



2020

HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS



Parking Study Report

FOR BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

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	METHODOLGY	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.

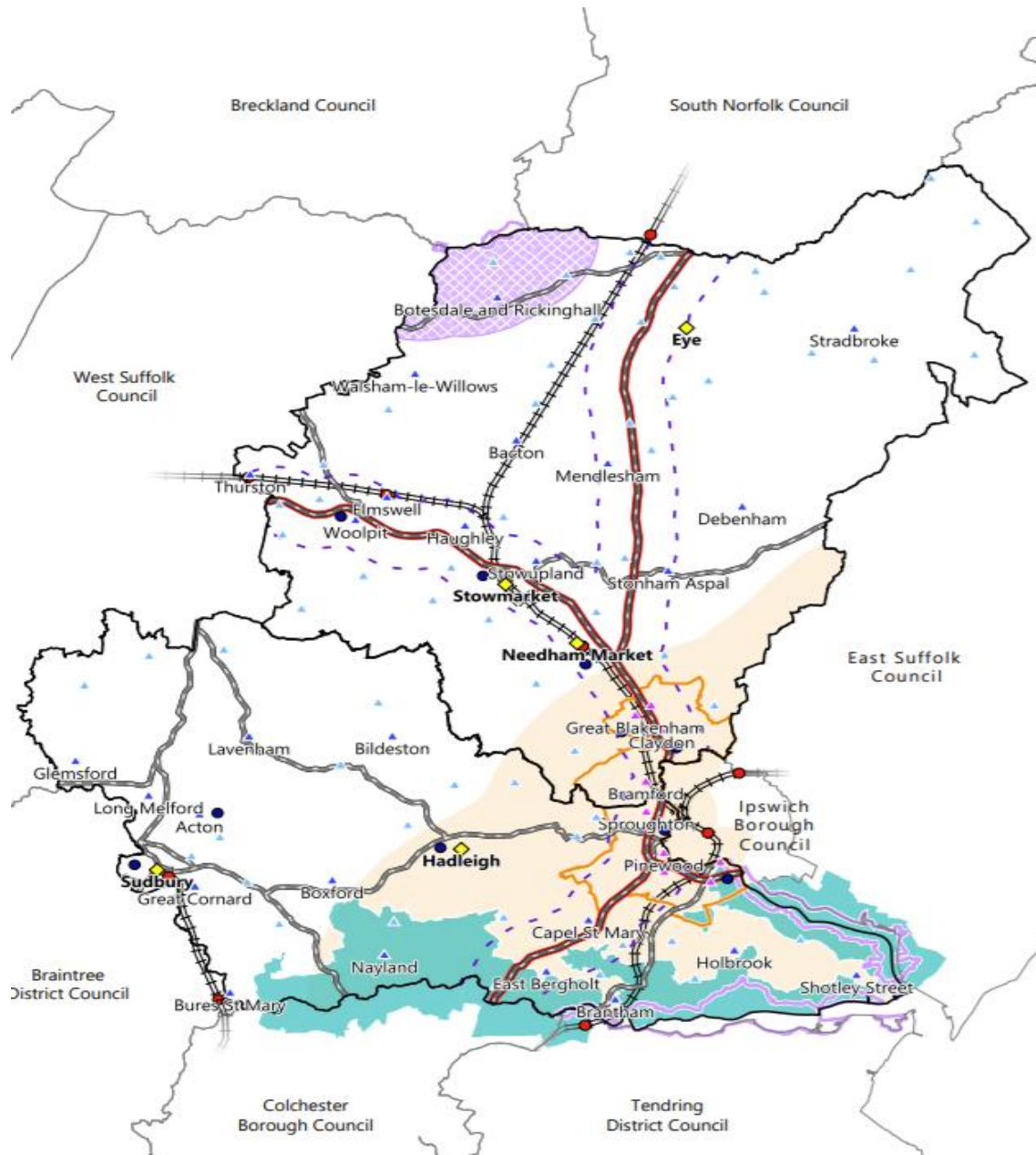


Figure 1 – Location of Babergh & Mid Suffolk District in relation to Suffolk region

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.

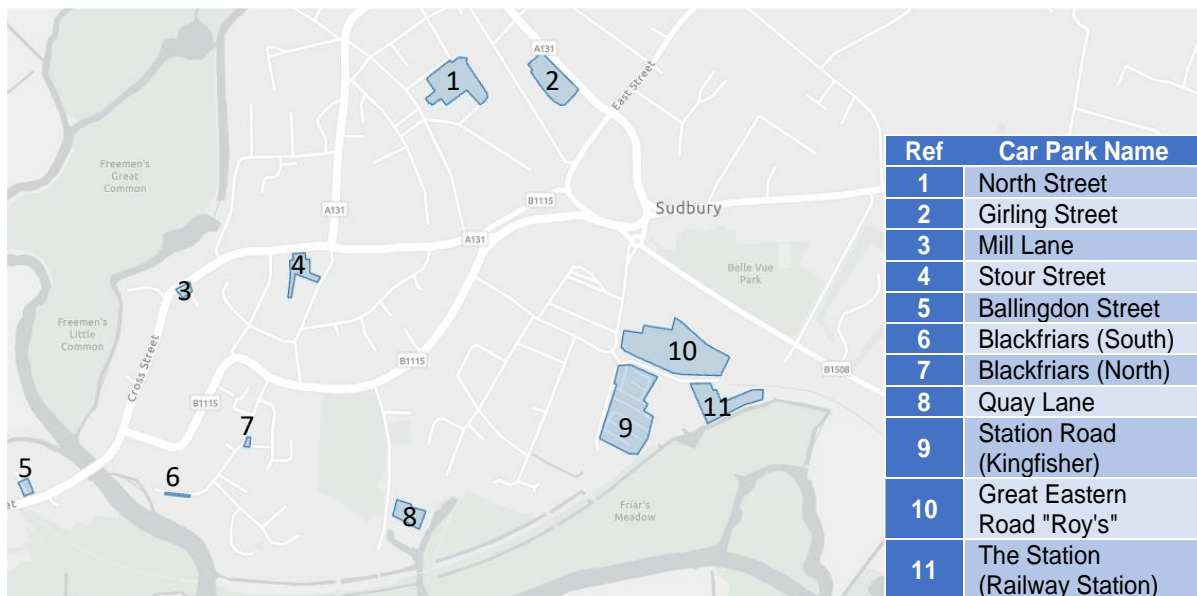


Figure 2 – Sudbury town centre car park locations

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.

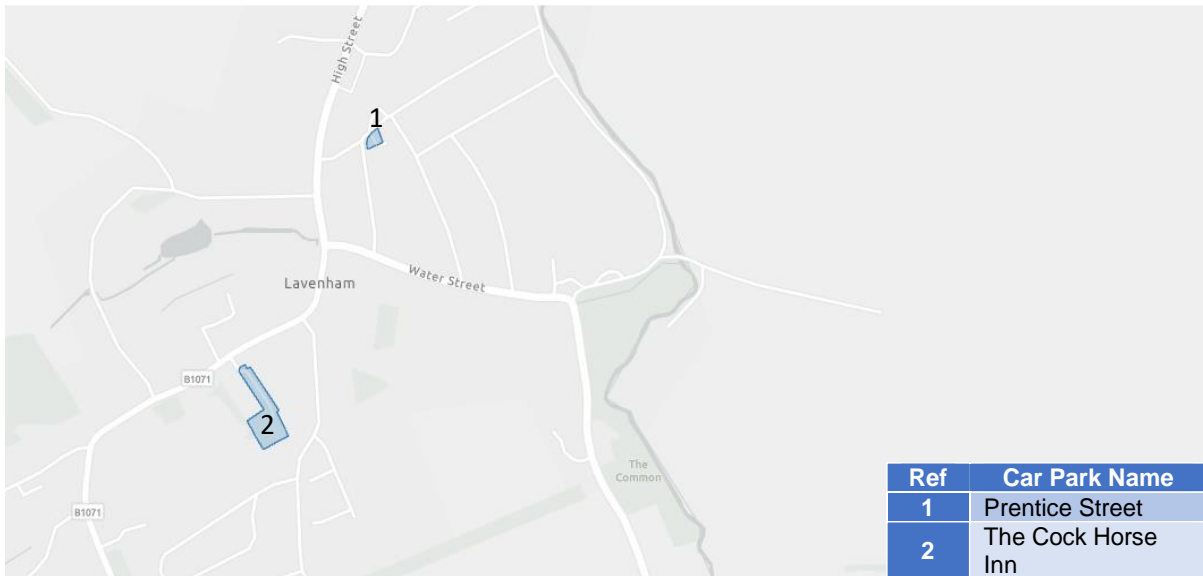


Figure 3 – Lavenham car park locations

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.

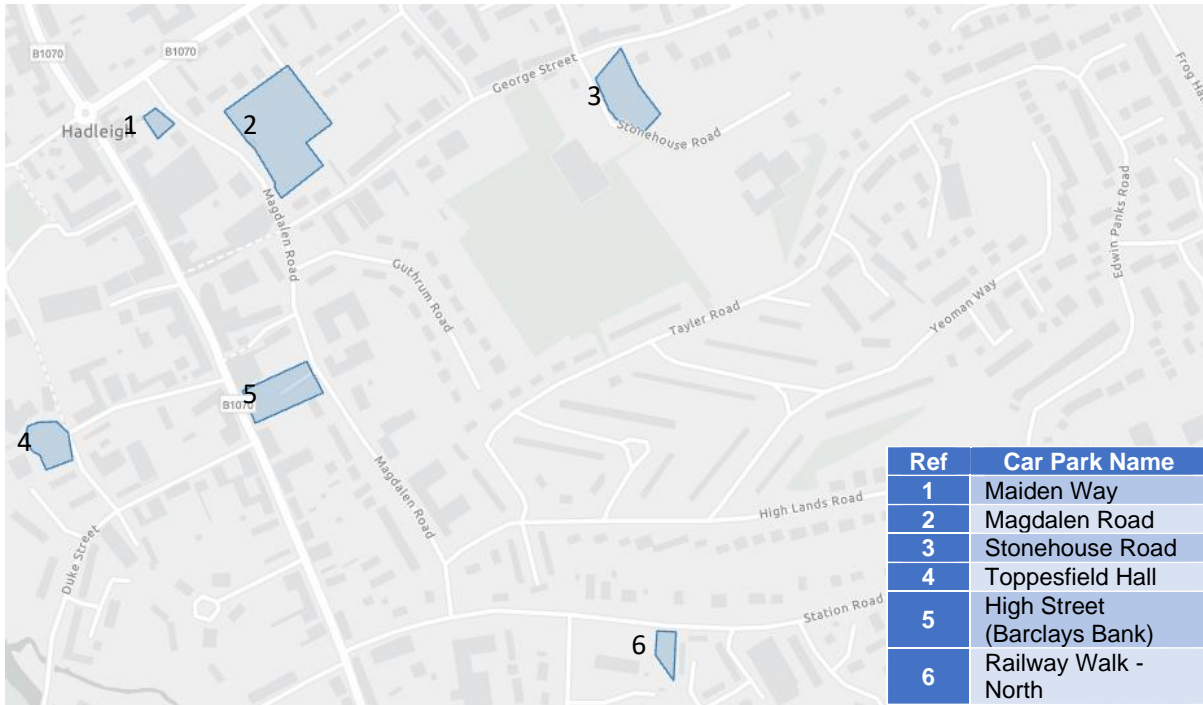


Figure 4 – Hadleigh town centre car park locations

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.

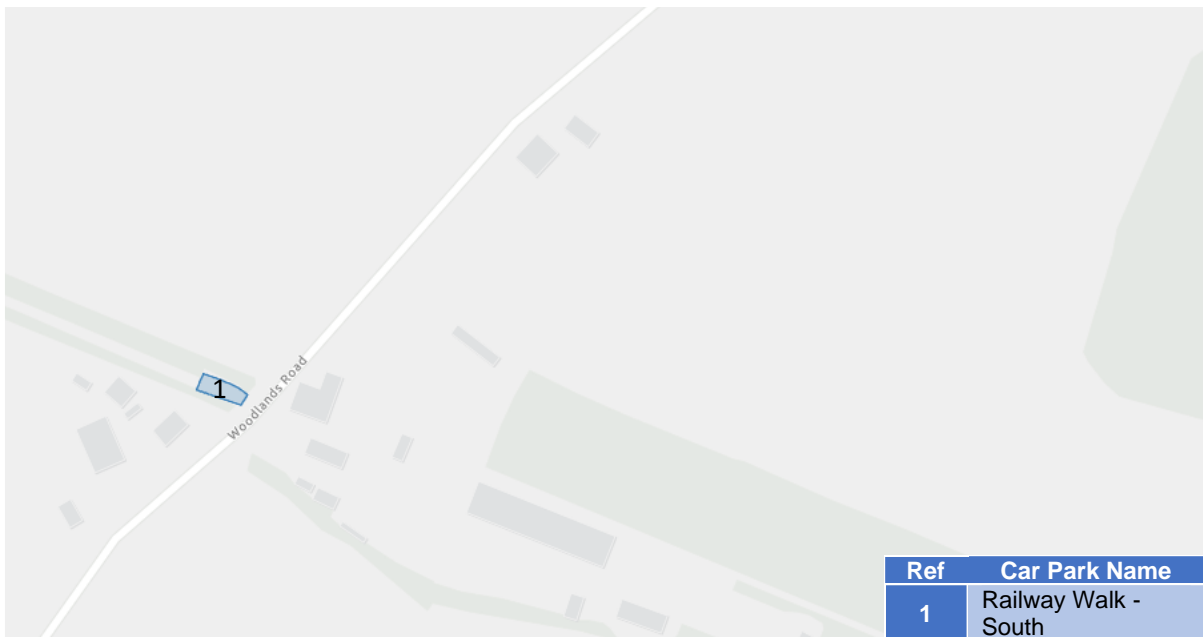


Figure 5 – Raydon car park location

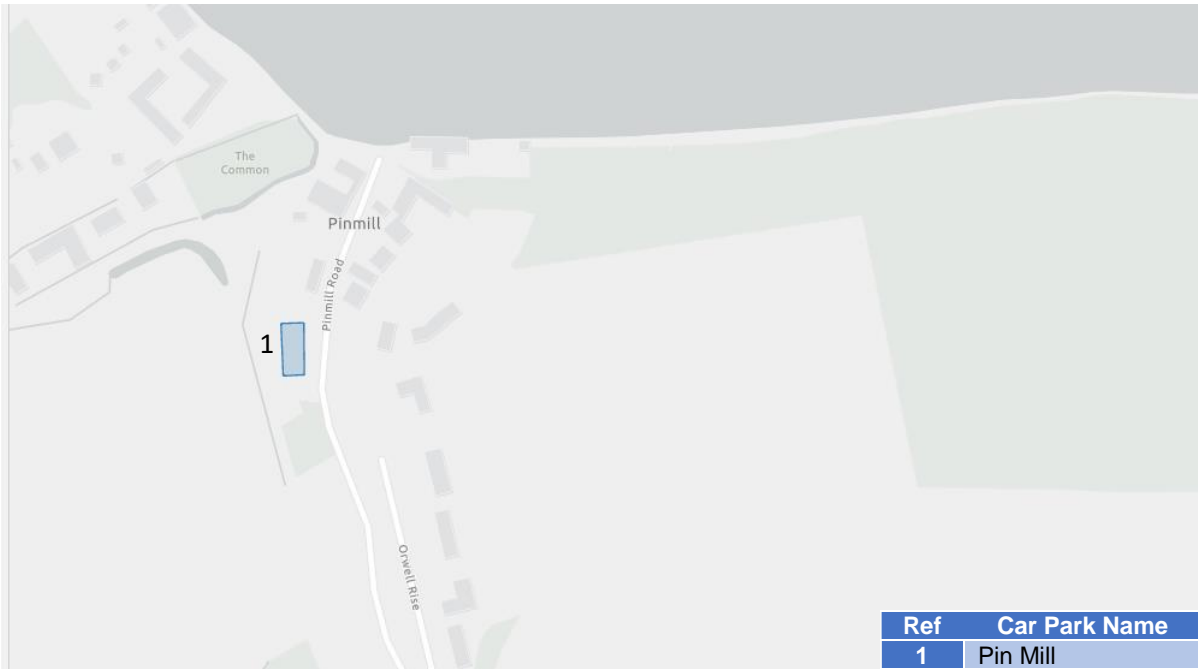


Figure 6 – Chelmondiston car park location

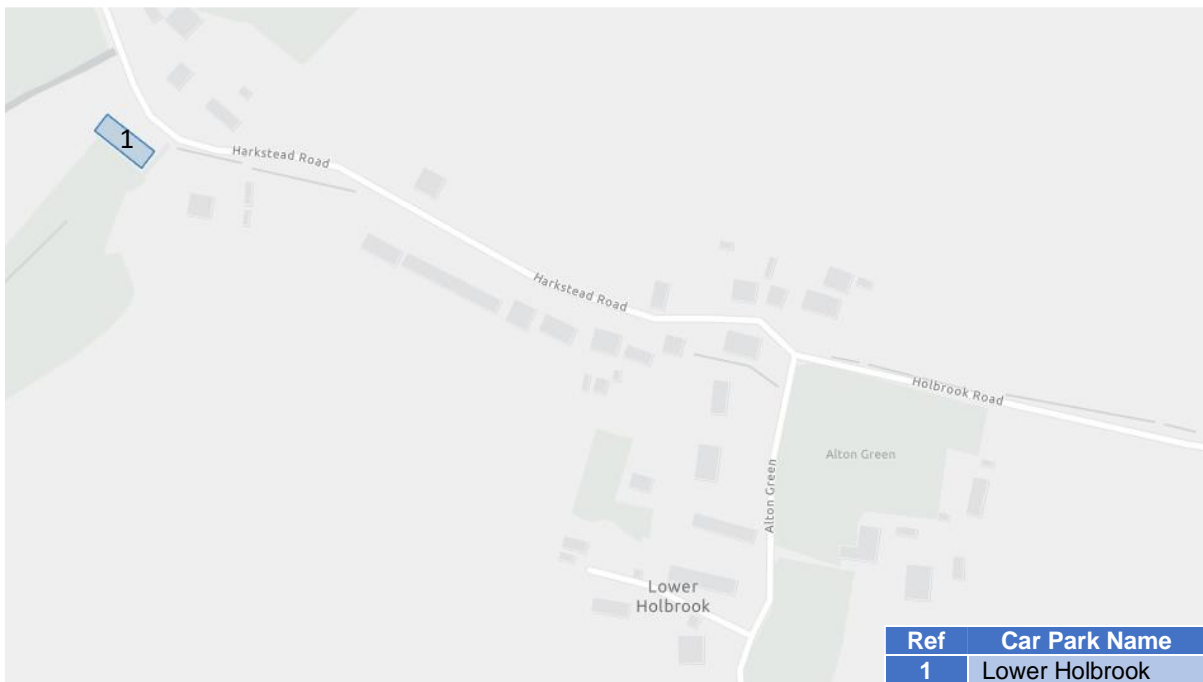


Figure 7 – Holbrook car park location

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.

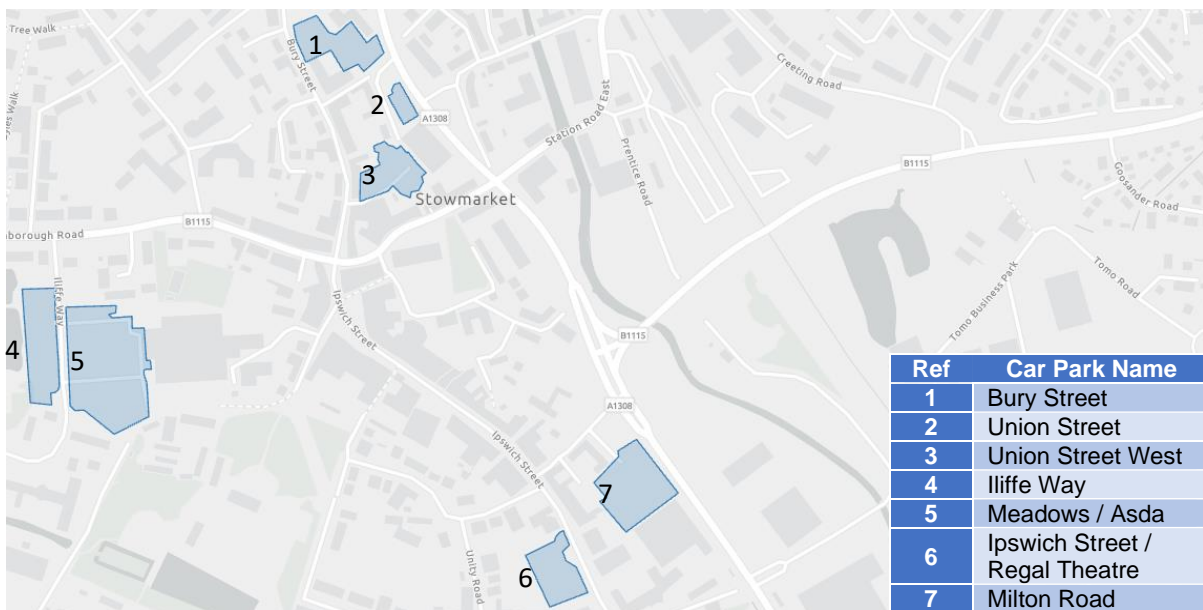


Figure 8 – Stowmarket town centre car park locations

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.

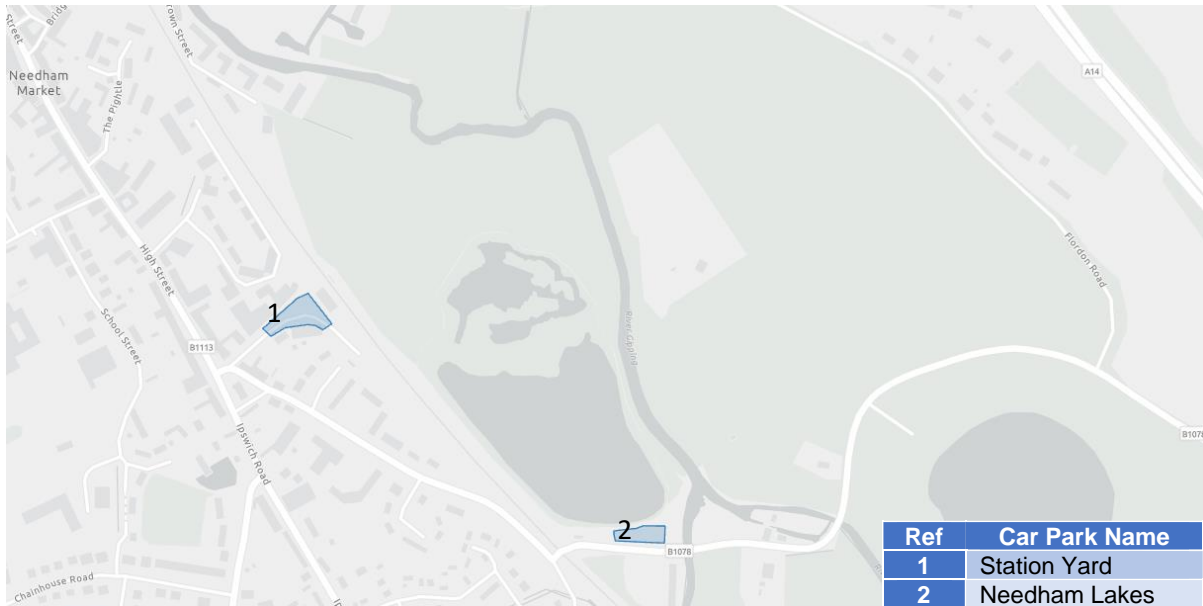


Figure 9 – Needham Market car park locations

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.

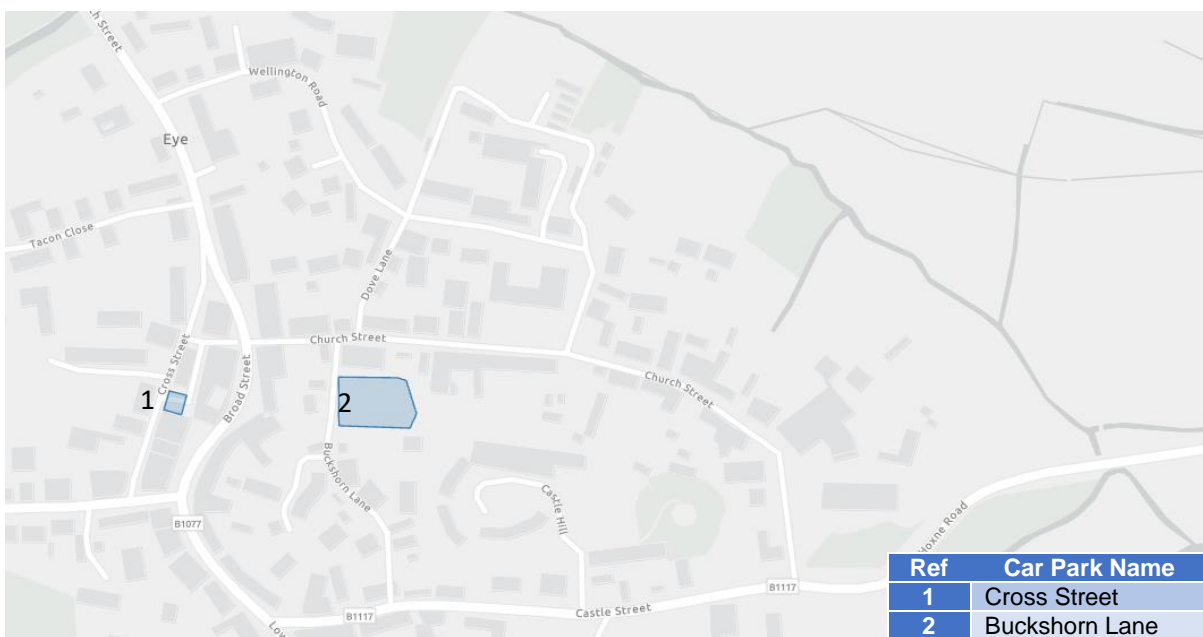


Figure 10 – Eye car park locations

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.

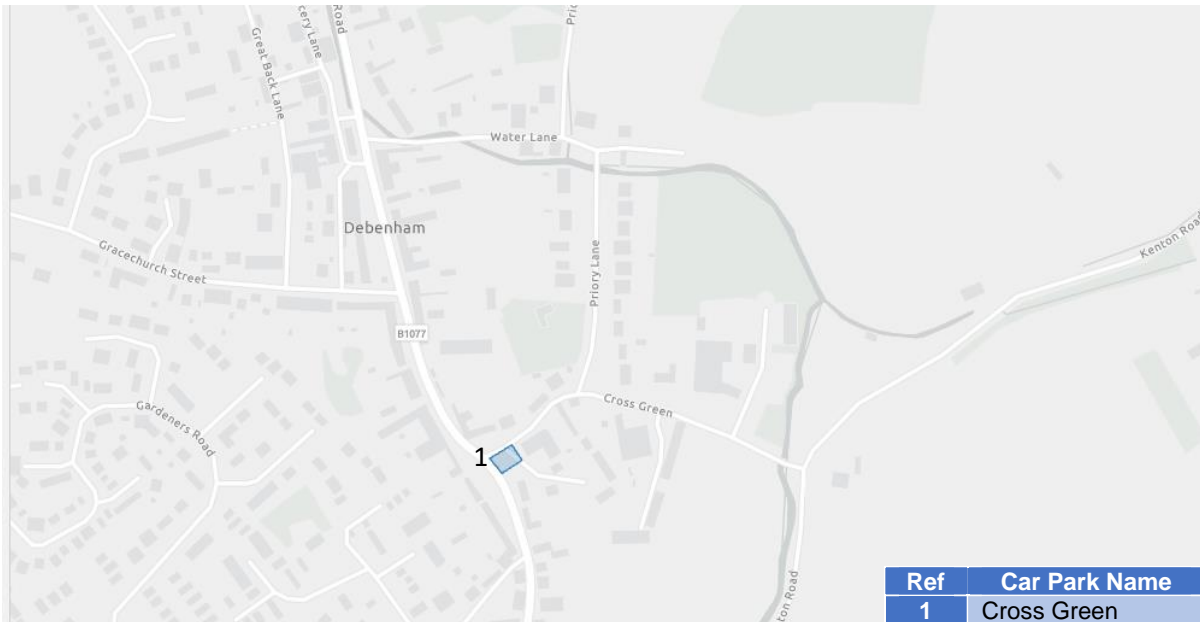


Figure 11 – Debenham car park location

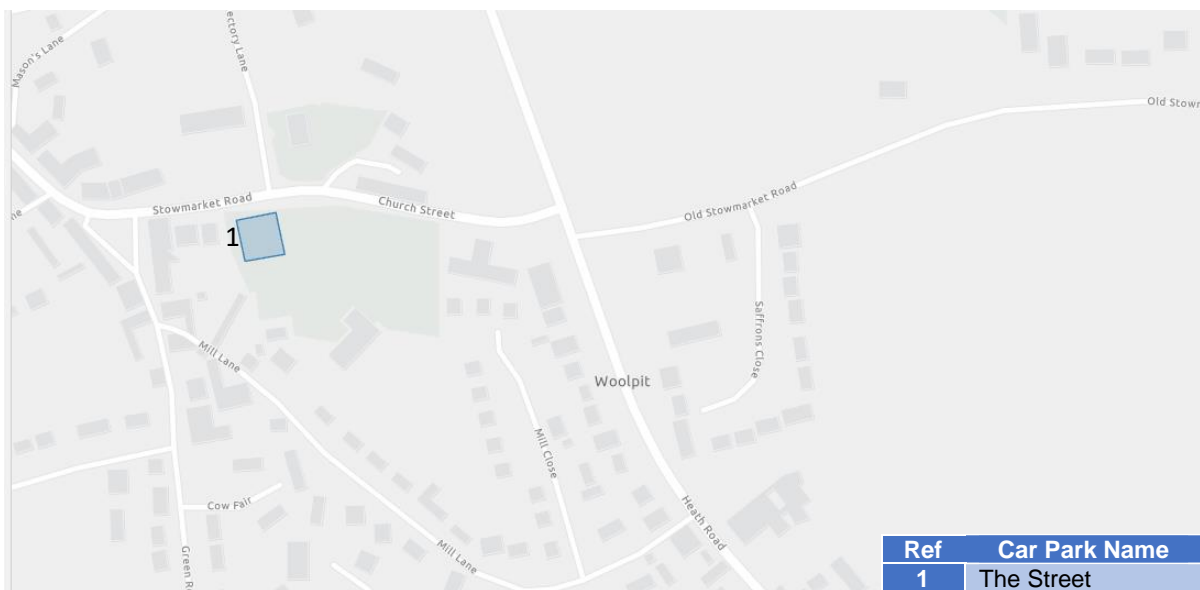


Figure 12 – Woolpit car park location

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 Market	~	~	~	~	~	~	24hr Max Stay
Needham Lake	Needham Market	~	~	~	~	~	~	Unlimited Max Stay
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.

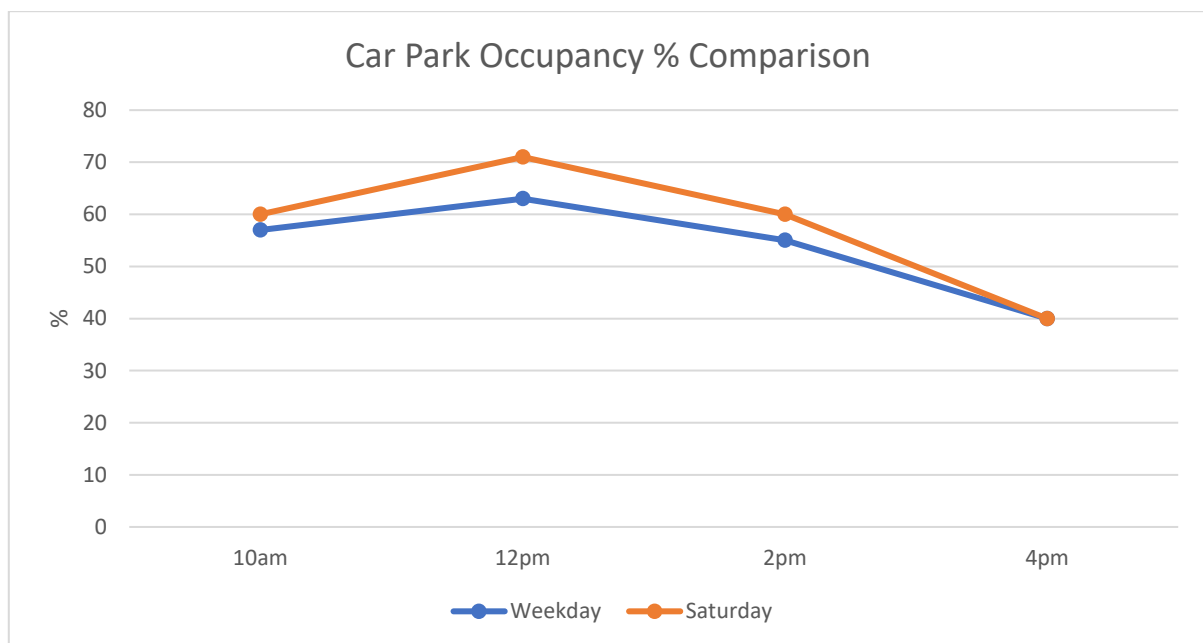


Figure 1 – Car park occupancy weekday / Saturday comparison

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.

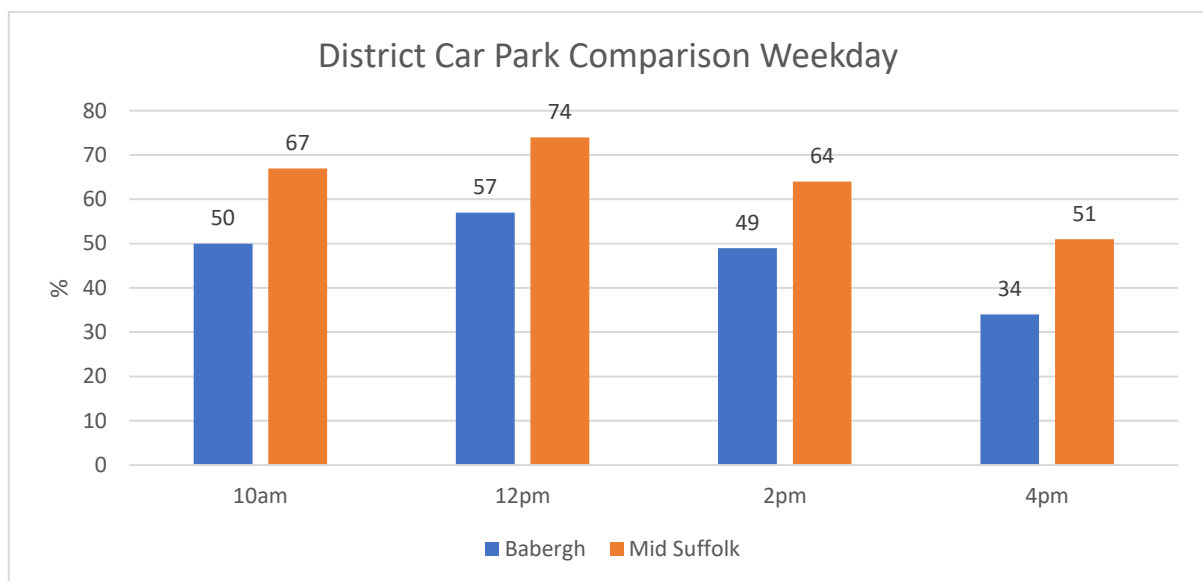


Figure 2 – District car park occupancy weekday comparison

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.

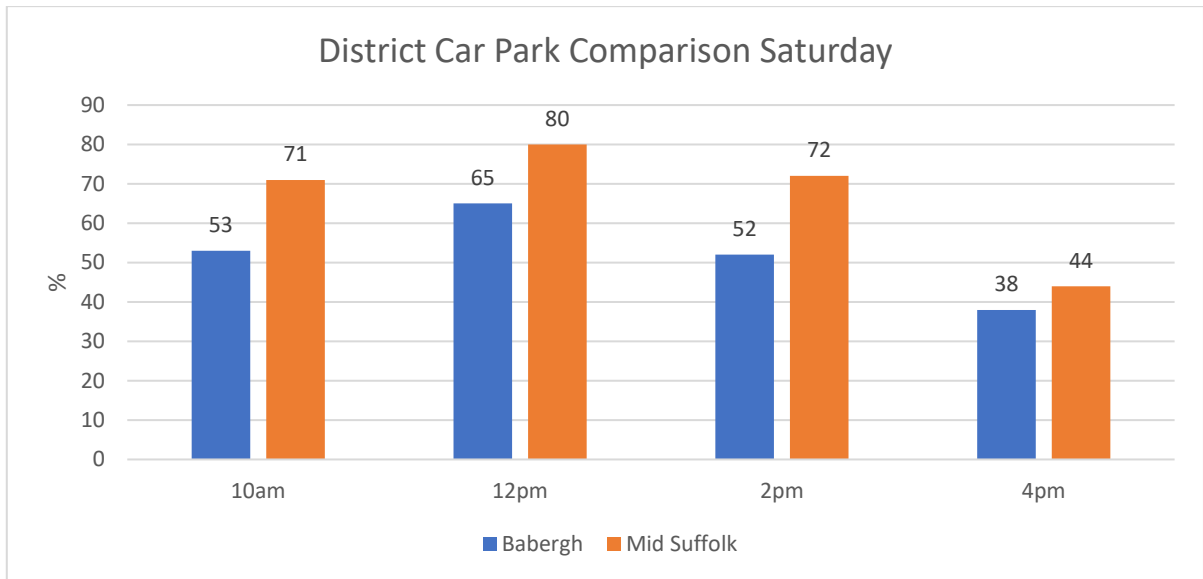


Figure 3 – District car park occupancy Saturday comparison

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.

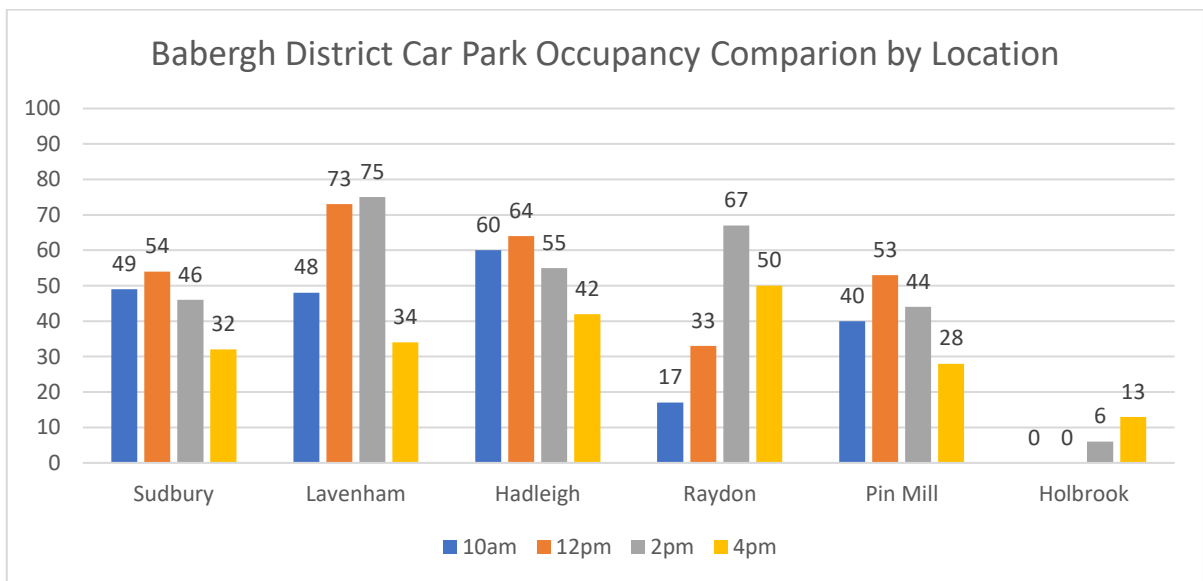


Figure 4 – Babergh district towns & village car park occupancy weekday

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.

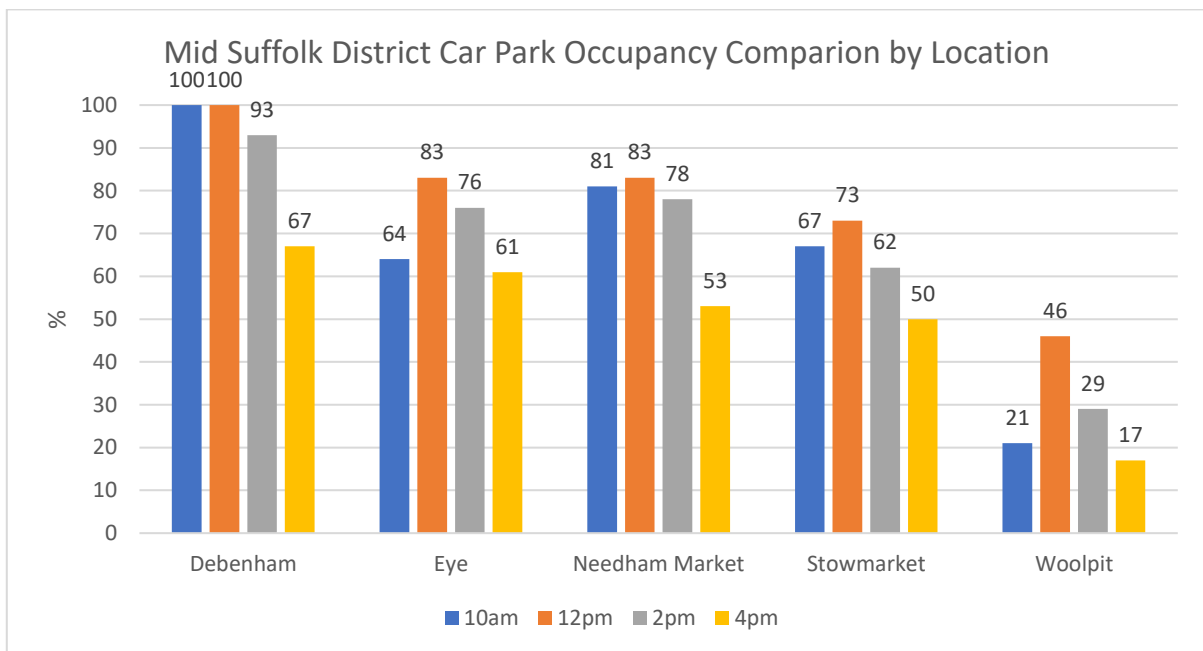


Figure 5 – Mid Suffolk district towns & village car park occupancy weekday

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.

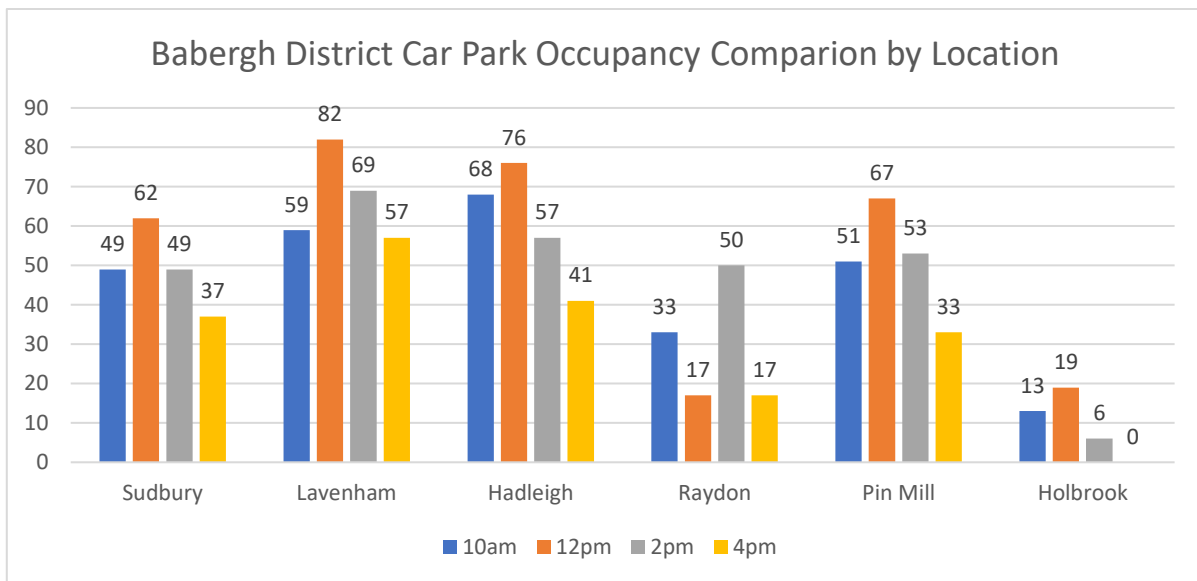


Figure 6 – Babergh district towns & village car park occupancy Saturday

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.

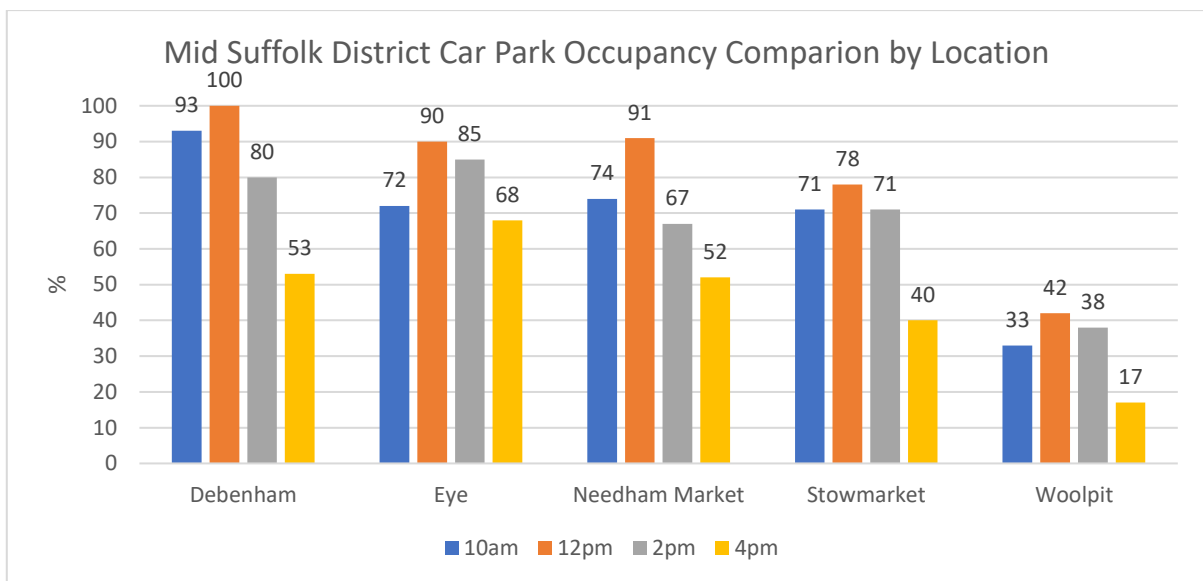


Figure 7 – Mid Suffolk district towns & village car park occupancy Saturday

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
Ballingdon 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.

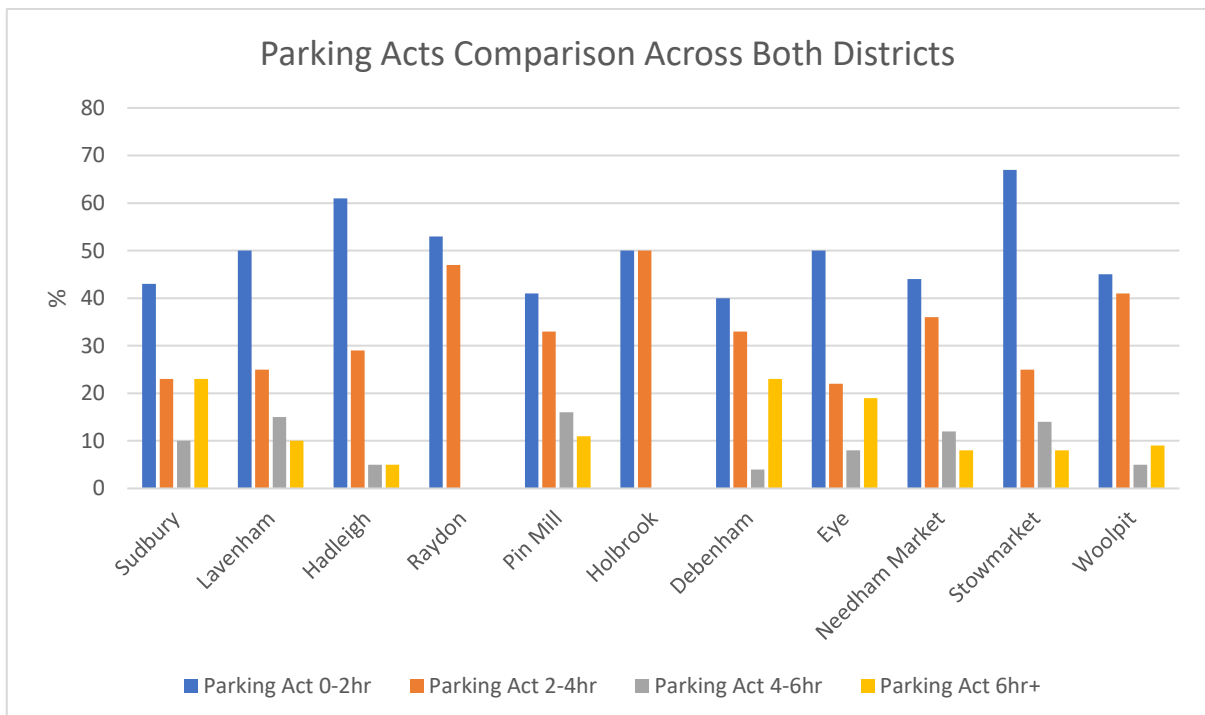


Figure 8 – Breakdown of parking acts across Babergh and Mid Suffolk

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.

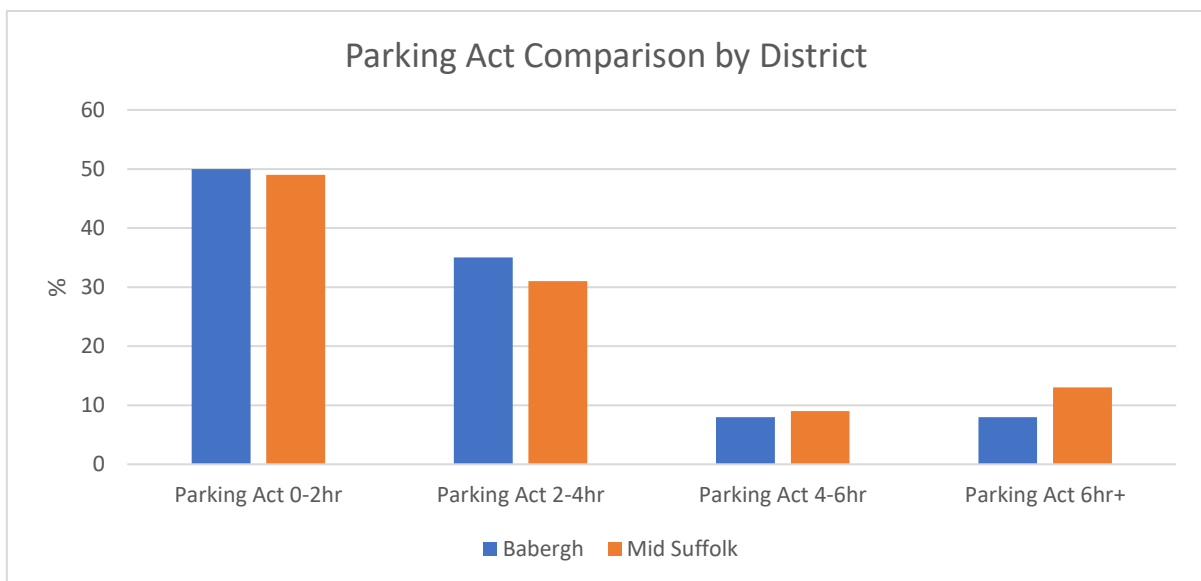


Figure 9 – Comparison of parking acts within Babergh and Mid Suffolk

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 2032

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.

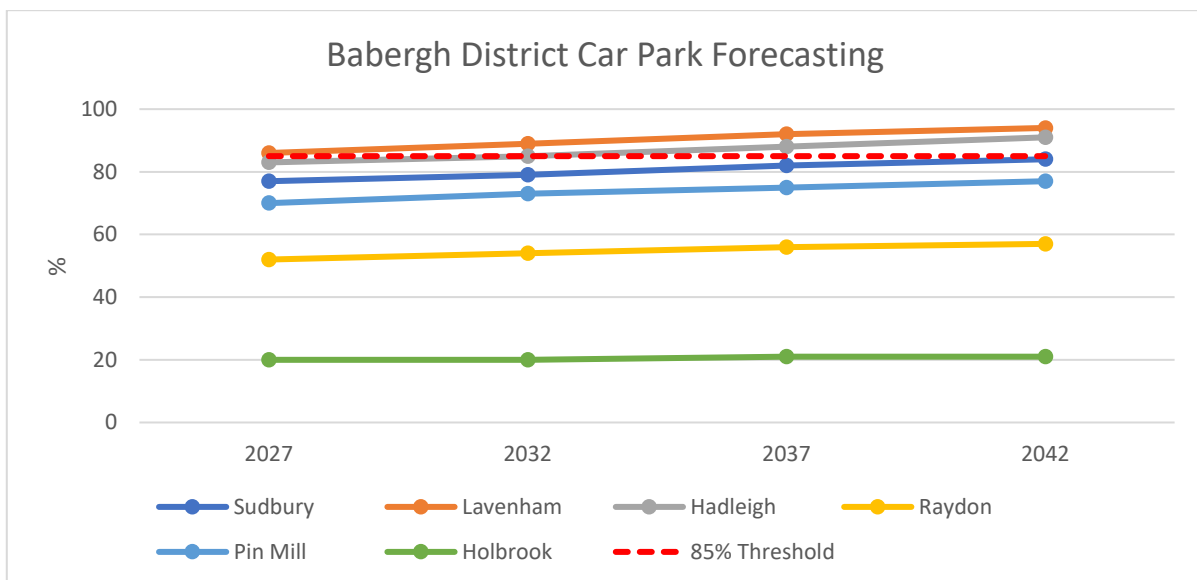


Figure 10 – Forecasting car park growth in Babergh district up to 2042

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.

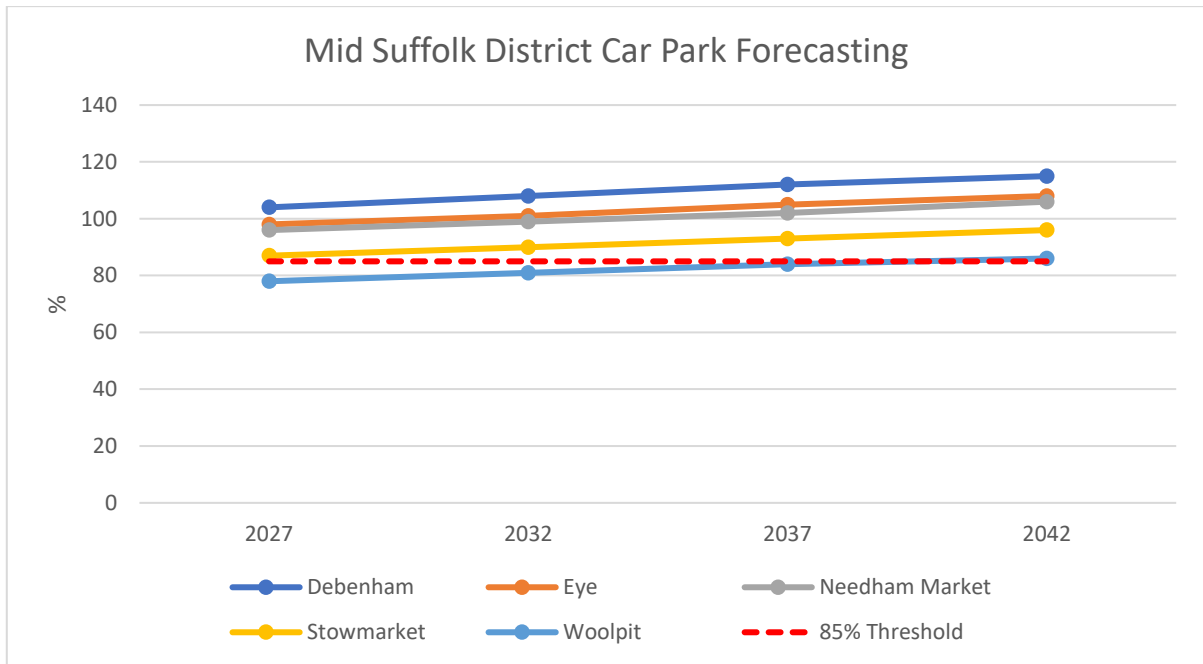


Figure 11 – Forecasting car park growth in Babergh district up to 2042

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 straight forward 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.

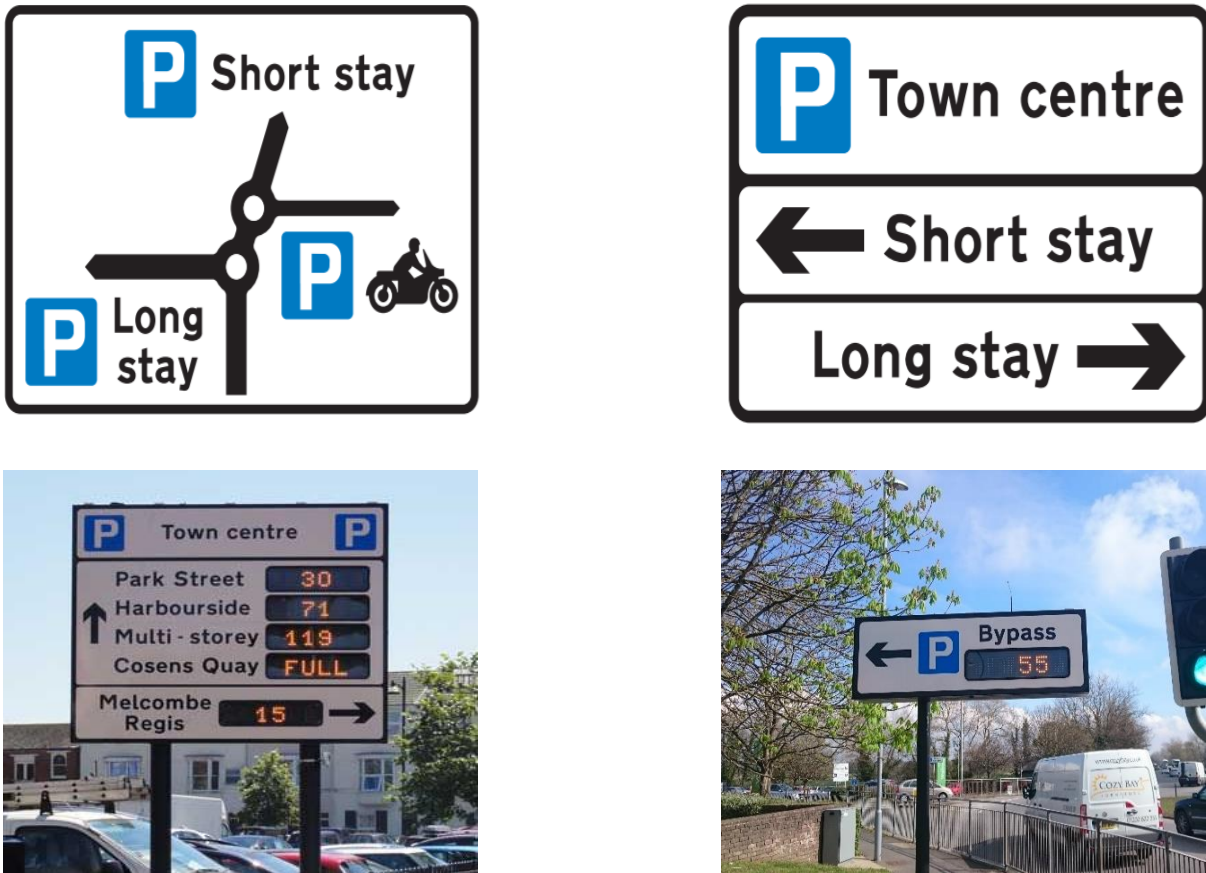


Figure 15 – Examples of car park signage

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