this recommendation. All three recommendations had a similar amount of opposition with the percentage between 17% and 18%.

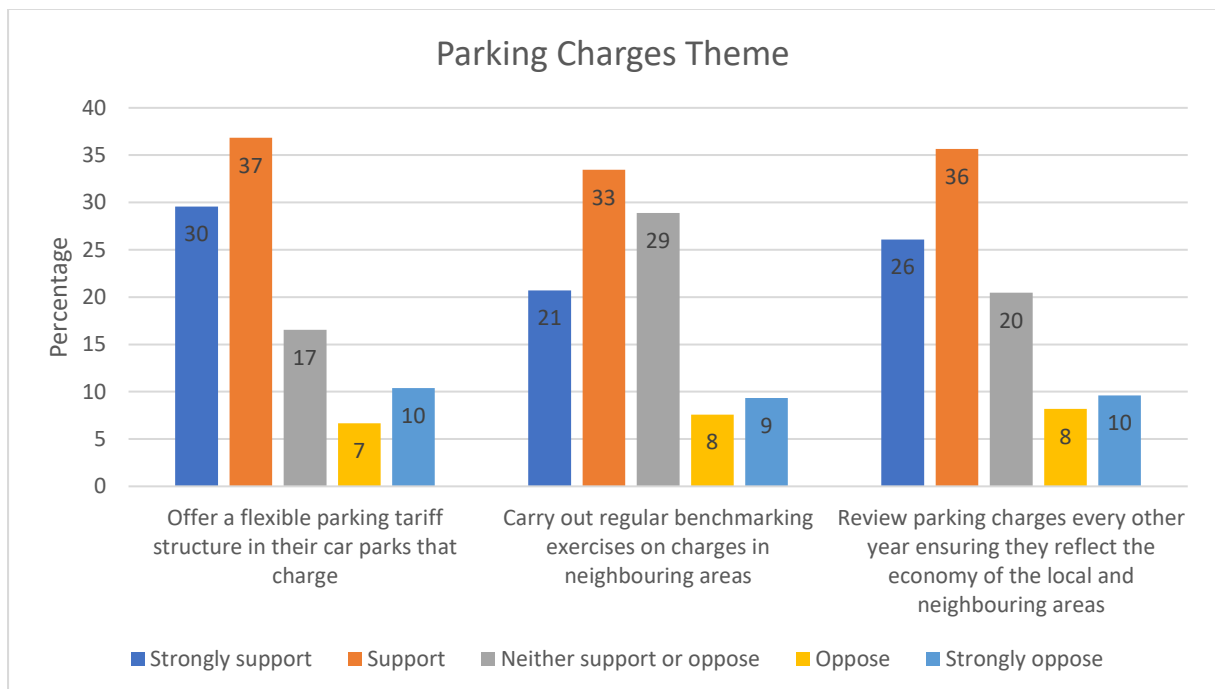


Figure 11 – Parking charges recommendation comparison

As part of this question, there were 397 supplementary comments provided with a full breakdown located on the councils' website.

3.28 CAR PARKING DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 9 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the car parking designation theme. This theme had one recommendation, which is shown below:

The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both.

1,618 respondents provided an answer to this question, meaning 386 respondents skipped the question. Table 7 provides a breakdown for this recommendation.

Car Park Designation	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	591	681	251	50	44	1617	81	79	6

Table 7 – Breakdown of Car Park Designation theme

Figure 12 provides a summary of the level of support and opposition for this recommendation. This demonstrates that there is really strong support for the recommendation with 37% strongly supporting the recommendation and a further 42% supporting the recommendation, meaning overall support of 81% for this recommendation.

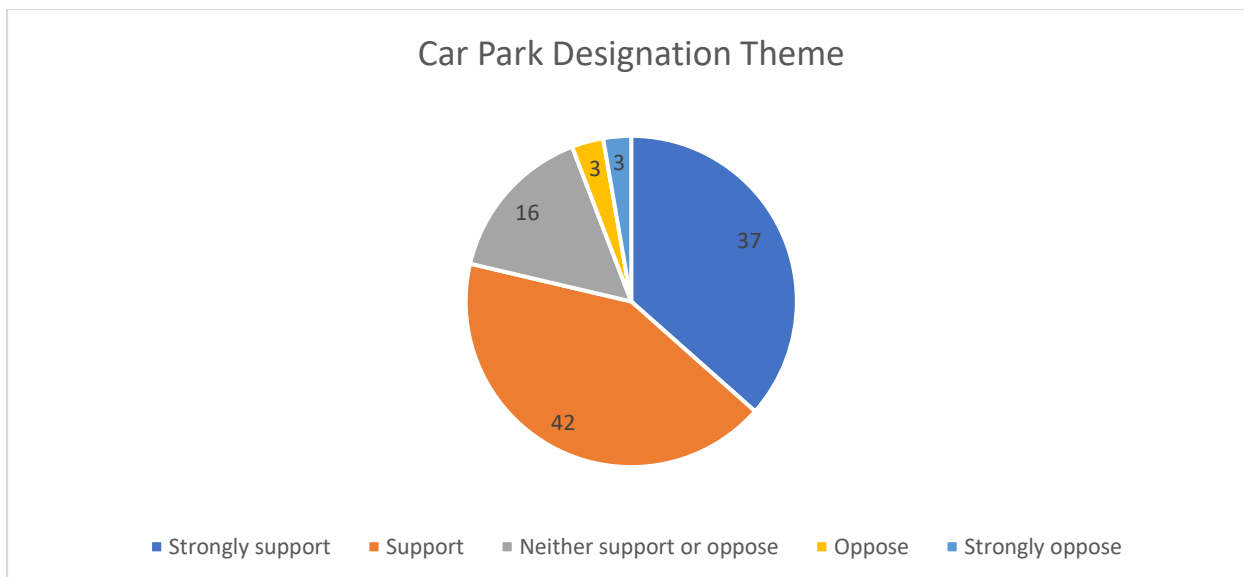


Figure 12 – Car park designation recommendation summary

As part of this question, there were 172 supplementary comments provided, a full breakdown is available on the councils’ website. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Need for residential parking
- Town centre car parks should be short stay only for visitors
- The existing situation works well

3.28 CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 10 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the car park technology theme. This theme had five recommendations, which are shown below:

- Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks;
- Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management;
- Investigate using Variable Message Signs;
- Make further improvements to their website;
- Consider smart parking integration e.g. parking apps and virtual permits.

1,617 respondents provided an answer to this question with 387 respondents choosing not to answer. Table 8 provides a breakdown for each of these recommendations.

Car Park Technology	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks	291	386	457	233	241	1608	80	42	29
Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management	297	522	497	153	123	1592	79	51	17
Investigate using Variable Message Signs	313	490	516	169	116	1604	80	50	18
Make further improvements to their website	333	487	680	50	40	1590	79	52	6
Consider smart parking integration e.g. parking apps and virtual permits	357	448	412	184	198	1599	80	50	24

Table 8 – Breakdown of car park technology theme

Figure 13 provides a comparison between each of recommendations. This demonstrates that the recommendation “*make further improvements to their website*” has slightly more support than the other recommendations, with 52% of respondents supporting this. Three of the other four recommendations have a similar level of support (50% and 51%). “*Make further improvements to their website*” has a low level of opposition at just 6%, whereas the other recommendations within this theme have a higher level of opposition, ranging from 17% to 29%. At 29%, “*investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks*” is subject to the second highest amount of opposition.

A number of recommendations in this theme have high levels of neither support or opposition, which would suggest respondents do not have a strong opinion either way. These are more technical recommendations compared to others and will likely require more detailed work to be undertaken prior to project delivery. It is likely that some of these recommendations would be subject to higher levels of support if there was a better understanding of the benefits it will bring the districts i.e. Variable Message Signs providing real time information that can reduce congestion and improve air quality.

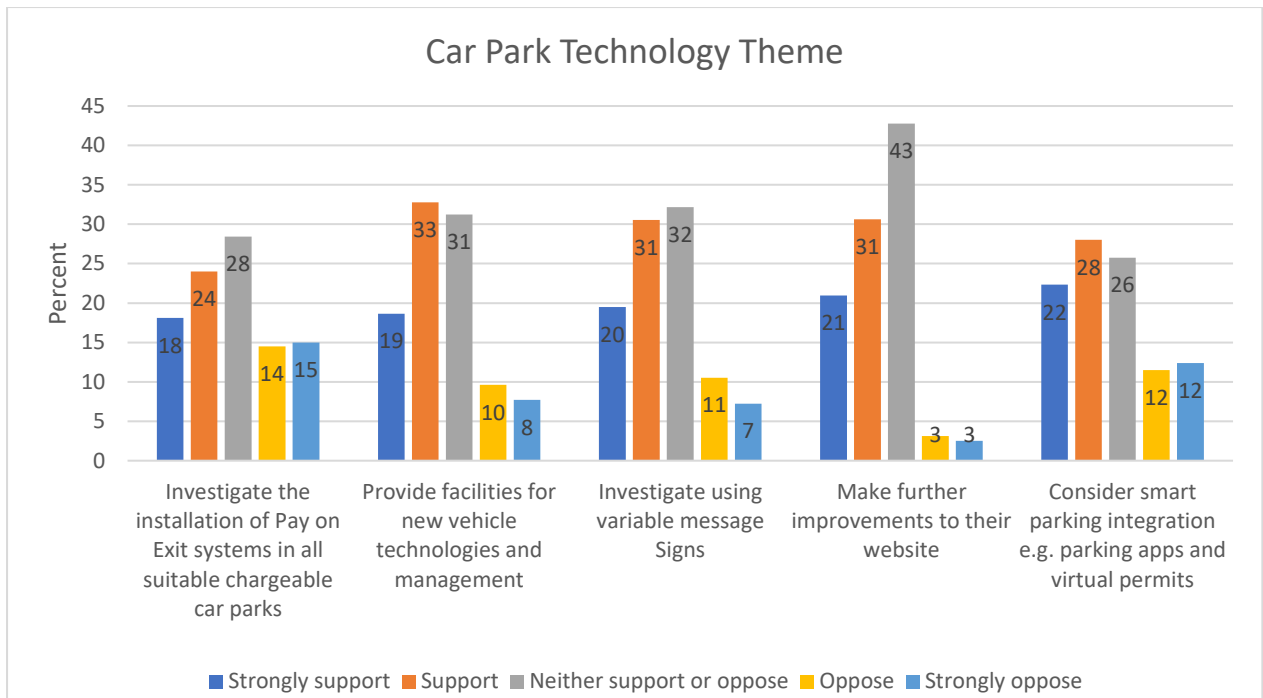


Figure 13 – Car park technology recommendation comparison

There were 281 supplementary comments provided, a full breakdown is located on the councils’ website. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Smart phone apps should only be in addition to other forms of payment
- Keep it simple to ensure the elderly do not struggle
- Investment in parking should be prioritised away from technology

3.29 LAND USE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 11 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the land use development theme. This theme had three recommendations, which are shown below:

Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example;

Review and understand local coach parking requirements;

Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks.

1,608 respondents provided an answer to this question, meaning 396 respondents skipped the question. Table 9 provides a breakdown for each of these recommendations, based on the level of “strongly support”, “support”, “neither support

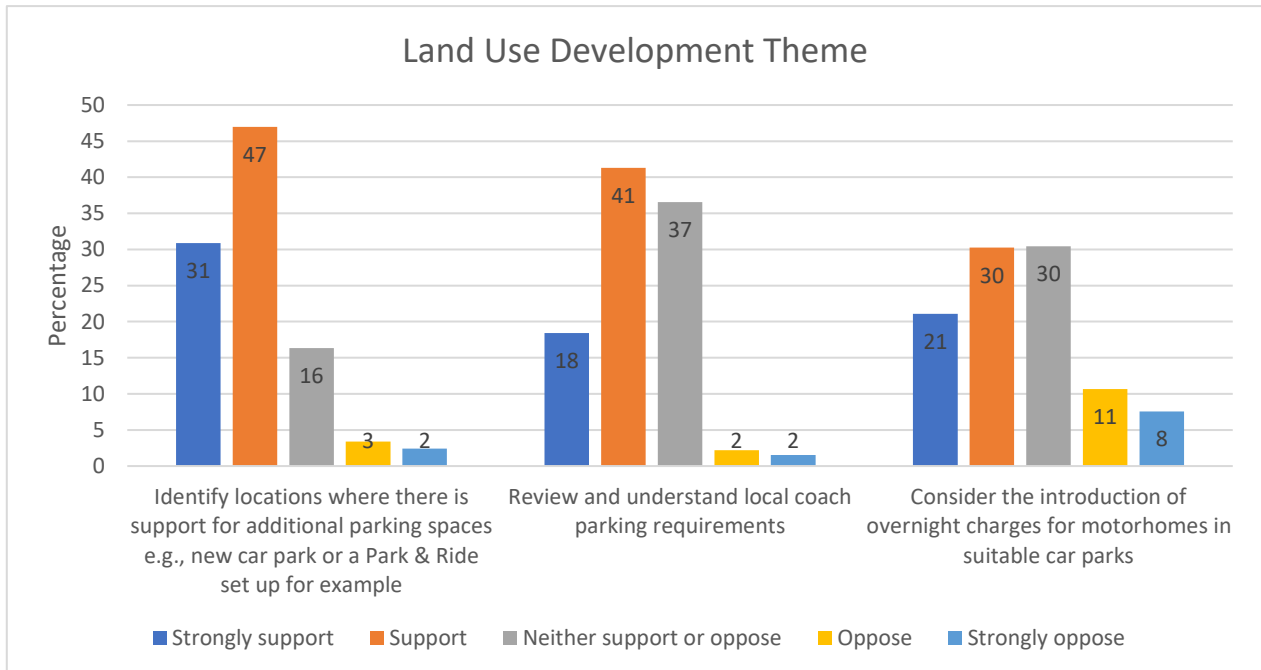
or oppose”, “oppose”, and “strongly oppose”. The table also highlights the engagement percentage for the question, the overall support for the recommendation (calculated by combining strongly support, and support), and the overall opposition for the recommendation (calculated by combining the oppose, and strongly oppose).

Land use development	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	291	386	457	233	241	1608	80	42	29
Review and understand local coach parking requirements	297	522	497	153	123	1592	79	51	17
Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks	313	490	516	169	116	1604	80	50	18

Table 9 – Breakdown of land use development theme

Figure 14 provides a comparison between each of recommendations. This demonstrates that the recommendation “*review and understand local coach parking requirements*” has slightly more support than the other recommendations, with 51% of respondents supporting this. “*Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks*” has 51% support, whereas “*identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example*” had much less support than the other two recommendations, with only 42% in support.

“Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example” was also the recommendation with the highest amount of opposition, with 29% of respondents opposing the recommendation. The other two recommendations had lower amounts of opposition, between 17% and



18%.

Figure 14 – Land use development recommendation comparison

As part of this question, there were 165 supplementary comments provided. A full breakdown is located on the councils’ website. The vast majority of these comments can be grouped into themes. Some of the more popular themes included:

- Comments in support and objection to motorhome parking in car parks
- HGV parking required across the districts
- Any action implemented requires good advertisement to ensure it works.

3.210 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND INTEGRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 12 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the sustainable transport and integration theme. This theme had five recommendations as shown below:

- Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand;
- Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in their car parks;
- Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities;

1,610 respondents provided an answer to this question with 394 respondents not answering the question. Table 10 provides a breakdown for each of the recommendations.

Sustainable transport and integration	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	586	577	330	69	34	1562	78	74	7
Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in their car parks	468	534	446	89	61	1598	80	63	9
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	578	692	268	25	25	1588	79	80	3
Investigate partnerships with car club providers	172	281	974	93	61	1581	79	29	10
Consider the implementation of docked bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters within car parks	243	393	646	176	137	1595	80	40	20

Table 10 – Breakdown of sustainable transport and integration theme

Figure 15 provides a comparison of the recommendations and demonstrates that two of the five recommendations have very strong support with *“Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities”* having an overall support rate of 80%, followed by *“Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand”*, which has an overall support rate of 74%. This reiterates the requirement to ensure the parking strategy has good integration with sustainability such as cycling and public transport. Both these recommendations have low levels of opposition with *“Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities”* having just 3% opposition, and *“Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand”* having 7% opposition.

“Investigate partnerships with car club providers” is the recommendation with the lowest level of support for this theme, with just 29% in support. However, this recommendation only has 10% opposition, with 62% of respondents stating they neither support nor oppose the recommendation. This suggests there may be a limited understanding of what is involved in the recommendation. During the consultation

process, there was strong support for this recommendation, which was achieved through discussion. There is a possibility that stakeholders would have a stronger support of this recommendation through a more detailed discussion and this a recommendation that would require further development work, including its own consultation exercise.

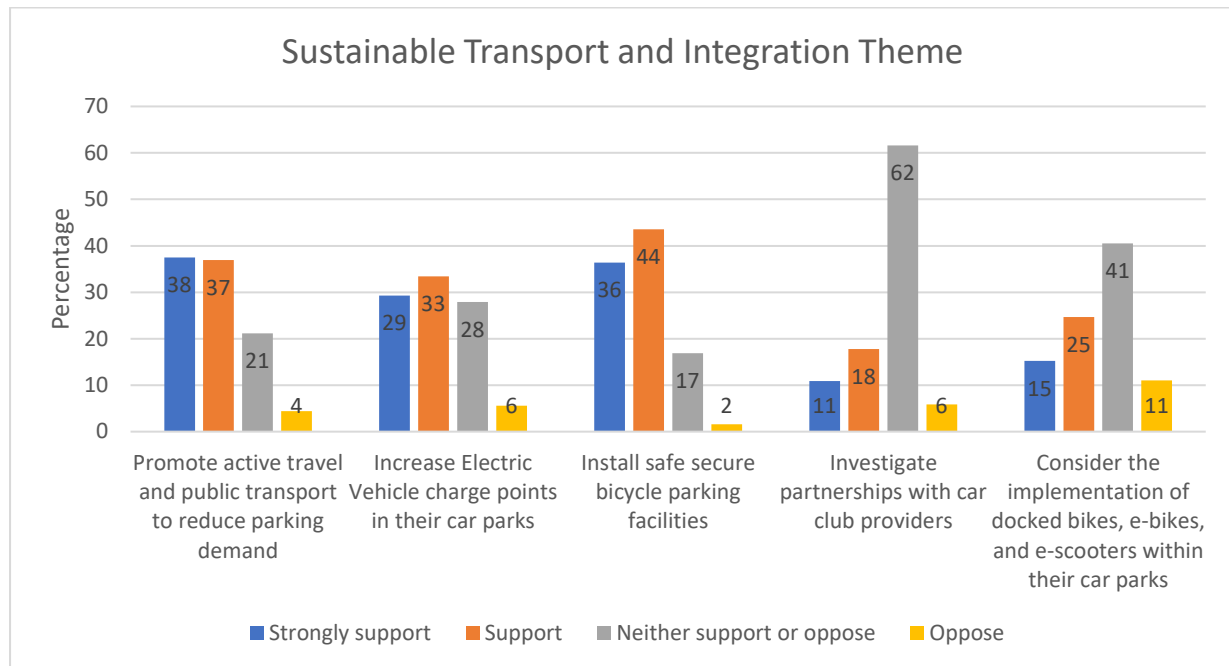


Figure 15 – Sustainable transport & integration recommendation comparison

There were 209 supplementary comments provided, a breakdown of which is located on the councils' website. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Improve public transport rather than car parks
- Park & Ride will not work in rural villages

3.211 PARKING IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 14 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the parking improvement theme. This theme had two recommendations, which are shown below:

Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem;

Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant.

1,471 respondents provided an answer to this question with 533 respondents not answering. Table 11 provides a breakdown for each of these recommendations.

Parking Improvement	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	673	571	148	42	28	1462	73	85	5
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	698	619	117	16	11	1461	73	90	2

Table 11 – Breakdown of parking improvement theme

Figure 16 provides a comparison between both recommendations and demonstrates that there is extremely high support for both recommendations in this theme. “Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant” has the highest overall support, with 90% of respondents either strongly supporting or supporting the recommendation, whereas “undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem” has 85% overall support.

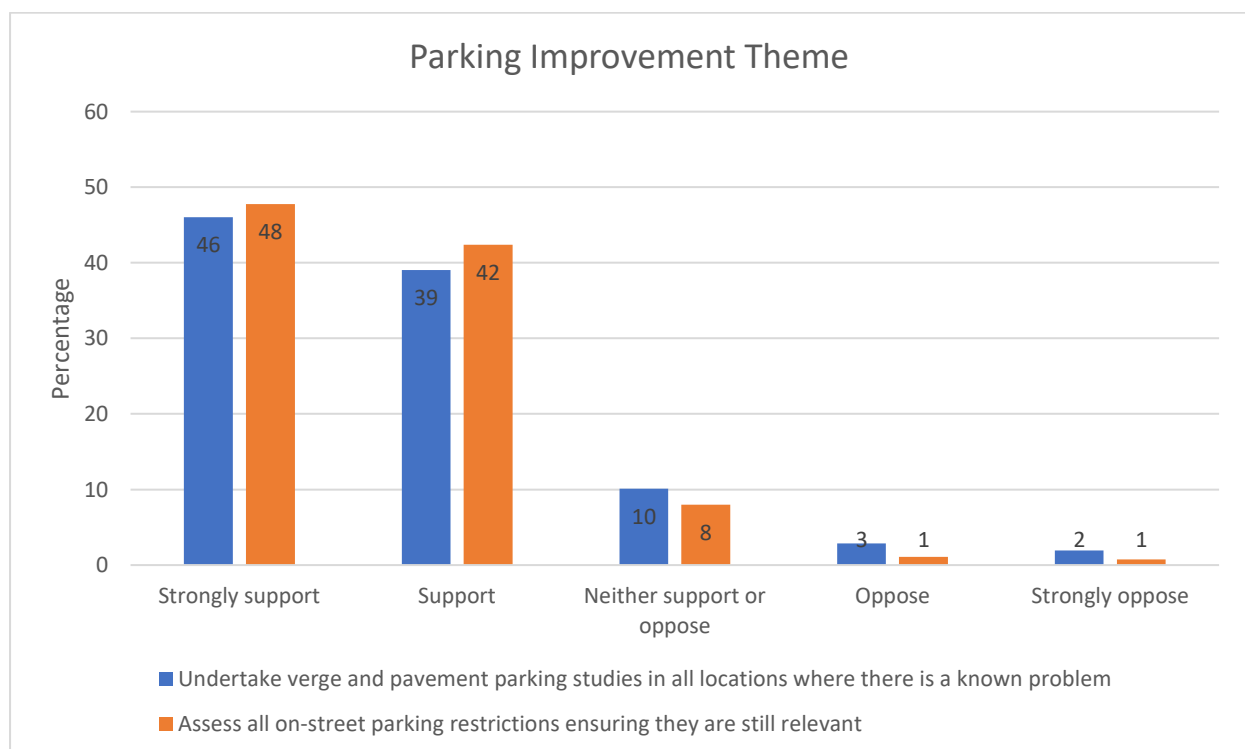


Figure 16 – Parking improvement recommendation comparison

As part of this question, 206 supplementary comments were provided, a full breakdown is located on the councils' website.. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Concern around pavement and verge parking
- Additional parking restrictions needed
- Insufficient parking in new developments causing major on-street parking issues

3.212 SUSTAINABLE HIGHWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 15 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the sustainable highways theme. This theme had four recommendations, which are shown below:

- Investigate the partnership of car clubs (on-street);
- Understand taxi demand in key locations;
- Investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points;
- Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking.

1,465 respondents provided an answer to this question, meaning 539 respondents skipped the question. Table 12 provides a breakdown for each of these recommendations.

Sustainable Highways	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
Investigate the partnership of car clubs	129	254	906	92	64	1445	72	27	11
Understand taxi demand in key locations	232	656	516	26	13	1443	72	62	3
Investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points	325	480	446	122	80	1453	73	55	14
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	465	615	328	26	18	1452	72	74	3

Table 12 – Breakdown of sustainable highways theme

Figure 17 provides a comparison between these recommendations and demonstrates that there is high support for one recommendation – “*identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking*” with 74% of respondents either strongly supporting or supporting the recommendation. This is 12% more than “*understand taxi demand in key locations*”, which has an overall support rate of 62%. The recommendation around investigating on-street electric vehicle charge points only had 55% support, which is 7% less than the overall support for car park charge points. This suggests that respondents feel the priority should be car park charging facilities for electric vehicles.

The two highest scoring recommendations, “*identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking*” and “*understand taxi demand in key locations*”, has the lowest level of opposition at just 3% for each. In comparison, “*investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points*” has the highest amount of opposition for this theme, with 14% either strongly opposing or opposing the recommendation.

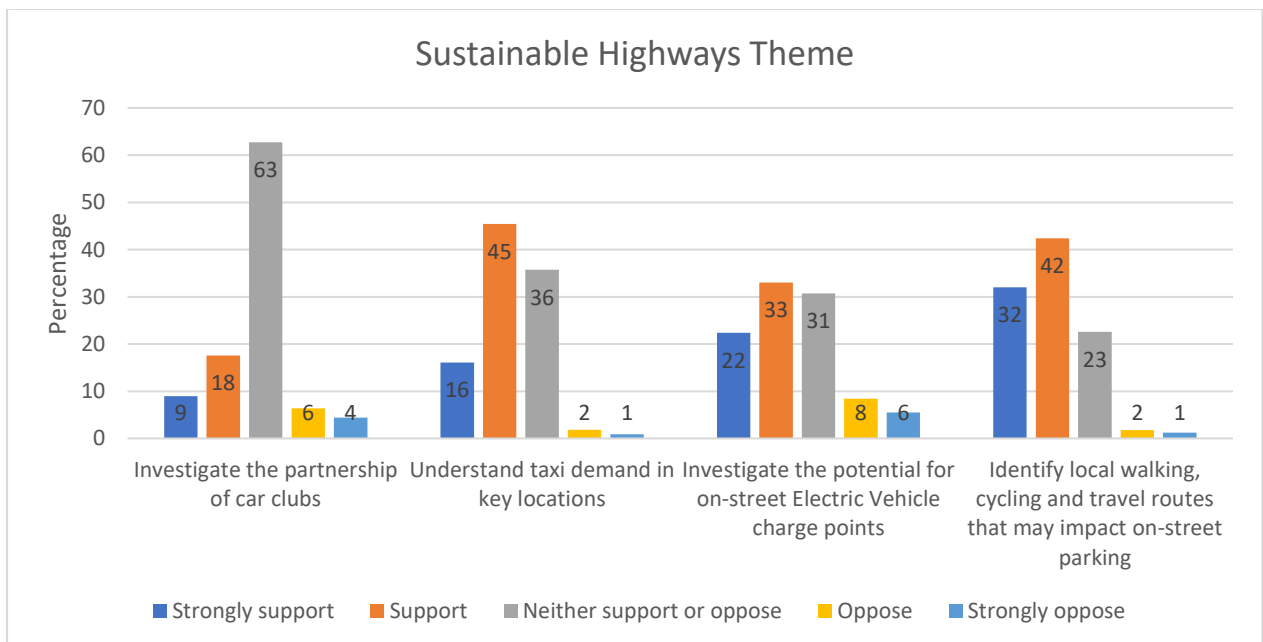


Figure 17 – Sustainable highways recommendation comparison

A further 90 supplementary comments were provided and a breakdown of these is located on the councils’ website. Some of the more popular themes include:

- Additional EV charge points required across the districts

- Support and objection to car clubs, with positives focused on sustainability, and negative comments focused around a lack of council responsibility
- Encourage investment into active travel routes

3.213 ON-STREET PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Question 16 provided the parking strategy recommendations for the on-street parking theme. This theme had two recommendations, which are shown below:

The Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas;
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations.

1,467 respondents provided an answer to this question, meaning 537 respondents did not. Table 13 provides a breakdown for the two recommendations.

On-Street Parking	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose	Total	Survey Engagement (%)	Overall Support (%)	Overall Oppose (%)
The Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas	129	254	906	92	64	1445	72	34	11
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	232	656	516	26	13	1443	72	64	3

Table 13 – Breakdown of on-street parking theme

There is relatively strong support for the “consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations” recommendation, with 64% of respondents either strongly supporting or supporting the recommendation. In comparison, “the Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas” only has 34% support, making this one of the lower scoring recommendations in the parking strategy overall.

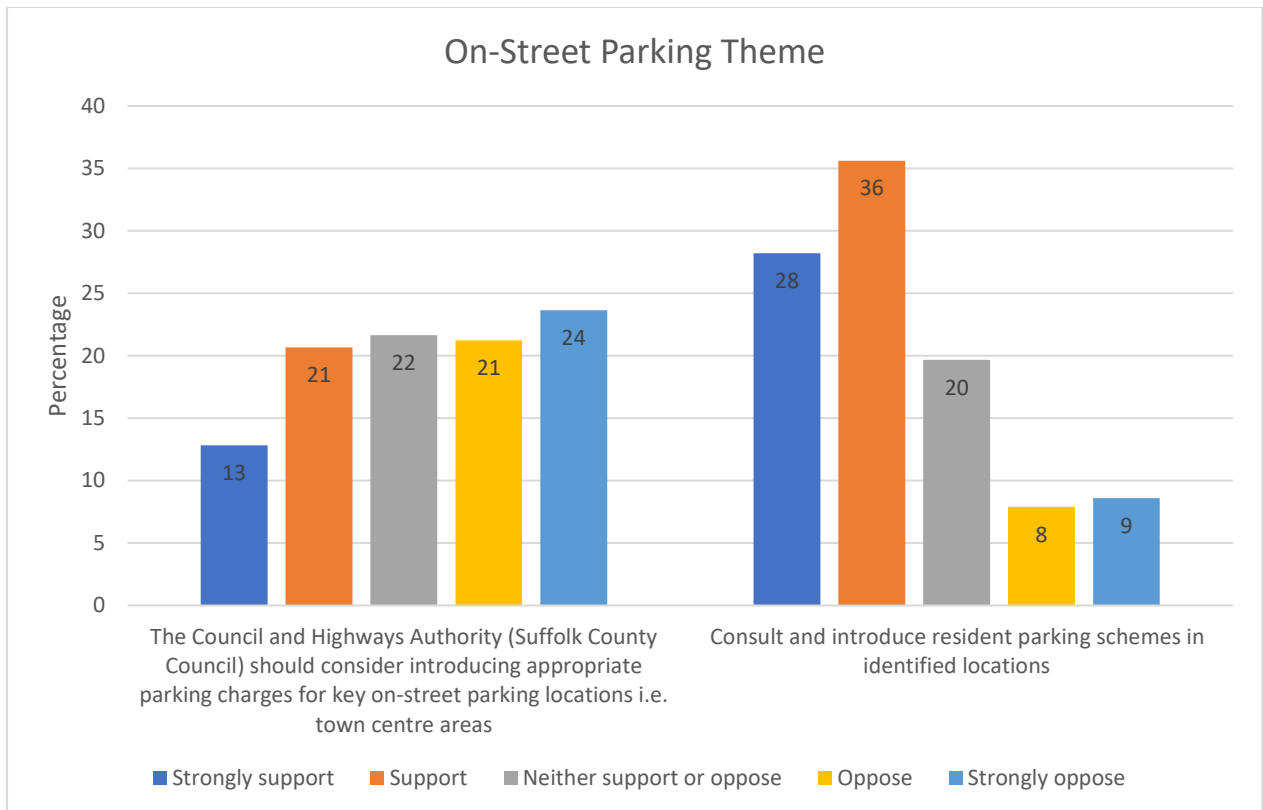


Figure 18 – On-street parking recommendation comparison

As part of this question, there were 175 supplementary comments provided, details of which are located on the councils’ website. Some of the themes included are:

- Residential parking permits is essential near town centres
- Opposition to residential parking permits
- Comprehensive review of parking restrictions required.

3.214 PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFF-STREET PARKING

Question 17 gave the opportunity for respondents to select the two off-street parking recommendations they would most like to see implemented. 1,308 respondents answered this question, meaning 696 respondents skipped the question.

“Ensure any new developments include appropriate car parking” was by far the most commonly selected recommendation, being chosen by 33% of respondents as priority 1, and 20% of respondents as priority 2. This means that more than half the respondents chose this recommendation as one of their top priorities for implementation.

“Is there more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks” was the second highest scoring recommendation, with 17% of respondents choosing this as their priority 1, and 8% choosing this as their priority 2. *“Should Suffolk County Council provide on street parking where possible”* was the third highest scoring recommendation, with 9% of respondents choosing this as their priority 1, and a further 9% choosing the recommendation as their priority 2. *“Investigate the delivery of Variable Message Signs”* was the lowest scoring recommendation with less than 1% of respondents choosing the recommendation as either of their two priorities for off-street parking.

3.215 PRIORITISED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ON-STREET PARKING

Question 18 gave the opportunity for respondents to select the two on-street parking recommendations they would most like to see implemented. 1,288 respondents answered this question, meaning 716 respondents skipped the question.

“Ensure appropriate measures are put in place when assessing new development sites to reduce impact on on-street parking” was the most commonly selected recommendation, being chosen by 23% of respondents as priority 1, and 18% of respondents as priority 2. There is a clear link between this recommendation and the highest-ranking recommendation for off-street parking, which demonstrates the importance of new development sites and the impact this has on parking, which should be considered at all times when assessing planning applications and the proposed parking provision.

“Enable the use of car parks overnight in areas where there is high on-street parking demand” was the second highest scoring recommendation, with 18% of respondents choosing this as their priority 1, and 12% choosing this as their priority 2, closely followed by *“develop a Residents Permit Scheme policy”*, which was the third highest scoring recommendation, with 21% of respondents choosing this as their priority 1, and 8% choosing the recommendation as their priority 2. *“Investigate the partnership of car clubs”* was the lowest scoring recommendation with just under 2% of respondents choosing the recommendation as either of their two priorities for on-street parking.

4.0 LOCAL PREFERENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Section 3 focused on the overall responses that were received across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts. However, whilst the parking strategy is designed to be at a strategic level that covers both districts, the interventions will be applied at a locally which means that it is important to understand the different views and priorities across the individual districts, as well as across individual towns and villages. Therefore, this section concentrates on the views at both district level and local level.

Section 4 reviews the level of support and opposition for Babergh, and for Mid Suffolk, and then reviews the level of support and opposition for towns and villages across the two districts. It isn't feasible to provide a breakdown across every town and village as this would take considerable time. It would also result in low numbers of responses in smaller village that may not provide as much useful information due to the low sample rate. Therefore, the location specific analysis has been carried out in the following locations:

- Sudbury
- Hadleigh
- Lavenham
- Stowmarket
- Needham Market
- Eye

Lavenham is the only village location that has been included in the analysis as this is the only village that has more than one council owned car park.

It isn't necessary to provide a breakdown for every question included in the consultation as this would create an excessive document that would not provide any more useful information than what can be achieved when only including critical questions. Therefore, the local analysis (both district and town/village level) only includes the questions on the strategy recommendations, and question 5, which is whether the parking strategy aims are supported or not.

4.2 DISTRICT ANALYSIS

The first breakdown of analysis undertaken on the consultation responses was a district level analysis. This involved creating a filter within the questionnaire results that separated responses from Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This created an almost even split between the two districts with just over 950 responses from each district.

4.2.1 QUESTION 5 ASKED DO YOU SUPPORT THE AIMS OF A PARKING STRATEGY FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK

In Babergh, 83% of respondents supported the aims of the parking strategy, this is 3% less than the overall response. In Mid Suffolk, 89% of respondents supported the aims for the parking strategy.

Figure 19 illustrates the support and opposition from the Babergh district and figure 20 illustrates the support and opposition from the Mid Suffolk district.

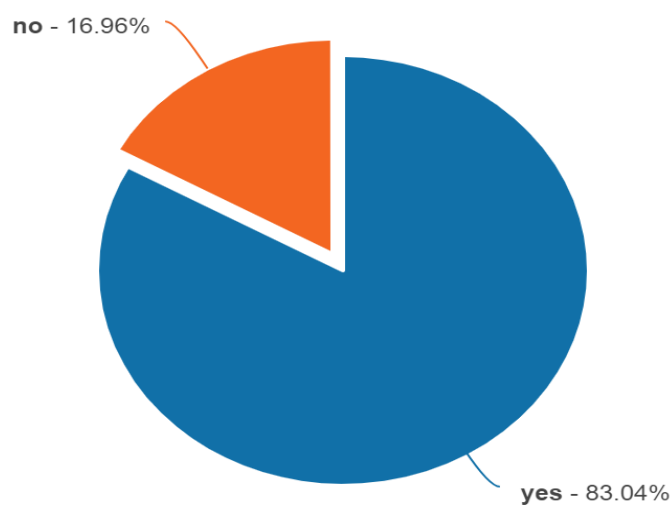


Figure 19 – Support and opposition for the parking strategy aims Babergh district

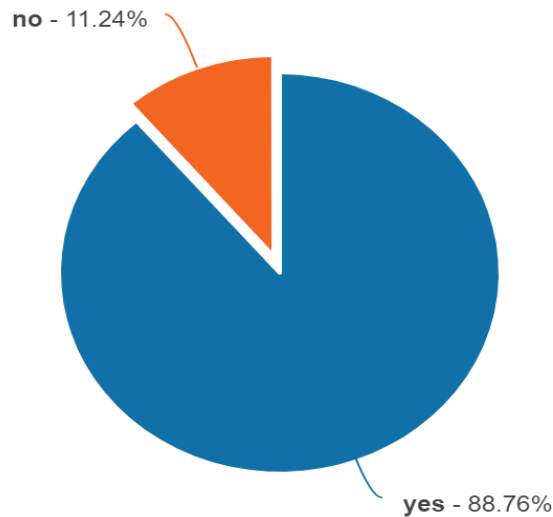


Figure 20 – Support and opposition for the parking strategy aims Mid Suffolk district

4.22 PARKING CAPACITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 14 below provides a comparison between the parking capacity theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that the overall support between the two districts is generally the same for all recommendations.

Parking Capacity	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	34	31	24	10	1	39	26	25	8	1
Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible	29	34	22	11	4	36	31	17	12	5
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	80	18	1	1	0	83	13	2	1	1

Table 14 – District comparison for parking capacity theme

4.23 QUALITY OF CAR PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 15 below provides a comparison between the quality of car parks theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that there is slightly more support for all the quality of car park recommendations in Mid Suffolk compared to Babergh, especially the upgrade pay and display machines recommendation, which has a 13% greater support in the Mid Suffolk district. This is likely due to the fact that Mid Suffolks machines require upgrading and Babergh’s were

recently replaced (February 2022). The level of opposition is also similar as is the neither support or oppose.

Quality of Car Parks	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	38	43	16	3	0	42	43	14	1	0
Undertake a detailed parking signage review	29	35	30	5	1	30	39	27	4	1
Increase safety within car parks	29	34	33	3	1	34	34	30	1	0
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	31	37	27	4	1	33	36	25	5	1
Upgrade the Pay & Display machines	23	27	34	9	8	33	30	25	5	7

Table 15 – District comparison for quality of car park theme

4.24 PARKING CHARGES RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 16 below provides a comparison between the parking charges theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that there is a lot more support for all the parking charge recommendations in Mid Suffolk compared to Babergh. “Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge” is the recommendation with the greatest difference with 17% more support in Mid Suffolk. “Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas” has 10% greater support in Mid Suffolk, and “review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas” has 14% greater support in Mid Suffolk. This is likely to be related to parking charges that are in place.

Parking Charges	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %

Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	24	34	18	9	15	36	39	16	4	5
Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas	18	31	29	10	12	24	35	28	6	6
Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas	22	33	21	12	12	31	38	20	4	6

Table 16 – District comparison for parking charges theme

4.25 CAR PARKING DESIGNATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 17 below provides a comparison between the car parking designation theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that the overall level of support between the two districts is generally the same. There appears to be slightly more strongly support in Mid Suffolk and slightly more support in Babergh. The level of opposition is also similar as is the neither support or oppose.

Car Park Designation	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	35	43	16	3	3	38	42	14	3	2

Table 17 – District comparison for car park designation theme

4.26 CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 18 below provides a comparison between the car park technology theme recommendations across the two districts. There is greater support for all the car park technology recommendations in Mid Suffolk compared to Babergh. The difference fluctuates between 1% and 9%, which is the “investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks” recommendation. There is a higher amount of opposition and neither support or oppose in Babergh.

Car Park Technology	Babergh District	Mid Suffolk District
---------------------	------------------	----------------------

	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks	17	21	26	18	18	19	27	30	12	12
Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management	17	32	32	11	8	21	33	29	9	8
Investigate using Variable Message Signs	16	30	35	12	8	23	31	30	10	7
Make further improvements to their website	21	30	43	3	3	22	30	43	3	2
Consider smart parking integration e.g. parking apps and virtual permits	21	26	27	12	14	24	29	24	11	11

Table 18 – District comparison for car park technology theme

4.27 LAND USE DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 19 below provides a comparison between the land use development theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that there is greater support for two of the three recommendations in Babergh, and one recommendation in Mid Suffolk. *“Review and understand local coach parking requirements”* has 13% greater support in Babergh, and *“consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks”* has 5% greater support in Babergh. *“Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example”* has 3% greater support in Mid Suffolk.

Land Use Development	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	29	47	18	4	2	32	47	16	3	3
Review and understand local coach parking requirements	20	45	31	2	1	16	36	43	2	2

Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks	23	31	29	10	7	19	30	30	12	9
---	----	----	----	----	---	----	----	----	----	---

Table 19 – District comparison for land use development theme

4.28 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND INTEGRATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 20 below provides a comparison between the sustainable transport and integration theme recommendations across the two districts. There is little difference between the level of support and opposition for the recommendations. This suggests that the recommendations may not have a greater impact in one district over another.

Land Use Development	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	39	37	19	3	2	36	34	22	6	2
Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in their car parks	29	34	27	7	3	29	33	29	4	5
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	36	44	18	1	1	37	44	16	2	2
Investigate partnerships with car club providers	11	18	62	6	4	11	17	63	6	3
Consider the implementation of docked bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters within car parks	15	26	38	12	10	15	23	43	10	8

Table 20 – District comparison for sustainable transport and integration theme

4.29 PARKING IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 21 below provides a comparison between the parking improvement theme recommendations across the two districts and the results demonstrate that there is slightly more support for the recommendations in Mid Suffolk compared to Babergh. It

should be noted that both recommendations have high support across the two districts, which is an encouraging sign. The amount of opposition is similar across both districts.

Parking Improvement	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	44	40	12	3	2	49	38	9	3	2
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	45	45	9	1	0	52	40	7	1	1

Table 21 – District comparison for parking improvement theme

4.210 SUSTAINABLE HIGHWAYS RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 22 below provides a comparison between the sustainable highways theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that there is slightly more support for the recommendations in Babergh compared to Mid Suffolk. There is little difference between the level of support. This is a theme that has been identified across a number of the recommendation themes.

Sustainable Highways	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
Investigate the partnership of car clubs	9	18	62	6	5	9	16	64	7	4
Understand taxi demand in key locations	15	48	35	1	0	16	43	37	2	1
Investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points	21	33	32	9	5	24	32	31	8	6
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	29	46	22	2	1	35	39	23	2	2

Table 22 – District comparison for sustainable highways theme

4.211 ON-STREET PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 23 below provides a comparison between the on-street parking theme recommendations across the two districts. The results demonstrate that there is slightly more support for the recommendations in Mid Suffolk compared to Babergh. There are also similar amounts of neither support or oppose and opposition. There are far greater levels of opposition for “the Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas” compared to “consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations”. This would suggest similar issues are experienced across both districts with non-residential vehicles parking in streets.

On-Street Parking	Babergh District					Mid Suffolk District				
	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %	Strongly Support %	Support %	Neither support or oppose %	Oppose %	Strongly Oppose %
The Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas	13	18	20	22	26	13	23	22	21	21
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	27	36	19	8	10	30	34	20	8	8

Table 23 – District comparison for on-street parking theme

4.3 TOWN / VILLAGE ANALYSIS

The second breakdown of analysis undertaken on the consultation responses is specific town and village analysis. This involved creating a filter within the questionnaire results that grouped responses into towns and villages, which was established using the post code and street name. As outlined above the following towns and villages were selected:

- Sudbury
- Hadleigh
- Lavenham
- Stowmarket
- Needham Market
- Eye

From the 2,004 completed consultation responses, 1,505 responses fell into one of the six locations, which represents 75% of the total. In Sudbury there were 518 completed responses, Hadleigh received 227 completed responses and Lavenham 69 completed responses. In Stowmarket there were 501 completed responses, Needham Market received 75 completed responses and Eye 115 responses. It should be noted that Sudbury and Stowmarket include some of the smaller satellite villages around the towns, which is likely to contribute towards the higher response rate.

The most important analysis to understand when reviewing responses at a local level, is the level of support for each recommendation, and how this compares to the overall support. This then provides a baseline to take forward the recommendations that could be delivered in the specific locations. For example, if a residents parking scheme had high support in Sudbury and low support in Lavenham, it wouldn't be appropriate to consider the implementation of a scheme in Lavenham.

Table 24 lists all the recommendations from the parking strategy, which have been placed in order of overall support at districts wide level. Each of the towns and villages are shown with the level of support received.

If the town / village has a higher amount of support than the overall level, this is shown in green. If the town / village has the same amount of support as the overall level, this is shown in yellow. If the town / village has less support than the overall level, this is shown in red.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Overall Support (%)	Sudbury Support (%)	Hadleigh Support (%)	Stowmarket Support (%)	Eye Support (%)	Needham Market Support (%)	Lavenham Support (%)
Do you support the aims of a parking strategy	86	80	85	91	94	80	93

Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	97	98	97	97	97	98	100
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	90	88	88	91	90	93	81
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	85	84	80	86	85	88	90
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	81	75	76	76	81	70	86
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	83	80	82	82	92	81	86
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	80	79	77	80	80	67	67
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	79	73	80	79	83	75	87
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	74	74	75	71	66	49	68
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	74	73	75	75	73	72	74
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	69	67	72	65	77	76	74
Undertake a detailed parking signage review	67	66	63	66	65	50	73
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	66	47	63	80	88	83	90
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	65	68	62	55	70	88	70
Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible	65	67	57	62	75	67	65
Increase safety within car parks	65	62	58	65	60	53	73
Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in their car parks	63	60	65	64	66	50	68
Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas	62	49	56	72	55	42	45
Upgrade the Pay & Display machines	56	42	49	70	60	48	52
Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas	54	42	52	61	47	63	52
Make further improvements to their website	52	48	47	49	57	47	50

Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management	51	48	46	53	54	53	86
Review and understand local coach parking requirements	51	53	61	51	65	63	60
Understand taxi demand in key locations	62	66	60	61	51	44	57
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	64	64	66	65	78	63	70
Investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points	55	53	54	57	45	43	55
Investigate using Variable Message Signs	50	47	38	53	59	42	65
Consider smart parking integration e.g. parking apps and virtual permits	50	46	44	56	44	38	48
Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks	50	53	49	49	52	34	64
Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks	42	32	36	46	44	29	39
Consider the implementation of docked bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters within car parks	40	39	43	38	33	24	27
The Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas	34	28	30	38	41	18	37
Investigate partnerships with car club providers	29	25	30	27	24	26	48
Investigate the partnership of car clubs	27	25	30	24	24	17	50

Table 24 – Comparison of recommendation support and town / village level

Table 24 demonstrates that there are many fluctuations between the local level of support compared to the overall level. For example, in Sudbury, many of the recommendations are subject to lower levels of support than the overall totals, whereas in Stowmarket there is a greater level of support than the overall total.

4.31 SUDBURY ANALYSIS

80% of responses from the Sudbury region support the aims of the parking strategy, which is 6% less than the overall total across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

On the whole, the responses received from the Sudbury area demonstrated lower levels of support for the parking strategy recommendations. When considering all 33

recommendations, only six saw a higher level of support than the total across both districts. *“Understand taxi demand in key locations”* is the recommendation that saw the highest level of support compared to the overall total, with 4% more of respondents from Sudbury supporting the recommendation. *“Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge”* is the recommendation that saw the lowest level of support compared to the overall total, with a difference of 19

Figure 21 illustrates how the support in Sudbury for each recommendation compares to the overall support across both districts.

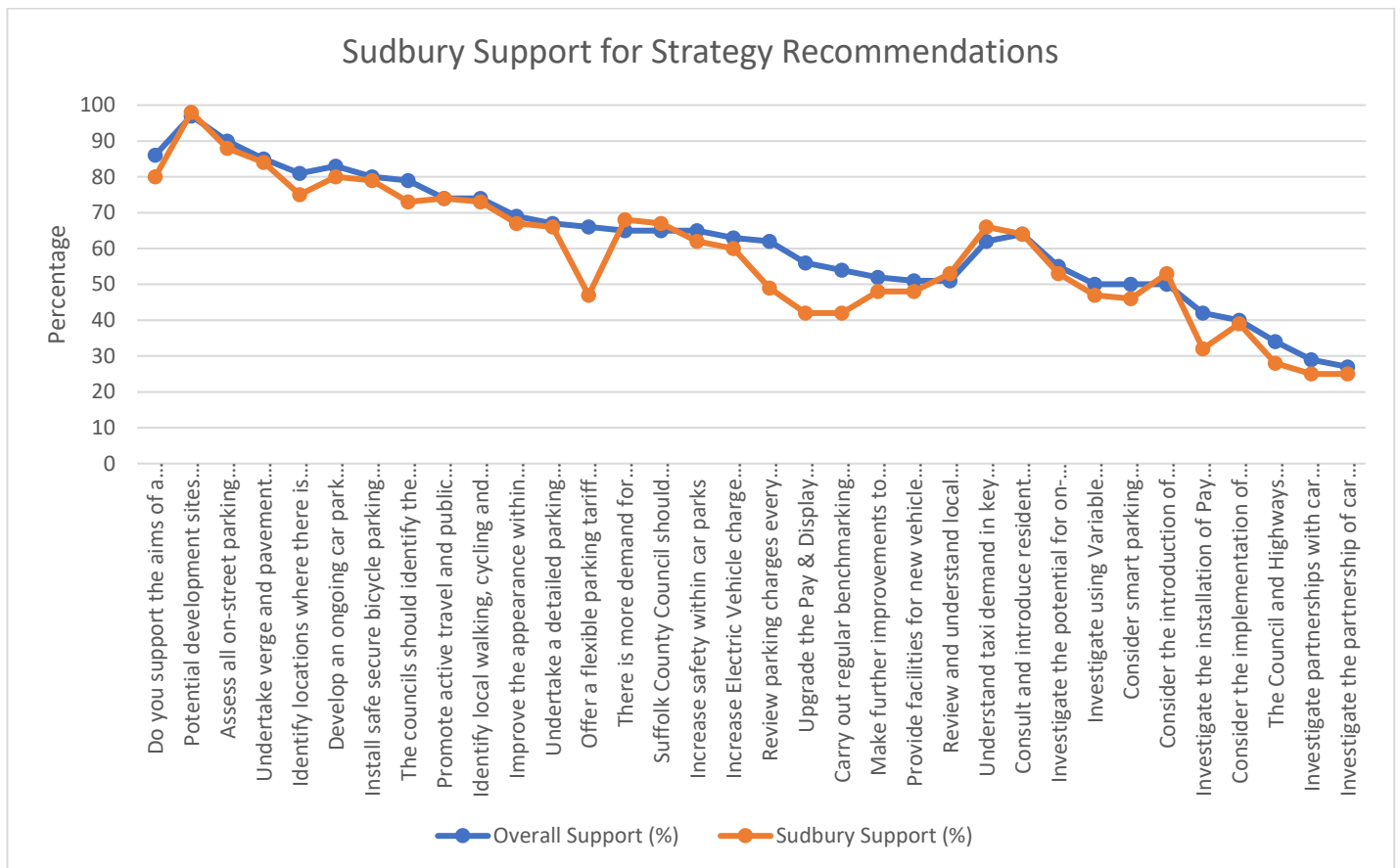


Figure 21 – Support from Sudbury respondents against overall district support

Despite this, there is still strong support in Sudbury for many of the recommendations, with 64% of the recommendations being subject to at least 50% support. This provides a platform to understand the recommendations that stakeholders would like to see prioritised. Table 25 provides the top 10 recommendations based on the level of support from the consultation exercise for Sudbury.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Sudbury Support (%)
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	98
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	88
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	84
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	80
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	79
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	75
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	74
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	73
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	73
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	68

Table 25 – Top 10 recommendations for Sudbury based on consultation responses

4.32 HADLEIGH ANALYSIS

85% of responses from the Hadleigh area support the aims of the parking strategy, which is a 1% lower compared to the overall level of support across the districts.

The responses received from the Hadleigh are demonstrated lower levels of support for the parking strategy recommendations. When considering all 33 recommendations, only 10 saw higher levels of support “*Review and understand local coach parking requirements*” is the recommendation that saw the highest level of support compared to the overall total, with 10% more of respondents from Hadleigh supporting the recommendation. “*Investigate using Variable Message Signs*” is the recommendation that saw the lowest level of compared to the overall total, with a 12% difference.

Figure 22 illustrates how the support in Hadleigh for each recommendation compares to the overall support across both districts.

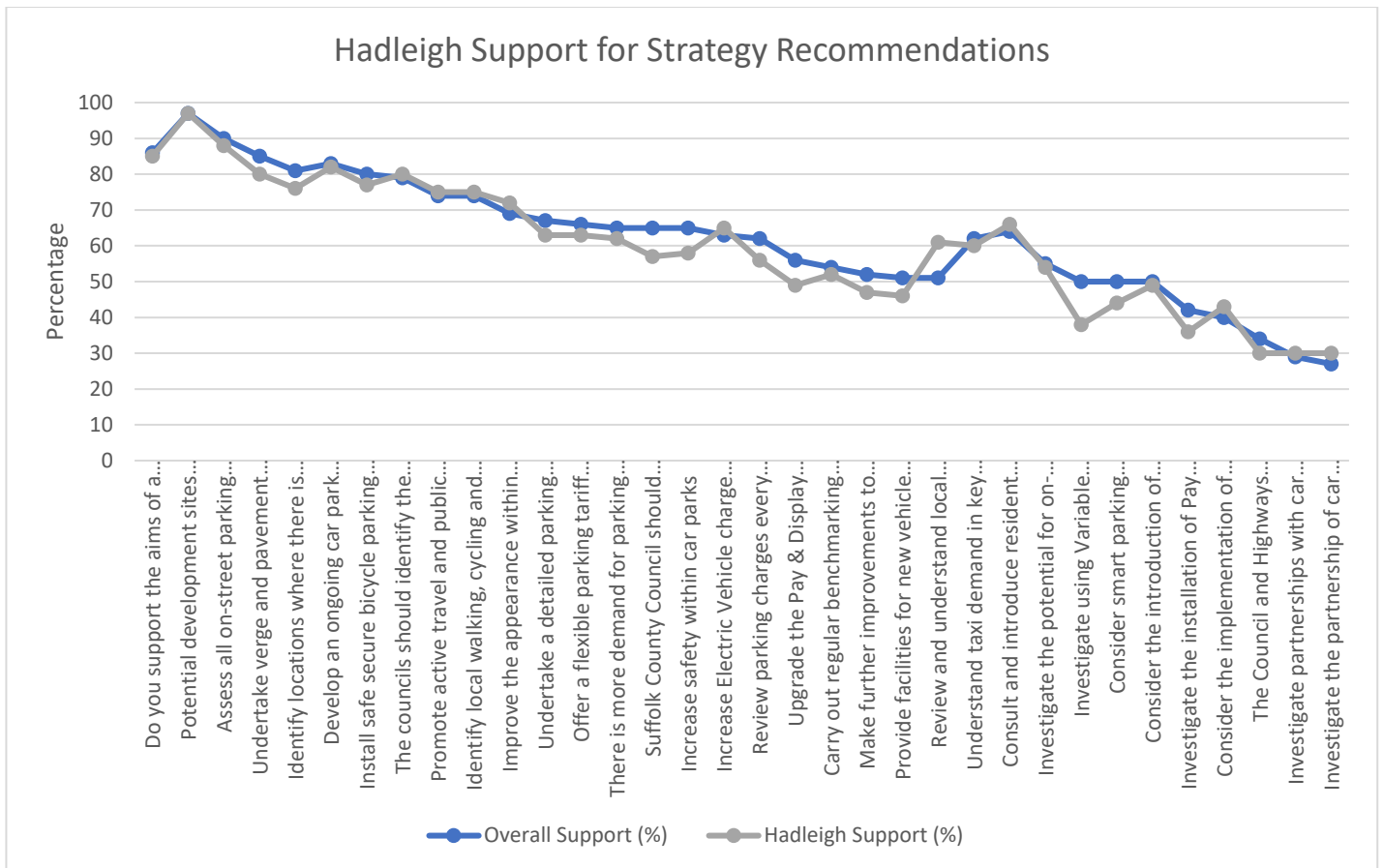


Figure 22 – Support from Hadleigh respondents against overall district support

Despite this, there is still strong support in Hadleigh for many of the recommendations, with 67% of the recommendations being subject to at least 50% support. This provides a platform to understand the recommendations that stakeholders would like to see prioritised. Table 26 provides the top 10 recommendations based on the level of support from the consultation exercise for Hadleigh.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Hadleigh Support (%)
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	97
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	88
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	82
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	80

The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	80
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	77
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	76
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	75
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	75
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	72

Table 26 – Top 10 recommendations for Hadleigh based on consultation responses

4.33 LAVENHAM ANALYSIS

93% of responses from Lavenham support the aims of the parking strategy, which is 7% higher than the overall total across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

Comparing the responses received from the Lavenham area highlights considerably more support for the recommendations than the overall district wide percentages. When considering all 33 recommendations, 20 saw higher levels of support than the overall amount across both districts. “*Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge*” is the recommendation that saw the highest difference in level of support with 24% more respondents from Lavenham supporting the recommendation. As there are currently no parking charges in place in Lavenham, this would suggest that there is an appetite for parking charges to be considered.

“*Investigate the partnership of car clubs*” also had a high level of support compared to the overall total, with 23% more of respondents supporting this recommendation. This recommendation had nearly twice as much support than the overall figure. “*Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas*” is the recommendation that saw the biggest reduction in support compared to the overall total, with 17% less support for this recommendation which is a slight contradiction to the support shown for flexible parking tariff structure.

Figure 23 illustrates how the support in Lavenham for each recommendation compares to the overall support across both districts.

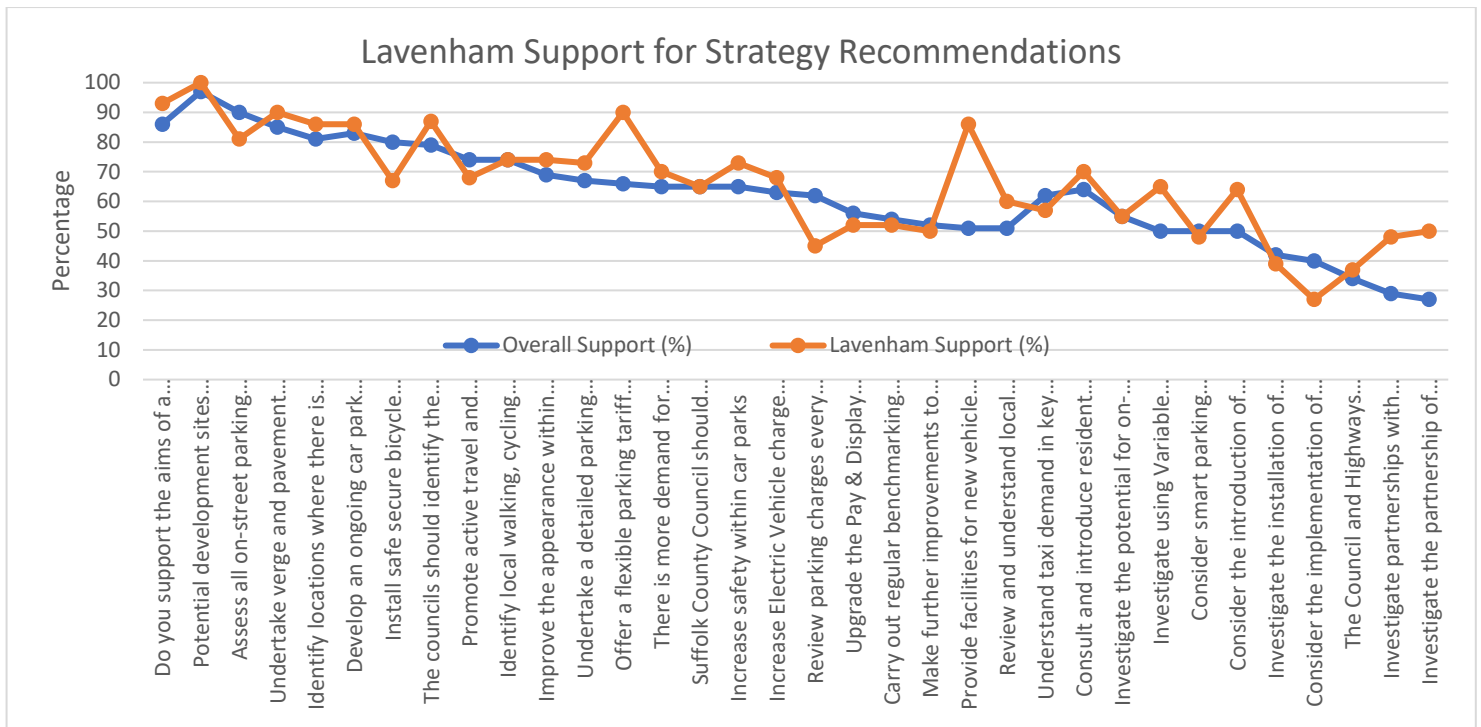


Figure 23 – Support from Lavenham respondents against overall district support

As shown in figure 23, there is very strong support in Lavenham for most of the recommendations, which is encouraging, especially in a more rural environment. 82% of the recommendations have at least 50% support, with many subject to much higher levels of support. This provides a platform to understand the recommendations that stakeholders would like to see prioritised. Table 27 provides the top 10 recommendations based on the level of support from the consultation exercise for Lavenham.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Lavenham Support (%)
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	100
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	90
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	90
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	87

Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	86
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	86
Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management	86
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	81
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	74
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	74

Table 27 – Top 10 recommendations for Lavenham based on consultation responses

4.34 STOWMARKET ANALYSIS

91% of responses received from the Stowmarket area support the aims of the parking strategy, which is 5% higher than the overall response from across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Comparing the responses that came from the Stowmarket area highlights a greater level of support for the recommendations than the overall districts combined. When considering all 33 recommendations, 16 of those saw higher levels of support than the overall total across both districts. “Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge” and “upgrade the Pay & Display machines” are the two recommendations that saw the highest level of support, with 14% more. These two recommendations are clearly linked, which would suggest parking charges and the infrastructure used is important.

“There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks” is the recommendation that saw the lowest level of support compared to the district wide response, with 10% less not support. This would suggest that respondents in Stowmarket feel there is currently an adequate parking supply in the area.

Figure 24 illustrates how the support in Stowmarket for each recommendation compares to the overall support across both districts.

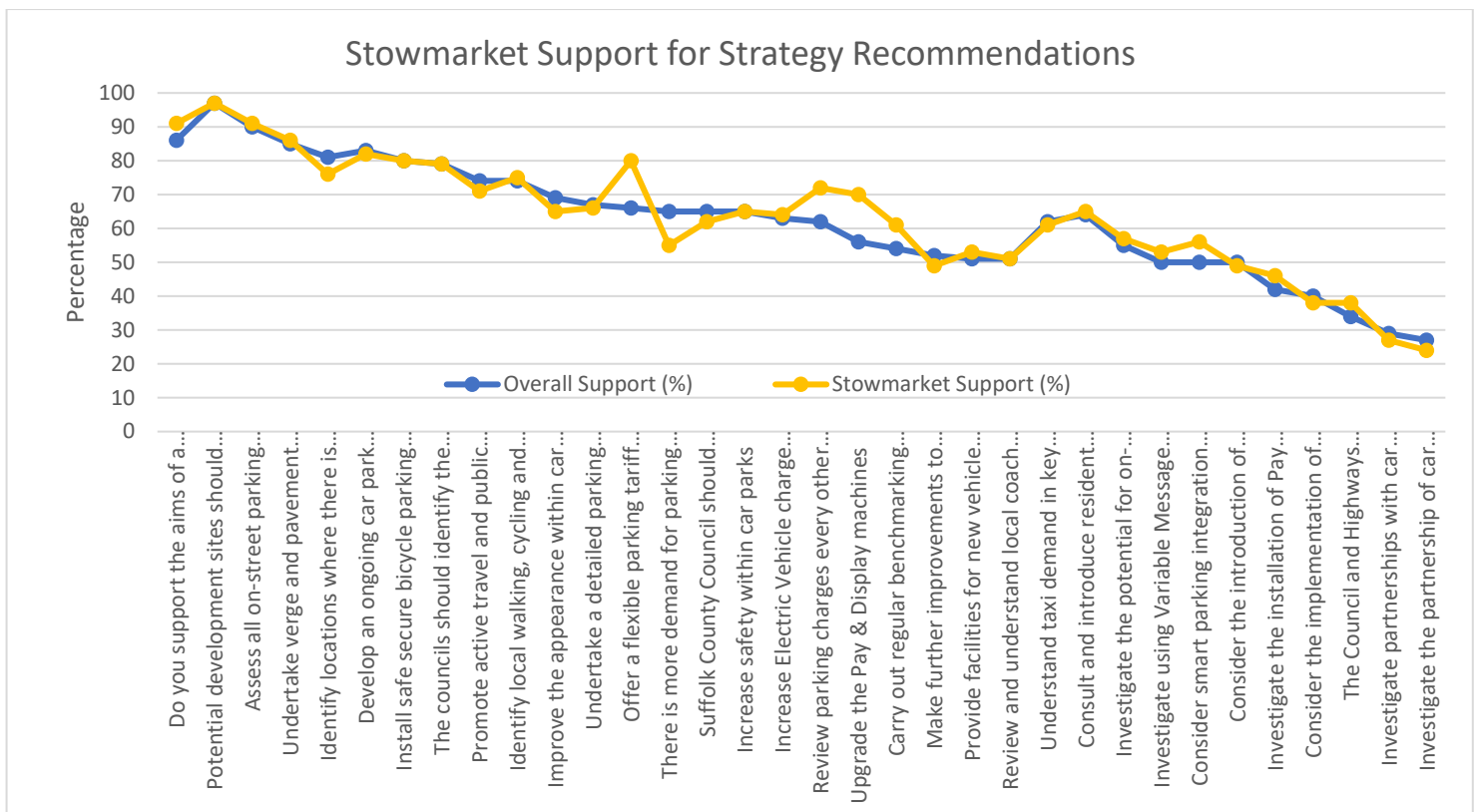


Figure 24 – Support from Stowmarket respondents against overall district support

As shown in figure 24, there is strong support in Stowmarket for many of the recommendations. 79% of the recommendations have at least 50% support, with many subject to higher levels of support. This now provides a platform to understand the recommendations that stakeholders would like to see prioritised. Table 28 provides the top 10 recommendations based on the level of support from the consultation exercise for Stowmarket.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Stowmarket Support (%)
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	97
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	91
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	86
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	82

Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	80
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	80
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	79
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	76
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	75
Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas	72

Table 28 – Top 10 recommendations for Stowmarket based on consultation responses

4.35 EYE ANALYSIS

94% of responses from Eye support the aims of the parking strategy, which is 8% higher than the overall total across Babergh and Mid Suffolk, as well as being the highest level of support from any town and village where analysis has been undertaken.

Comparing the responses that came from Eye highlights more support for the recommendations than the overall districts wide percentages. When considering all 33 recommendations, 17 of those saw higher levels of support than the total amount across both districts. “Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge” is the recommendation that saw the highest level of support than the overall total, with 22% more respondents from Eye supporting this recommendation. As there are currently no parking charges in place in Eye, this would suggest that there is an appetite for parking charges to be considered. “Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations” also had a high level of support than the overall total, with 14% more of respondents supporting this recommendation.

“Understand taxi demand in key locations” is the recommendation that least level of support compared with the overall total, with a difference 11% less not supporting the recommendation. This would suggest that there isn’t a concern around taxi provision.

Figure 25 illustrates how the support in Eye for each recommendation compares to the overall support across both districts.

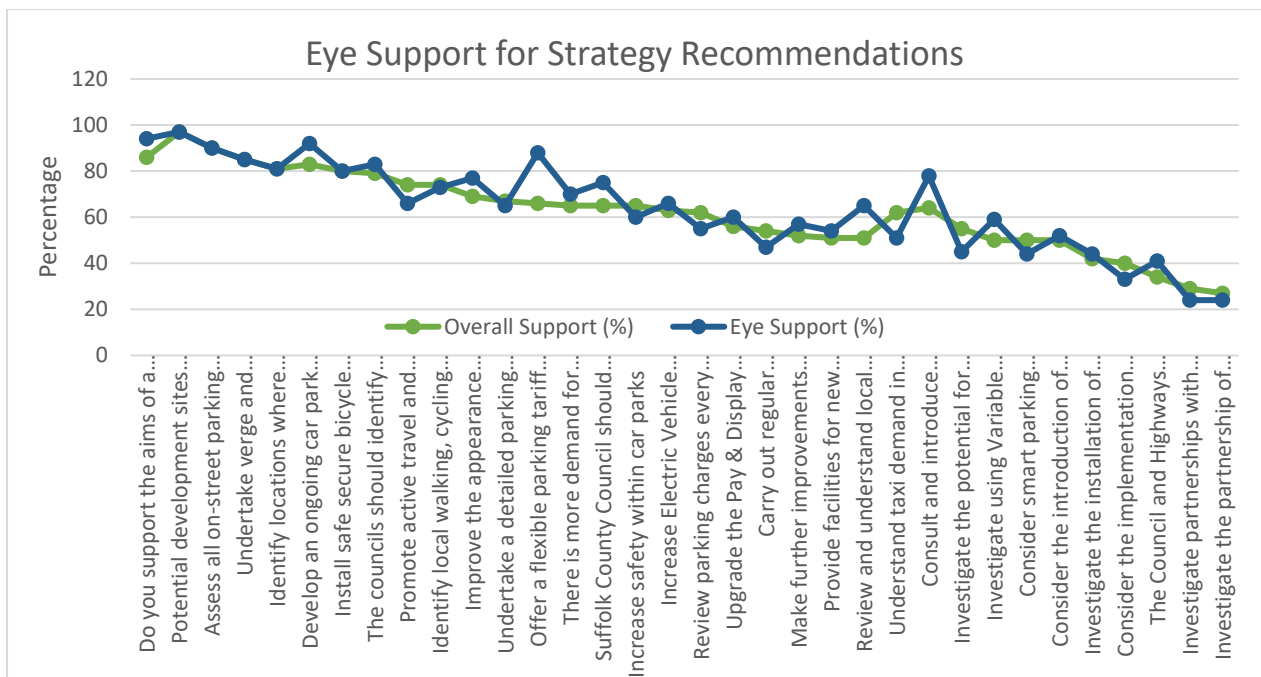


Figure 25 – Support from Eye respondents against overall district support

As shown in figure 25, there is strong support in Eye for many of the recommendations. 76% of the recommendations have at least 50% support, with many subject to higher levels of support. This provides a platform to understand the recommendations that stakeholders would like to see prioritised. Table 29 provides the top 10 recommendations based on the level of support from the consultation exercise for Eye.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Eye Support (%)
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	97
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	92
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	90
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	88
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	85
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	83

Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	81
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	80
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	78
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	77

Table 29 – Top 10 recommendations for Eye based on consultation responses

4.36 NEEDHAM MARKET ANALYSIS

80% of responses from the Needham Market area support the aims of the parking strategy, which is 6% less than the overall total across both Babergh and Mid Suffolk districts.

Overall, the responses from Needham Market demonstrated lower levels of support for the parking strategy recommendations. When considering all 33 recommendations, only 10 saw higher levels of support than the total amount across both districts. *“There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks”* is the recommendation that saw the highest level of support compared to the overall total, with 23% more respondents supporting the recommendation. This would suggest that respondents have real concerns over the number of parking spaces in the town. *“Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge”* also has a large difference in support with 22% more of respondents from Needham Market supporting the recommendation. As there are currently no parking charges in place in Needham Market this would suggest there is an appetite for parking charges to be considered.

“Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand” is the recommendation that saw the lowest level of support compared to the overall total, with 25% less not supporting this recommendation.

Figure 26 illustrates how the support in Needham Market for each recommendation in the parking strategy compares to the overall support across both districts.

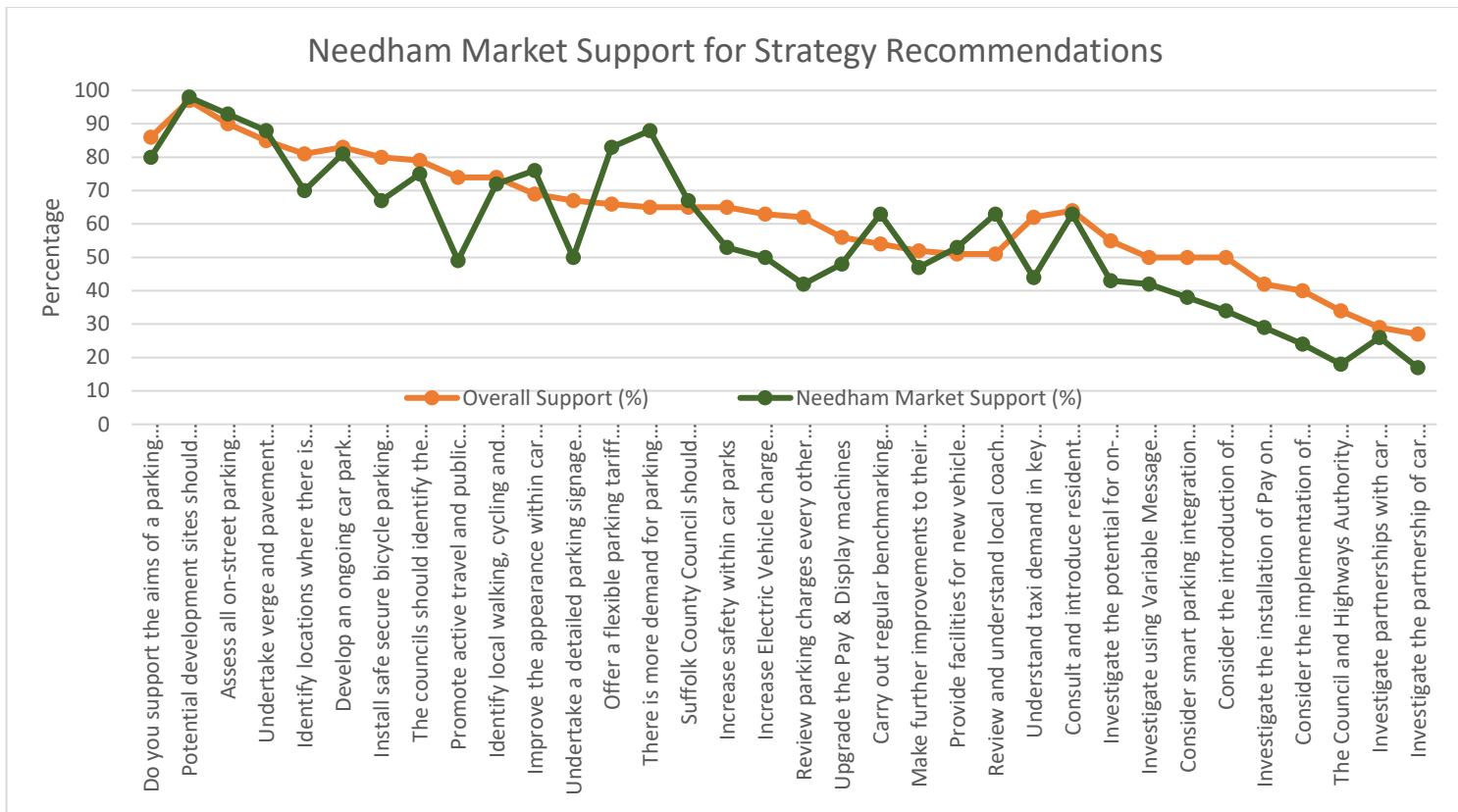


Figure 25 – Support from Needham Market respondents against overall district support

Although there appears to be a number of recommendations that are subject to much lower levels of support in Needham Market, there is still strong support for many of the other recommendations, with 58% of the recommendations being subject to at least 50% support. This is the lowest level of support across the individual locations analysed. The data provides a platform to understand the recommendations that stakeholders would like to see prioritised. Table 30 provides the top 10 recommendations based on the level of support from the consultation exercise for Needham Market.

Parking Strategy Recommendations	Needham Market Support (%)
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	98
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	93

Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	88
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	88
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	83
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	81
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	76
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	75
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	72
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	70

Table 30 – Top 10 recommendations for Needham Market based on consultation responses

4.4 SUMMARY OF LOCAL ANALYSIS

Whilst there is strong support across both districts, there is a noticeably stronger support for the parking strategy from Mid Suffolk stakeholders with a 6% difference - Mid Suffolk, received 89% support for the parking strategy aims, whereas the Babergh received 83% support.

There are some very clear differences between the two districts. Firstly, across the majority of parking strategy themes, Mid Suffolk received a higher number of “strongly supports” responses, whereas Babergh received higher numbers of “supports” responses. Whilst this may not seem significant, it provides evidence that there is greater support for the recommendations in Mid Suffolk. There is also clearly a lower level of support for those recommendations that have an impact on parking charges in Babergh district. Whilst parking charges are in place after a three-hour period, there is a perception that there are not parking charges in place, due to this three-hour free parking concession.

Reviewing responses from the six towns and villages chosen for section 4.3, demonstrates that the location with the highest support for the parking strategy aims is Eye, followed by Lavenham, both of which have received a greater level of support than the overall total of 86%. Stowmarket also has a higher degree of support than the

overall total. Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Needham Market have a lower degree of support than the overall total.

The recommendations included within each of the town / villages top 10 lists were fairly consistent, with only three recommendations appearing on one list, whereas six recommendations appear on all top 10 lists. *“Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking”* is the highest scoring recommendation on all six top 10 lists, and *“assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant”* is the second highest scoring recommendation on four of the top 10 lists, again demonstrating that despite there being differences across the districts, many recommendations are well supported regardless of the location, which is encouraging for the delivery stage.

Table 31 provides details on the recommendations that appeared on the top 10 lists, and the number of times the recommendation was included, along with the position on the list.

Strategy Recommendation	No. Times Included
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	6
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	6
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	6
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	6
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	6
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	6
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	5
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	4
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	4

Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	3
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	2
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	2
Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management	1
Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas	1
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	1

Table 31 – Recommendations on town / village top 10 lists

5.0 CONCLUSION

This phase 2 public consultation has given stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on the recommendations contained in Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils first parking strategy. Due to the number of recommendations included in the strategy, the recommendations have been separated into themes for off-street car parks and on-street parking.

Prior to the phase 2 consultation commencing, a period of pre-consultation was included, which involved liaising with targeted stakeholders over a number of weeks. This was part of a three-stage process, with the fourth stage being the commencement of the consultation. Stage 1 involved presenting the strategy themes to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Cabinets, stage 2 involved the wider district councillors, and stage 3 involved presenting to Town / Parish Councils, and interest groups such as transport groups, the local highway authority, and the councils responsible for enforcement across the two districts.

The phase 2 consultation commenced on 7th June 2022, and lasted seven weeks, closing on the 2nd August 2022. During the consultation, there was a series of roadshow events, which involved BMSDC officers, 2020 Consultancy, and the Portfolio holders visiting numerous locations across Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The in-person roadshow events took place over 6 days and 13 different locations were visited, with the main towns and villages visited twice to include a daytime and evening or Saturday visit.

As part of the consultation exercise, a questionnaire was included, which enabled respondents to outline the level of support or opposition for each of the parking strategy recommendations, as well as supporting or opposing the strategy aims. During the consultation period, 2,004 completed questionnaires were received from stakeholders, with an even split between Babergh, and Mid Suffolk. There was also a good sample of age groups, which means a variety of stakeholders chose to engage with us.

Whilst there is strong support across both districts, there is noticeably stronger support of the parking strategy from Mid Suffolk stakeholders, with a 6% additional support. Eye and Lavenham saw high levels of support for the strategy, whereas Sudbury and Needham Market received lower levels of support. There are six recommendations that appear on all locations top 10 lists, suggesting these should be high priority recommendations.

APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION LEAFLET



P **PARKING**
Strategy Roadshow
21-28 June 2022

This is your opportunity to help shape parking for the next 20 years

Parking affects everybody, so whether you drive a car or not, your views matter.

You can get involved by:

- Joining us at one of our drop-in events
- Completing our short online survey
- Watching a short video clip about the parking strategy,

For full details visit our website:
www.babergh.gov.uk/parkingstrategy www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/parkingstrategy

 Anyone without internet access, can request details of the events and request a paper copy of the survey by calling: 02392 432756
Queries can be emailed to: parking.strategy@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

PARKING

Consultation



Have your say!

Help us shape our parking strategy for the next 20 years



Scan this QR code using
your phone camera

Or visit

www.babergh.gov.uk/parkingstrategy

www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/parkingstrategy

Survey closes 31 July 2022



Anyone without internet access, can request a paper copy by calling 02392 432756

Queries can be emailed to parking_strategy@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

3. Please select to what extent you support or oppose the following

6. Parking capacity

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
There is more demand for parking than there are spaces available in the car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suffolk County Council should provide on street parking where possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential development sites should include appropriate car parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

7. Quality of council-owned car parks.

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Develop an ongoing car park improvement programme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Undertake a detailed parking signage review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase safety within car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve the appearance within car parks i.e. bay lines, trees & shrubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Upgrade the Pay & Display machines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

8. Parking charges.

Please select to what extent you support or oppose the following

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Offer a flexible parking tariff structure in their car parks that charge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carry out regular benchmarking exercises on charges in neighbouring areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review parking charges every other year ensuring they reflect the economy of the local and neighbouring areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments

9. Car parking designation.

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
The councils should identify the most likely destinations and user groups for each car park (e.g. residents, visitors, shoppers, employees) to determine if they should be long or short stay car parks or a combination of both	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

10. Car park technology.

The councils should:

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Investigate the installation of Pay on Exit systems in all suitable chargeable car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide facilities for new vehicle technologies and management (e.g. priority parking spaces)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigate using variable message signs (e.g. signs which could display the number of spaces available in real time)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make further improvements to their website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider smart parking integration e.g. parking apps and virtual permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments relating to these changes:

11. Land use development.

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Identify locations where there is support for additional parking spaces e.g., new car park or a Park & Ride set up for example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review and understand local coach parking requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider the introduction of overnight charges for motorhomes in suitable car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

12. Sustainable transport and integration

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Promote active travel and public transport to reduce parking demand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase Electric Vehicle charge points in their car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Install safe secure bicycle parking facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigate partnerships with car club providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider the implementation of docked bikes, e-bikes, and e-scooters within their car parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

13. Our customers

Please select the reason(s) you use our car parks

- Retail
- Visiting a tourist attraction
- Dining Out
- Work
- Leisure
- Theatre
- Cinema
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Special Events close to the town centre
- Other (please specify including any specific location(s):

4. Please select to what extent you support or oppose the following

14. Parking improvement.

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Undertake verge and pavement parking studies in all locations where there is a known problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess all on-street parking restrictions ensuring they are still relevant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

15. Sustainable highways integration.

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Investigate the partnership of car clubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Understand taxi demand in key locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigate the potential for on-street Electric Vehicle charge points	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify local walking, cycling and travel routes that may impact on-street parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

16. On-street parking

	Strongly support	Support	Neither support or oppose	Oppose	Strongly oppose
The Council and Highways Authority (Suffolk County Council) should consider introducing appropriate parking charges for key on-street parking locations i.e. town centre areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consult and introduce resident parking schemes in identified locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to provide any additional comments including any specific location(s)

17. Please select two recommended actions that you would like to see prioritised.

	OFF-STREET Recommended Action
Priority No 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Priority No 2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to include any additional comments including any specific location(s)

18. Please select two recommended actions that you would like to see prioritised.

	ON-STREET Recommended Action
Priority No 1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Priority No 2	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use this box to include any additional comments including any specific location(s)

19. Are there any recommended actions which you feel haven't been included, that you would like to see explored further?

Recommendation

Recommendation

Please use this box to include any additional comments including any specific location(s)

20. Please use this box to make any comments along with location(s) that you think are relevant in developing our parking strategy

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Basepoint Business Centre
Andersons Road
Southampton
Hampshire

2020 Consultancy Solutions Limited

Tenacity House
11 Osborne Place
Dundee
DD2 1BE

023 9243 2756

info@2020consultancy.co.uk

www.2020consultancy.co.uk

ACTIVE TRAVEL &
SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT

TRAFFIC
ENGINEERING

PARKING
CONSULTANCY

TRANSPORT
PLANNING

ROAD SAFETY

HIGHWAY DESIGN

PUBLIC REALM

Page 335
STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT

INTERIM STAFF

This page is intentionally left blank

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

The characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

Disability	Age	Sex (gender)
Gender reassignment	Marriage/civil partnership	Pregnancy/maternity
Race	Sexual orientation	Religion/belief

By law we must have due regard to the need to:

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

In effect, this means that we need to ensure that our policies and services are fair, equitable and proportionate and where possible mitigate against any adverse impacts on people from the different protected characteristics.

In addition to the above protected characteristics, you should consider the impact of living in a **rural area** as part of this assessment. Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law, but for an organisation such as Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.

The Rural-Urban definition, defines the rurality of very small census based geographies. Census Output Areas forming settlements with populations of over 10,000 (which are urban), while the remainder are defined as one of three rural types: *town and fringe, village or hamlet and dispersed*.

Details	
Service or policy title	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Parking Strategy
Lead officer <i>(responsible for the policy or service/function)</i>	Fiona Duhamel, Director Economic Growth & Climate Change
Officers carrying out the EQIA <i>(at least one must have done EQIA training and it is recommended that an officer responsible for the policy or service/function is involved in completion)</i>	Sharon Bayliss, Service Improvement Advisor, Operations
Is this new or a revision? <i>(If revision state when previous EQIA undertaken)</i>	New
Is this the first time this policy or function has been assessed?	No
Date of completing this EQIA	30 th August 2022

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Description					
<p>What exactly is proposed? <i>(Describe the service/policy and the changes that are being planned)</i></p> <p>To develop Babergh and Mid Suffolks first parking strategy.</p>					
<p>Why? <i>(Give reasons why these changes are being introduced)</i></p> <p><i>Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are keen to develop a parking strategy that provides a comprehensive route map with respect to the long-term approach to parking provision across the districts. The strategy at a high level needs to reflect national policy guidance as it applies to both the future of centres/high streets and sustainable transport and travel as well as patterns of demand.</i></p>					
<p>What will the effect of the changes be? <i>(Describe which people, communities, localities etc. will be affected by the changes)</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring the right level and types of car parking facilities, and the right controls are in place for their use, will help to support regeneration and enable development in and around the District's town centres as well as in rural villages. It is important to ensure that shoppers, tourists, visitors, residents, workers and commuters have access to sufficient, good quality, safe, welcoming parking opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>More specifically the parking strategy needs to provide a set of detailed recommendations as to the nature of future parking provision serving both the town centres and rural villages, and how operationally they will function.</i></p> <p><i>The approval of the Joint Area Parking Management Plan (JAPMP), the subsequent Babergh Car Parking Study Report and the council's climate emergency declaration has highlighted the increasing need to develop a parking strategy that provides a comprehensive route map with respect to the long-term approach to parking provision.</i></p> <p><i>The strategy at a high level needs to reflect national policy guidance as it applies to both the future of town and village centres, sustainable travel, and transport as well as patterns of demand. The parking strategy must also align with the councils Strategic Priorities, the United Nations Sustainability Goals and the goals of Central Government e.g ten-point plan for a green industrial revolution, to ensure consistency.</i></p>					
<p>How will it be implemented? <i>(Describe the decision-making process, timescales, process for implementation)</i></p> <p><i>The process for developing a parking strategy has taken 14 months beginning in July 2021. There are various stages to the process, a detailed is shown in the table below.</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%; padding: 5px;"><u>Task</u></th> <th style="width: 30%; padding: 5px;"><u>Completion Date</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr style="background-color: #e0f2f1;"> <td style="padding: 5px;">STAGE 1 – investigation and data collection</td> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>Task</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	STAGE 1 – investigation and data collection	
<u>Task</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>				
STAGE 1 – investigation and data collection					

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Agree the Parking Strategy process with Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee	28 June 2021
Draft pre-consultation document	Jun / Jul 2021
Cabinet meeting - agree process / costs and sign off	2 August 2021
Pre-consultation / key stakeholder engagement – virtual workshops etc	30 August 2021
Data Gathering including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • legislative research • previous surveys • capacity • occupancy • churn • usage • costs • fees & charges 	Aug to end Sep 2021
STAGE 2 – creation of the strategy	
Further consultation with key stakeholders	1 Sep 2021 to 31 Mar 2022
Draft strategy	30 Apr 2022
STAGE 3 – governance process	
Informal Cabinet discussion	May / Jun 2022
Public consultation	
All member workshops	
Final draft strategy	Jul 2022
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Aug /Sep 2022
Informal Cabinet discussion (EWC)	
Report to Cabinet	Oct 2022

When is it due to start? *(Planned start of new/revised policy/service)*

The aim is to have developed a parking strategy by October 2022 which will then act as a framework for future parking ambitions. The strategy will help to support other initiatives & policies such as planning, sustainable travel etc.

Any other relevant details

There will be financial implications in respect of delivering the recommendations included within the parking strategy. The need for a comprehensive, robust and focused implementation plan is crucial to the parking strategy's success. Where there are significant cost implications, a detailed business case will be required, and approval sought through the council's governance process.

Whilst the parking strategy covers the 20-year period, 2022 to 2042, there will be a need to review in 3–5-years dependent on local economic and global factors, technological advancements etc.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Data about the population
<p>What is the demographic profile or make up of the community you are serving? <i>(A brief overview of quantitative data used and qualitative research undertaken, including customer surveys and focus groups, plus links to reports, local or national data that you have used, suggested sources of information can be found at the end of this document)</i></p> <p>Suffolk Observatory Data for Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Council – shows that the Councils have an older demographic</p> <p>Suffolk Observatory https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/equality-impact-assessment/report/view/5e7fcef336be4fe8a386e2825c7095cf/SHA1</p>
<p>What is the profile or make up of your service users by protected characteristics? <i>(Where this data is available. If it is not currently available state any plans to collect this in future)</i></p> <p>Users of Town Centre Parking in both Babergh and Mid Suffolk Districts will be made up of residents, visitors and commuters. We are not able to accurately profile the demographic of our car park users.</p> <p>Through the data analysis and survey work undertaken by our consultants, it is possible to understand the types of journeys that are made into Babergh and Mid Suffolk town centres such as commutes, shopping, and recreation.</p>

Implications for communities and workforce	
Disability	
<p>What is the impact on people with a disability (including children with additional needs) and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i></p>	<p>Special requirements may be needed for those with a disability to fully utilise the car parks. For example, in respect of the location of parking bays and the space required around the vehicles.</p> <p>The misuse of the blue badge scheme can limit the number of disabled spaces available.</p> <p>Individuals with certain disabilities may have difficulty using car park machinery i.e. taking a ticket on entry or using a pay and display machine.</p> <p>Individuals suffering from dyslexia, those who are visually impaired or those with colour blindness may have difficulty reading the signs and / or pay and display machines..</p> <p>There may be a need to park close to facilities / amenities where there are on-street restrictions in place which are different to those restrictions in council own car parks.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive – as improvements to the parking service will benefit all groups
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	<p>Review of parking space allocation; ensuring adequate provision of disabled parking, spaces are of an appropriate size and accessibility is considered as part of the improvements planned (e.g., surfaces, removing steps, improved signage considering all users).</p> <p>Blue Badge Holders will not be charged for parking in designated disabled bays, no change from current policy. A review of parking arrangements including a charging tariff to encourage different behaviours should help free up more available parking. By applying the policy and changes to service provision and charging fairly and equitably to all vehicle owners who use the car parks</p> <p>Ticket Machines are DDA compliant</p> <p>Guidelines used for design of signage i.e. font size, use of colour etc.</p> <p>Flexibility in applying enforcement rules for disabled drivers who need to park where there are restrictions in place.</p>
Age	
What is the impact on people of different ages and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	<p>Elderly users of the car parks may not receive dispensation, but still have special requirements and so find it more difficult to navigate into / out and around our car parks.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour in our car parks, may impact the sense of security that car park users feel specifically the older and more vulnerable users.</p> <p>Those on low income may struggle to afford parking prices deterring them from regularly use of a car</p>
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	A review of the service and car parking arrangements will have a positive impact for everyone.
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	A review of parking space allocation ensuring adequate provision of spaces that are of appropriate size and accessibility to be considered as part of the improvements we have planned (e.g., surfaces, removing steps, improved signage and considering all users). Also review of car park lighting, arboriculture etc.
Sex (gender)	
What is the impact on people of different genders and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you</i>	Females may feel vulnerable in the car parks if visibility / lighting is poor.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

<i>do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	Ensure adequate lighting / CCTV.
Gender reassignment	
What is the impact on people who have undergone gender reassignment (i.e. transgender people) and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No differential impact anticipated
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	By applying the policy and changes to service provision and charging fairly and equitably to all vehicle owners who use the car parks
Marriage/civil partnership	
What is the impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No differential impact anticipated
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	By applying the policy and changes to service provision and charging fairly and equitably to all vehicle owners who use the car parks
Pregnancy/maternity	
What is the impact on people who are pregnant women or those with a young child and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	Some pregnant women and those with small children may find it hard to get in and out of a car within a normal width parking bay.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive - improvements to the service will benefit all groups
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact	Reviewing and ensuring provision of designated 'Parent and Child' spaces

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

or further promote positive impact?	
Race	
What is the impact on people from different races or ethnic groups and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No differential impact anticipated
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	By applying the policy and changes to service provision and charging fairly and equitably to all vehicle owners who use the car parks
Sexual orientation	
What is the impact on people according to their sexual orientation and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	No differential impact anticipated
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	By applying the policy and changes to service provision and charging fairly and equitably to all vehicle owners who use the car parks
Religion/belief	
What is the impact on people according to their religion or belief and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	Different faith groups may put pressure on parking requirements during specific hours of worship leading to ill feeling within the local community.
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Positive - improvements to the service will benefit all groups
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	All members of the public were invited to be a part of the consultation process through two online questionnaires.

Rurality

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Where people live is not a characteristic protected by law: but for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils it is good practice to consider carefully how location may affect people's experience of a policy or service.	
What is the impact on people according to whether they live in an urban or rural environment and what evidence do you have? <i>(If you do not believe there is any impact describe why not)</i>	<p>Those living in rural areas may have fewer transport options when accessing services and may therefore need to use a car. The review aims to optimise parking availability.</p> <p>People with electric vehicles living outside the local area may be concerned that the charge capacity of their vehicles is not sufficient to visit our town centres.</p>
How does it have a positive or negative impact?	Charging will have an adverse impact on those who must use a car to access town centres. The promotion of sustainable transport alternatives may have a positive impact.
What could be done to mitigate any adverse impact or further promote positive impact?	<p>By applying the policy and changes to service provision and charging fairly and equitably to all vehicle owners who use the car parks. Improvements to car parks will have a positive impact on all users.</p> <p>Electric Vehicle Charging Points have been installed in 6 car parks across the districts (20 EV charge points), with plans in place to install at a further 12 car parks across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.</p>

Making Decisions	
Having completed this equality impact assessment indicate which decision is recommended to be taken.	
Should the policy or service be implemented as the correct course of action?	Yes
Should the policy or service be amended as suggested by the report so that mitigating actions are taken to address an adverse or negative impact on any characteristic?	No
Should the policy or service be reviewed and revised more significantly to take into account its impact on different groups?	No
Should the policy or service not be actioned as there are too many negative impacts?	No

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Monitoring Impact	
Assessing the impact on equality is an ongoing process that does not end once a policy or service had been agreed or implemented.	
How frequently will the policy or service be reviewed?	Once the strategy is in place, it is anticipated that this will be reviewed every 3-5 years, but will be very much dependent on local economic and global factors, technological advancements etc.
Who will be involved?	Sharon Bayliss, Service Improvement Advisor, Operations Sarah Gilson, Parking Services Manager Fiona Duhamel, Director, Economic Growth and Climate Change
Will there need to be an action plan completed for any amendments?	Yes
What further evidence or consultation will be needed to check that the policy or service is working well?	Continue to work with both the Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Disability Forums – seek feedback on a regular basis.

Completion	
Authors signature	
Date of completion	

Additional sources of data can be found on the following links:

<http://www.suffolkobservatory.info/Default.aspx>

<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/>

<http://suffolkcf.org.uk/publications/hidden-needs-2016/>

<https://www.nao.org.uk/>

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 9

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/22/22
FROM: Councillor John Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance	DATE OF MEETING: 3 October 2022
OFFICER: Melissa Evans, Director, Corporate Resources	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB369.

EXEMPTION OF RIGHT TO BUY RECEIPTS FOR NEW COUNCIL HOUSING FROM POOLING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the option to exclude receipts under Right to Buy relating to new council homes built or acquired since July 2008 from pooling regulations.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 There are no other available options.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That application for exemption from pooling for all Right to Buy receipts from the sale of existing council homes built or acquired since July 2008 and homes built or acquired by the Council going forwards is approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

Exemption from pooling for the sale of these homes would mean that the Council retains more flexibility in how it uses these capital receipts and can apply them to any Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital expenditure or to repay debt without time restrictions.

4. KEY INFORMATION

Background

- 4.1 Under the current regulations the Council has to “pool” Right to Buy receipts and must use a proportion of the retained receipts to finance eligible new build and acquired affordable and social housing. This can be up to 40% of the cost but must be spent within 5 years of the receipt.
- 4.2 It is current Government policy that any new council homes built since July 2008 are eligible for exclusion from the provisions in these pooling regulations.
- 4.3 This means that, if these replacement homes were subsequently sold under the Right to Buy, the council would be able to retain the whole receipt with no conditions or time constraints. Receipts from sales of properties built or acquired since July 2008 can

be spent on any eligible capital purpose - affordable housing, regeneration projects or repaying HRA debt.

- 4.4 There is one exception to this. Where homes sold were built with social housing grant, the balance of the initial grant will be returned to the Homes England to be reinvested to enable more affordable rented homes to be built.
- 4.5 Councils can apply retrospectively for an exemption from pooling for all HRA dwellings acquired or built after 22 July 2008. Properties that have already been sold, and that meet the criteria can also be issued with retrospective agreements.
- 4.6 Applications can be made for dwellings that have been acquired or built after 22 July 2008 that are already in the housing stock and developments in progress.
- 4.7 An Agreement would be made under powers provided by section 11(6) of the Local Government Act 2003 permitting the council to retain the full capital receipt on any subsequent sale of excluded properties. Applications to enter into s11(6) Agreements can be made at any time.

Types of properties eligible for exemption

- 4.8 DLUHC will assess each application against the principle of supporting the provision of additional local authority housing. Most applications are likely to be one of the following:
 - **New build schemes started since 22 July 2008.** The start of a scheme is the date when the building contractor takes possession of the site or property and when both the councils and the builder have signed the building contract.
 - **Remodelling schemes started since 22 July 2008.** Remodelling is the adaptation of existing structures and includes conversion of 'difficult to let' properties, or the creation of sheltered housing to meet the needs of elderly people, combining adjacent units to provide larger accommodation to meet the needs of extra-care housing, or to provide self-contained units in multi-occupied accommodation. It does not include simple refurbishment to replace like for like or intended to cover the addition of an extra room to an existing property.
 - **Properties purchased or otherwise newly acquired since 22 July 2008.** Properties that immediately before acquisition were not held by the council.
 - Properties are eligible if supported by grant from Homes England or supported by the council's own resources including schemes for which a Homes England bid was unsuccessful.

The Council's position

- 4.9 As at 31 March 2022, 145 properties in Mid Suffolk have been identified as eligible for exemption from pooling, having been built or acquired since July 2008.
- 4.10 Of these, there have been two properties sold where the receipt was subject to pooling. If the Council applies for the exemption, these receipts could be moved from the pooled receipts, which are subject to the conditions outlined in 4.1, to general HRA capital receipts to be used for any HRA capital expenditure or to repay HRA debt, without time constraints.

- 4.11 The way that the pooling system works means that it is not possible to determine what the impact of retrospective applications to DLUHC would be. It is also not possible to predict the level of capital receipts that the exemption could apply to in the future as this is dependent on the number of applicable properties sold, their value and the Right to Buy discount applied.

Advantages & disadvantages of the exemption

- 4.12 The result of applying for the exemption would be additional flexibility in how the capital receipts could be used. This is summarised in the table below.

Current position: pooled retained receipts	With exemption applied: outside of pooling regulations
Requirement to use the receipt within 5 years or pay back to Government	No time limit for the use of the receipt
Can be used for replacement dwellings only.	Can be used for any HRA capital expenditure or to repay debt. This includes planned maintenance, refurbishment and retrofit.
Use limited to 40% of the cost of replacement dwellings.	These receipts could be used towards financing the remaining 60% of replacement dwellings, helping to ensure that these are spent within the 5-year time limit.

- 4.13 There are no disadvantages to applying for the exemption for the Council's homes. The receipts could still be used in the same way as they are currently after the exemption is applied, but the Council would have the flexibility to use the receipts differently to provide the optimum financing strategy for the HRA capital programme.

5. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 5.1 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of its resources is what underpins the ability to achieve the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. Specific links are to financially sustainable Councils and managing our corporate and housing assets effectively.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

These are detailed in the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific legal implications.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business Risk No. 4 – We may be unable to respond in a timely and effective way to financial demands. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
The application for exemption is refused	2 (unlikely)	1 (minimal)	Continue to use capital receipts as they are currently.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 No consultations have taken place or are required for this report.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 An equality analysis has not been completed because there is no action to be taken on service delivery as a result of this report.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Additional flexibility around the use of these receipts could help the Council meet its objectives for retrofit schemes for its housing stock.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 None

13. REPORT AUTHORS

Rebecca Hewitt: Corporate Manager – Finance, Commissioning & Procurement

Sue Palmer: Senior Business Partner - Capital & Treasury

Caroline Pearce: Business Partner – Capital & Treasury

Agenda Item 10

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: MCa/22/23
FROM: Cabinet Member for Finance John Whitehead	DATE OF MEETING: 3 October 2022
OFFICER: Melissa Evans – Director Corporate Resources	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB383

Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme 2023/24 - Consultation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To outline proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Scheme and to seek approval from Councillors to enter a period of formal consultation before seeking adoption of the revised scheme to Cabinet and Council in early 2023. The Council Tax Reduction (Working Age) Revised Scheme will come into effect on 1st April 2023

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Option 1
Renew the existing Working Age LCTR Scheme to allow an up to 100% maximum reduction for all households.
- 2.2 Option 2
Renew the existing Working Age LCTR Scheme to allow an up to 100% maximum reduction for all legacy benefit households and introduce a simplified scheme for UC customers that will allow 'passport' claims to be automated based on the UC financial data without additional verification.
- 2.3 Option 3
Renew the existing Working Age LCTR Scheme to allow an up to 100% maximum reduction for all legacy benefit households and introduce a simplified scheme for UC customers that will allow 'passport' claims to be automated based on the UC financial data without additional verification. Create a transitional protection scheme to support those households who would be worse off under the simplified UC scheme.
- 2.4 Option 4
Continue with the existing Working Age LCTR Scheme of up to 95% maximum reduction for all households

<p>3. RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>3.1 To consult on Option 3 as set out in Appendix B of this report as the basis for a revised (Working Age) Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24.</p> <p>3.2 To authorise the Director for Corporate Resources following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to initiate the formal consultation on the proposed revision to the Mid Suffolk District Council (Working Age) Council Tax Reduction Local Scheme.</p>
<p>REASON FOR DECISION</p> <p>3.3 To increase the maximum reduction available to 100% and reduce the number of customers undergoing recovery processes.</p> <p>3.4 To avoid unnecessary means testing and provide equitable access to CTR for all customers who receive welfare benefits.</p> <p>3.5 To reduce the requirement for recalculation of awards for customers on UC with fluctuating earnings.</p> <p>3.6 To ensure that no customer is disadvantaged on the introduction of the new CTR Scheme</p> <p>3.7 To meet the statutory consultation requirements and inform future decision making.</p>

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Council currently operates two Council Tax Reduction (CTR) schemes:
- CTR State Pension Age Scheme; and
 - CTR Working Age (Local) Scheme
- 4.2 The State Pension Age Scheme is a prescribed scheme and councils are prohibited from changing any aspect of the scheme.
- 4.3 The Council’s CTR Working Age (Local) Scheme (CTRS) was first introduced in April 2013 offering a maximum reduction in Council Tax to eligible households of 95%.
- 4.4 The Scheme was subsequently revised in 2018 – increasing the maximum reduction available to 95% for both councils whilst allowing customers in receipt of the then new Universal Credit (UC) the same access to CTR as recipients of the legacy benefits which Universal Credit had replaced.
- 4.5 In response to the ‘cost of living’ crisis there is a proposal to renew the Working Age LCTR to allow an up to 100% reduction. Helping the most financially vulnerable across the districts and provide some much needed support within a well-established scheme.

- 4.6 In order to deliver this support three options have been reviewed with a recommendation for the option that protects the most financially vulnerable, will be least bureaucratic and can also deliver service efficiencies in the future. This is reflected in a new banded scheme that encompasses transitional protection in 2023/24.
- 4.7 Following the consultation, a recommendation for a revised scheme will be proposed to Cabinet and Council in early 2023.

5. Background

- 5.1 The CTR schemes 'piggyback' on the means-tested Housing Benefit (HB) scheme using the same calculation method & rules for entitlement. This works well for those customers who receive both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction although, for a number of customers, this means-testing is undertaken solely to calculate entitlement to CTR. I will refer to these as CTR only cases.
- 5.2 The number of CTR only cases have grown as Universal Credit becomes the primary benefit claimed by new customers requiring help with rent. Additionally, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have been migrating all existing working age HB claimants onto Universal Credit. This migration will continue for legacy benefits at an unspecified date in the future. Whilst a 'natural' migration had been planned, the Coronavirus pandemic caused a significant acceleration in this migration as many existing customers experienced a significant change in their circumstances which required a move from HB to UC.
- 5.3 Since the introduction of the revised scheme in 2018, the caseload profile for recipients of Council Tax Reduction has changed significantly and now almost 60% of CTR customers receive Universal Credit.
- 5.4 The operation of the current CTR scheme is administratively burdensome. UC has award periods which require reviews to entitlement of UC every month for people who work. These reviews generate new award notifications to Local Authorities (LA's) for any change in circumstances which, in turn, prompt a reassessment of CTR awards. The proposals for an up to 100% reduction scheme will also produce a reduction in printing, postage and recalculation of awards.
- 5.5 The efficiencies highlighted above will deliver service savings within the Shared Revenues Partnership. These will be realised through potentially lower financial contributions from Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Ipswich for the financial year following the introduction of a 100% reduction scheme. This could be in the region of £75,000 to £150,000 in subsequent years to be shared amongst the partners.
- 5.6 The continual reassessments consequently create Council Tax (CT) adjustments which necessitate the production of a new CT bill. Each new bill notifies the customer that a new instalment plan has been set (satisfying the legal notice period) and of the date when the first instalment falls due. This effectively defers the customer from making CT payments and, just before that new instalment falls due, UC recalculates again, and the process is repeated. This constant deferral causes confusion for customers as to when and how much to pay and can lead to accrual of CT arrear debt. A mechanism which reduces the requirement to recalculate

awards would provide clarity for customers with fluctuating earnings and allow for any Council Tax due to be spread over the year.

- 5.7 As the current scheme requires that everyone contributes towards their Council Tax by at least 5%, many CTR customers are left with small balances to pay. These balances are difficult to collect, and recovery processes can lead to customers incurring costs – sometimes the cost of which exceeds the balance to pay. These balances are difficult to collect, and recovery processes can lead to customers incurring costs – sometimes the cost of which exceeds the balance to pay. Moving to a 100% reduction maximum scheme would mean those customers who are living on welfare benefits alone would have no Council Tax to pay and would not be subject to recovery processes or related costs. The reduction in recovery action will reduce the printing and postage of reminders, final notices and summons'. These processes themselves are generally automated and offer no potential for officer time savings.
- 5.8 The existing LCTR scheme does not work well for customers in receipt of UC and the proposals detailed within this report will significantly alleviate the pressures of financial uncertainty for this group of customers.
- 5.9 The additional financial pressures brought about by the current 'cost of living' crisis make this timely for the Council to offer additional financial support to its most financially vulnerable residents

6. Options To be considered

6.1 Option 1

Renew the existing Working Age LCTR Scheme to allow an up to 100% maximum reduction for all households.

- 6.2 Moving to a 100% reduction maximum scheme would mean those customers who are living on welfare benefits alone would have no Council Tax to pay and would not be subject to recovery processes or related costs.
- 6.3 This is the simplest change to introduce but perpetuates the existing problems of Universal Credit customers being put through a secondary means-test process and then being subject to monthly means-tested reviews as UC awards change. As the UC caseload increases, the workload is likely to become unmanageable and lead to long delays for all customers (including those on Housing Benefit) unless there is to be further investment in additional resources.
- 6.4 Approximately 2297 individuals will be better off. Each customer will gain CTR equal to 5% of their Council Tax liability. An average increase of £1.20 per week.
- 6.5 **Option 2**
Renew the existing Working Age LCTR Scheme to allow an up to 100% maximum reduction for all legacy benefit households and introduce a simplified scheme for UC customers that will allow 'passported' claims to be automated based on the UC financial data without additional verification.
- 6.6 UC claims without additional earnings would be awarded a 100% reduction on their Council Tax automatically based on their calculated UC entitlement. Customers

with additional earnings will be managed within the scheme based on the level of earnings they receive as evidenced to and reported by DWP.

- 6.7 This scheme will maximise the opportunity for automation of UC notifications, offer a transparent scheme that will allow customers to calculate their own entitlement 'at a glance' and dramatically reduce the number of transactions that would lead to new bills/notifications being produced.
- 6.8 Approximately 2036 individuals will have the same/better reduction award with an average benefit increase of £1.32 per week and a maximum benefit increase of £28.71 per week.
- 6.9 This option could deliver future operational savings of £75,000 to £150,000 in subsequent financial years following the introduction shared amongst the partners.
- 6.10 **Option 3**
Same as Option 2 above but introduces a Transitional Protection Scheme for Universal Credit customers that would otherwise receive a lower entitlement at the introduction of the new scheme.
- 6.11 This scheme could operate until a change in circumstances or break in claim. The details of operation are part of the consultation.
- 6.12 As with Option 2 except approximately an additional 261 individuals will receive Transitional Protection. This results in 2297 individuals having the same/better reduction.
- 6.13 This option could deliver future operational savings in subsequent financial years following the introduction.
- 6.14 This option will ensure that no customer is financially 'worse off' on the introduction of a new CTR Scheme.

7. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 Ensuring that the Council makes best use of its resources is what underpins the ability to achieve the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The costs for Mid Suffolk of the three options are set out below, as mentioned in paragraph 6.9 there is likely to be operational savings that would offset these costs.

Option 1 Increase CTR from 95% to 100%	£12.6k
Option 2 Increase CTR from 95% to 100% and introduce a Banded Earnings scheme for UC customers	£14.0k
Option 3 Increase CTR from 95% to 100% and introduce a Banded Earnings scheme for UC customers and Transitional Protection.	£23.5k

- 8.2 The financial impacts in respect of cost arising from the proposals within this report are detailed within the appendices.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Section 13A(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) states that the amount of council tax which a person is liable to pay in respect of any chargeable dwelling and any day (a) is to be reduced to the extent if any required by the Council's council tax reduction scheme under section 13A(2). Subsection 13A(1)(c) allows that in any case the council tax liability may be reduced, or if the amount has already been reduced under section 13A(1)(a), to such further extent, as the Council thinks fit. Under Section 13A(2) the Council must make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of council tax payable in respect of dwellings situated in its area, by (a) persons whom the Council considers to be in financial need, or (b) persons in classes consisting of persons whom the Council considers to be, in general, in financial need. Section 13A(6) confirms the power under subsection (1)(c) includes the power for the Council to reduce an amount of council tax liability to nil.
- 9.2 Schedule 1A sets the arrangements for council tax reduction schemes. Paragraph 2 details the matters to be included in schemes, for example Paragraph 2(1) states that a scheme must state the class of persons who are to be entitled to a reduction under the scheme, and paragraph 2(3) says a scheme must set out the reduction to which each person in each class are to be entitled, and different reductions may be set out for different classes. Paragraph 4(d) confirms a reduction may be the whole amount of council tax (so that the amount payable is nil). Paragraph 5 of Schedule 1A requires the Council each financial year to consider whether to revise its scheme or replace it with another scheme.
- 9.3 Before making a scheme, the Council has a duty to (in the following order): (a) consult any major precepting authority which has the power to issue a precept to it; (b) publish a draft scheme, and (c) consult "such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme." (Schedule 1A Paragraph 3(1)). Once the Council has made the scheme it must publish it in the manner it thinks fit (Paragraph 3(3) of Schedule 1A).
- 9.4 If a Council fails to consult in accordance with the Act and the so-called Gunning principles on consultation, there is a possibility that any scheme could be subject to a challenge of Judicial Review, and if successful may be set aside. These principles are: (1) proposals are still at a formative stage; (2) there is sufficient information to give 'intelligent consideration'; (3) there is adequate time for consideration and response; and (4) 'conscientious consideration' must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made. The Council should therefore ensure that it consults with anyone who is likely to have an interest in the scheme, provide enough information of the scheme, and sufficiently reasonably time to respond, and it must then properly consider and take into account any responses received.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Corporate / Significant Business. Key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Successful legal challenge to the Working Age CTR scheme changes	Highly unlikely	Bad/Serious	Follow legal requirements for public consultation
Failure to meet the deadlines for agreeing/ implementing the scheme	Highly Unlikely	Bad/Serious	Project Management Committee Scheduling Gateway Reviews Test system set-up

11. CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance were consulted in the designing of the options for consideration.
- 11.2 Before any such changes can be adopted, the Council is required to
- consult any major precepting authority which has power to issue a precept to it,
 - publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and
 - consult such other persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme.
- 11.3 In 11.1 above:
- 11.4 Major precepting authorities would be Suffolk County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, both of whom can be approached direct.
- 11.5 Publishing the scheme would be satisfied by publishing the revised CTR Scheme on the Council's Web Site, provided that attention is drawn to it on the "Home" page and elsewhere, such as:
- in Social Media posts,
 - in the signature panel of Council e-mails,
 - in a standard paragraph in every Council Tax, CTR and Housing Benefit letter sent, and
 - in a local press release.
- 11.6 Consultation would include:

- a) Council Tax liable persons.
- b) Those currently in receipt of a Council Tax Reduction (CTR):
- c) Advisers regarding debt problems – including SCC Financial Inclusion Advice Service, Citizens Advice, Anglia Care Trust, Step Change, and National Debt Line; and
- d) Landlords, in particular, Social Landlords and the Council’s Housing Departments.

11.7 Consulting those above can be carried out in tandem with the publication of the scheme by inviting comments from those who view it on-line and by the publicity suggested regarding publication above.

11.8 A draft timeline for the consultation and decision making is shown below

Cabinet decision on consultation	6-week consultation	Earliest date to make a decision		Latest date to make the decision	
		Cabinet	Council	Cabinet	Council
3 rd October 2022	13 th October to 24 th November	13th January 2023	26th January 2023	6th February 2023	23 rd February 2023

12. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 12.1 The proposals in this report equalise the Pension Age CTR Scheme and the Working Age CTR Scheme by offering up to 100% Council Tax Reduction thus ensuring that as well as age, there won’t be discrimination against the other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief or because someone is married or in civil partnership)
- 12.2 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- 12.3 The proposals in this report equalise the pension age CTR scheme and the working age CTR scheme by offering up to 100% council tax reduction thus ensuring age is not a reason for difference in treatment under either scheme.
- 12.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required for consultation but will be undertaken prior to any scheme change implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.5 The proposal to amend the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme does not have a detrimental impact on the Council’s climate change objectives.

13. APPENDICES

Title	Location
Option 1 Increase the maximum rate of CTR from 95% to 100%	Appendix A
Option 2 Increase the maximum rate of CTR from 95% to 100% and introduce a Banded Earnings scheme for UC customers	Appendix B
Option 3 Increase the maximum rate of CTR from 95% to 100% and introduce a Banded Earnings scheme for UC customers and Transitional Protection.	Appendix C

14. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

14.1 None.

Option 1

Increase the maximum rate of CTR from 95% to 100% reduction of the Council Tax charge maintaining alignment with the Housing Benefit Scheme.

This provides for the simplest change and allows for all customers to be treated in the same way. The caseload changes on a daily basis but the table below demonstrates the approximate cost of change.

Table 1

	Council Tax Net Collectable Liability	Cost of CTR 22/23 95% Scheme	Cost of CTR 22/23 100% Scheme	Cost of uplift to 100% Scheme (+5% liability)	Caseload on 30th June 2022
Based on data as of 30 th June 2022					
Working Age	£727,118	£2,352,038	£2,494,807	£142,769	2,297

The cost of the CTR scheme is borne proportionally by precepting authorities.

Based on the 2022/23 Council Tax Band D figures, the increase in the scheme costs would impact the preceptors by the following amounts:

Table 2

Cost of uplift to 100% Scheme	Suffolk County Council 74.1%	Police & Crime Commissioner 12.8%	Mid Suffolk 8.8%	Parish Average 4.3%
£142.7k	£105.8k	£18.2k	£12.6k	£6.1k

Option 2

Increase the maximum rate of CTR from 95% to 100% reduction of the Council Tax charge maintaining alignment with the Housing Benefit Scheme for legacy customers and introduce a Banded Earnings element to the scheme to account for Universal Credit customers.

This scheme (as modelled) costs just £22,810 (BDC) & £16,014 (MSDC) more to support than option 1.

The cost of the CTR scheme is borne proportionally by precepting authorities.

Based on the 2022/23 Council Tax Band D figures, the increase in the scheme costs would impact the preceptors by the following amounts:

Table 3

Cost of uplift to 100% Scheme and UC Banded Scheme	Suffolk County Council 74.1%	Police & Crime Commissioner 12.8%	Mid Suffolk 8.8%	Parish Average 4.3%
£158.7k	£117.7k	£20.2k	£14.0k	£6.8k

Option 2 was modelled assuming the following income thresholds for customers on UC. These are completely flexible, and both the band thresholds and weekly contribution can be amended.

Table 4 – Income Bands

Income Bands (Monthly)	monthly contribution	Income Bands (Weekly up to)	Weekly contribution
Not in work or less than £290	£0	Not in work or less than £66.92	£0
£290 - £609.99	£35	£140.77	£8.08
£610 - £1159.99	£80	£267.69	£18.46
£1160 to £1844.99	£120	£425.77	£27.69
£1845 - £2369.99	£185	£546.92	£42.69
£2370 - £2899.99	£240	£669.23	£55.39
Over £2900	No entitlement to CTS	over £669.23	No entitlement to CTS

Only those UC customers who earn over £290 per month would need to make any contribution towards their Council Tax and, provided their earnings do not fluctuate greatly, payments would remain the same throughout the year.

The main groups of people who benefit from this scheme are those where the claimant or partner had Carers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance included within their Universal Credit. This is counted as income within the current scheme and 20% of that income is used to reduce weekly entitlement to CTR. Under the new scheme, those customers who do not work are 'passport'ed to full CTR. Those customers who work and have Carers/Employment Support Allowance, have this 'other' income disregarded as additional income and, as such, see less of a reduction to their weekly entitlement.

95.37% of customers receive the same/better reduction than under the current scheme.

The customers who are adversely affected by this change are those who have Housing Costs included within their UC. The current scheme assumes that the assessed UC level is equivalent to the 'basic living allowance' used for legacy benefit customers and results in higher entitlement to CTR.

Option 3

Increase the maximum rate of CTR from 95% to 100% reduction of the Council Tax charge maintaining alignment with the Housing Benefit Scheme for legacy customers, introduce a Banded Earnings element to the scheme to account for Universal Credit customers and Transitional Protection.

Option 3 details are as for Option 2 but, for those customers who would be adversely affected under Option 2, Transitional Protection would be awarded to 'top up' entitlement to that of entitlement levels at the 31st March 2022.

Transitional Protection is awarded under Section 13A (1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which gives Local Authorities the ability to make a further reduction to an established LCTR scheme in saying that the amount of Council Tax which a person is liable to pay in respect of any chargeable dwelling and any day 'may be reduced to such extent (or, if the amount has been reduced under paragraph (a) or (b), such further extent) as the billing authority for the area in which the dwelling is situated thinks fit'. Such additional awards are made at the Councils discretion.

Awards made at the Council's discretion are to be financed by the Council.

Due to the multiple ways that a Transitional Protection scheme can operate the costs will be calculated post consultation based on feedback received.

Introducing a Transitional Protection Scheme to preserve the award for 23/24 to at least that of the entitlement in 22/23 would have the following estimated cost **£23.5k**

These estimates assume a Transitional Protection award for the whole of the financial year 2023/24.

This page is intentionally left blank