

Colchester Draft Parking Strategy

A Positive Parking Review

Pre-consultation draft

Full Version

September 2019



working in partnership with
**North Essex
Parking
Partnership**



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Pre-Consultation Draft

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Foreword

- 1 The supply and provision of adequate accessible and good quality car parking is
- 2 important to visitors and residents alike.
- 3 The quality and availability of off-street car parking, including realistic charges
- 4 compared with other modes, easy access, providing a safe and secure environment
- 5 has an impact on the number of people visiting our towns and using the facilities
- 6 they have to offer.
- 7 The implementation of the recommendations in this strategy will ensure the
- 8 continued prosperity of the town and its shopping and business centres whilst
- 9 mitigating the manageable factors that contribute towards environmental damage.

Executive Summary

This document makes recommendations for the future of Colchester's car parks.

Following its Climate Emergency declaration, Colchester Borough Council is looking at ways to influence motorist behaviour. A change on just one day a week could take a fifth of the traffic out of the peak, with consequent improvements in air quality, reductions in congestion and CO₂ emissions.

The Council is also installing its first Electric Vehicle charging point in a shoppers and residential car park to encourage alternatives to internal combustion engine car travel, reducing air pollution at the point of use.

The Strategy recommends some adjustments to Tariffs, especially at peak times, and combines this with positive innovations that could offset increases for motorists who can adjust travel patterns when using the proposed MiPermit special offers.

This section will be expanded after draft consultation.

Items in Yellow

Items in the yellow boxes are for further discussion in the pre-consultation draft.

Consultation Draft

This version is a partially complete Consultation Draft.

Following circulation of this draft during September, comments will be taken into account and a final version will be prepared, including recommendations for policy objectives and outcomes.

Making comments on the circulation draft:

When making comments, please reference comments against the line numbers shown in this draft document.

After consultation, comments will be integrated into the final version in the appropriate section.

About Colchester

Colchester has a population of 190,098 living in 82,055 households. There are currently 132,530 voters in the local electorate. Our population is projected to grow to 216,300 by 2030.

12,500 new homes were built between 2001 and 2015; and 16,000 are projected to be built between 2016 and 2032. The borough covers 300 square kilometres and Colchester is the largest district in Essex, with a rapidly growing population and economy. Over the next 15 years Colchester is anticipated to experience one of the fastest growth rates within the county.

6,877 jobs were created between 2004 and 2014 (up 9.6%); and the turnover of the local economy grew to £3.41 billion over the same period, an increase of an estimated £200 million of Gross Value Added (GVA) (using 2010 prices). Colchester's economy attracted an estimated £3 billion of inward investment 2001- 2015.

The University of Essex ranks in the top 20 for research excellence. It is also one of the most international campus Universities in the UK with students from more than 130 different countries. Two of Colchester's secondary schools appeared in the top 10 for the best GCSE results in the country, and another school achieved the best A-Level results in the UK.

Part of the borough lies in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and it contains 22 conservation areas and 2,056 listed properties. We estimate that approximately 35,000 adults in the borough volunteer at least once per month.

Introduction

Colchester Council is responsible for 32 managed car parks. These provide essential access as destinations for to the places people need and want to go to — such as workplaces, schools and colleges, shops, leisure facilities, health provision and much more.

Colchester Council's car parking service generates, on average, £3.7m per year. Parking is a large financial generator for the Council which is supported by the North Essex Parking Partnership in its operational services. The business of running parking in Colchester needs to continue to provide for the benefit of all our services and residents.

This Positive Parking Framework for Colchester has been developed to change the face of parking across the Borough, in Colchester town centre and for our surrounding towns and villages; to help support local economies; traffic management and our communities.

The Framework is intended to put the business of parking in Colchester on an effective and efficient footing: simplifying tariff patterns; identifying sufficient and proper maintenance plans to protect the asset that we all rely on; and being bold and ambitious in terms of how the future of parking is provided so that it supports much wider benefits beyond the current regime of measuring success through income.

This Framework seeks to also support the economy, the environment and our communities as set out in the Local Plan; the Local Transport Plan; the Council's Business Plan; the Town Centre Partnership's BID; and the Local Enterprise Partnership Vision.

Reviewing parking in Colchester

Colchester Council's Off-Street Car Parking provision was last reviewed in 2009/10 with changes being implemented from April 2010. The charging strategy was based on a mixture of short and long stay with protection of the historic core as far as possible.

Several years have passed since the last review, it is necessary to carry out a further review to determine the strategy for the next five years. In addition, the implementation of Park & Ride and changes to several off-street parking areas has been completed.

In addition, the quality of off-street car parking including realistic charges compared with other modes, easy access, providing a safe and secure environment has an impact on the number of people visiting our towns and using the facilities they have to offer.

Having adequate car parking facilities is particularly important in helping to deliver the Council's programme that supports regeneration of the town centre, helps manage air quality, whilst seeking to improve the commercial vitality of the town, encouraging greater footfall and to improve the public realm and streetscape enhancements.

What is Positive Parking?

Colchester Council is both a founder member of, and has signed up to, the Positive Parking Agenda, an initiative started by a group of local authorities supported and assisted by the British Parking Association.

The aim of the Positive Parking Agenda is to change perceptions and challenge misconceptions about the parking sector as well as local government's role and make the parking experience a better one for all concerned. The Agenda looks to provide effective and positive communications, promoting innovation and the use of technology, for the benefit of all.

The Agenda addresses a range of key priorities including: congestion, safety, air quality, accessibility, technology, working together and fairness.

Colchester Council is looking to align its parking strategy, including its policies and operations, to this agenda through a Positive Parking Framework. The Positive Parking Agenda is looking to its founder members to set a benchmark standard for other local authorities to follow.

Find out more at www.positiveparkingagenda.co.uk



Positive parking themes and principles

111 This review addresses the Off-Street parking assets and tariffs at car parks owned by
112 Colchester Council; Colchester Council's parking operations supplied by its shared
113 service, the North Essex Parking Partnership (On- and Off-Street, including outside
114 schools); Use of technology; location and provision.

Project Definition, Objectives and Themes

115 A Project Group was formed, and this group has established a number of themes.
116 The Positive Parking Framework has been structured around these **key themes** in
117 order to help shape the framework. The work included looking at issues such as:



Inline Statistics

118 Throughout the document, statistics, data and quotes from the Survey have been
119 included to illustrate the points at hand.

Scope of this Review

To review the Council's Off-Street Car Parking provision in the Borough and develop a five-year strategy designed to achieve the following aims and objectives:

In scope – terms of reference

We set up a Project Group to investigate the best future plans to consult upon. The work looked at themes (colour coded throughout the document), including:

Sufficient **provision**

- Location, type and number of bays, long/short stay vs. P&R
- Statistical analysis (opening and closing times, utilisation & capacity)
- Payment mechanisms, concessions, season tickets, resident parking in car parks, special offers and other incentives such as loyalty schemes
- Parking charges and durations (tariff structure and other modes)

Increased economic **prosperity**

- District growth and development
- Colchester town centre and other towns in the Borough

Customers and retailers' **perception** of parking provision in the Borough

Special **parking** requirements

- Disabled, young children, cyclists, electric vehicles

Communications, **promotion** and **publicity**

- Communication Plan, Social Media,
- Adequate signage and advertisement of car parking provisions including Variable Messaging

Out of scope


The Framework *does not* include a review of any On-Street parking, although it may make recommendations to the Joint Committee. Neither does it cover residents' parking or on-street pay and display. A town parking review was carried out in Colchester during 2012-14 to deal with the most significant issues relating to on-street parking.

Other projects are in the process of being delivered and further requests for work in this area will be considered against the Parking Management Framework (2019) and resource availability.

Provision for delivery of small scale on-street parking restrictions (yellow lines) has been made through the North Essex Parking Partnership and allocates funding each October for up to six schemes in the Borough Area. The Parking Partnership, for which Colchester is the lead authority, delivers the Joint Committee's priorities parking improvement schemes.

Staff Parking is being considered separately, outside this review.

1. Place & Provision

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Provision Place: car park provision 	Location, type and number of bays, long/short stay vs. P&R Statistical analysis (opening and closing times, utilisation & capacity) Vitality, USP, access, inputs, survey, partners Parking charges and durations (tariff structure and other modes)	Place: To provide excellent parking facilities at an appropriate cost to users and Council Tax Payers, compared with other modes, whilst contributing to the economic vitality of our town centres. To determine the adequacy of off-street provision in terms of volume, location and mix of short v long stay and permit parking to determine whether it meets the needs of customers.

Introduction

In this section we consider the background to our market, including:

- Changes in the market;
- Origin and destination statistics, including routing;
- Surveys, consultations and comments received;
- Alternative car parks, and other locations;
- Park & Ride (although its Policy is decided by Essex County Council);
- Opening, closure or redevelopment of facilities;

Staff Parking – although provision of staff parking is subject to separate review

We consider Trends, including data from: –

- Outputs,
- Links to Marketing offers (discussed in more detail in the

Promotions

- link to the BID, destination Colchester

Also considered are the outlying car parks including Parish Partnerships

- West Mersea, Dedham and Wivenhoe

Other free car parks:

- St Christopher's, London Road Lexden, Prettygate

Issues

Off Street Asset Review

An important part of the Review concerns the location of parking facilities and the appropriate provision. Some changes have occurred since the last Plan was produced.

Some proposed developments have not yet occurred, and there have been some slight changes in the development timescale and locations.

Generally, provision and tariff type has been closely associated. Long stay tariffs have been towards the edge of town, in an attempt to reduce car-bound commuting into the historic core.

Shoppers and shorter stays have been accommodated in the town centre car parks, predominantly within the circle formed by the inner ring road (Balkerne Hill/Southway area) – however only Britannia car park provides true short stay parking.

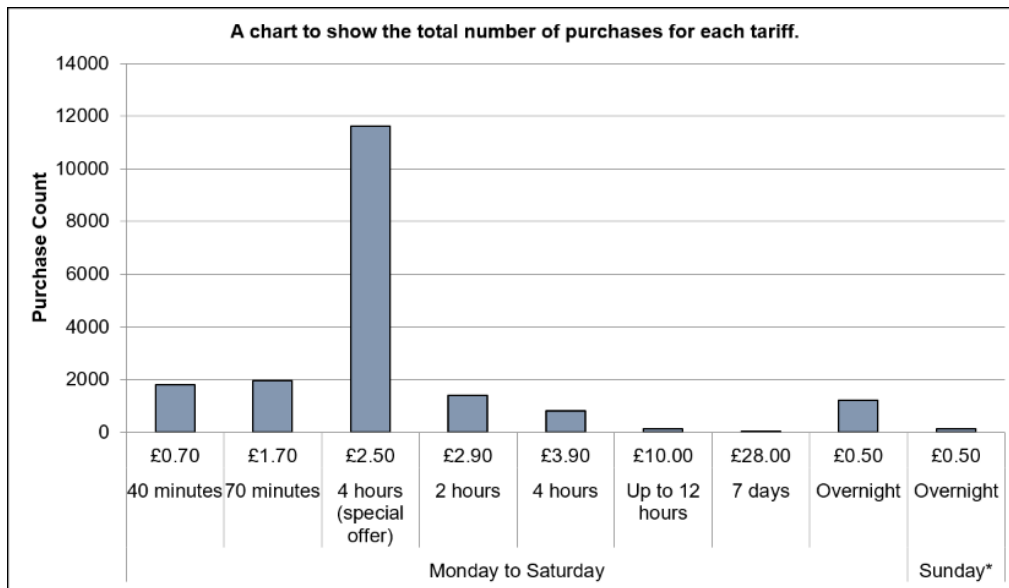
Tariff and Custom

The last Plan set out how special offers could benefit certain locations, with the offer at Britannia proving particularly successful. This offer also introduced for the first time the idea of marketing on stay type in different ways, and offering a differential tariff off-peak where it did not impact on rush hour congestion.

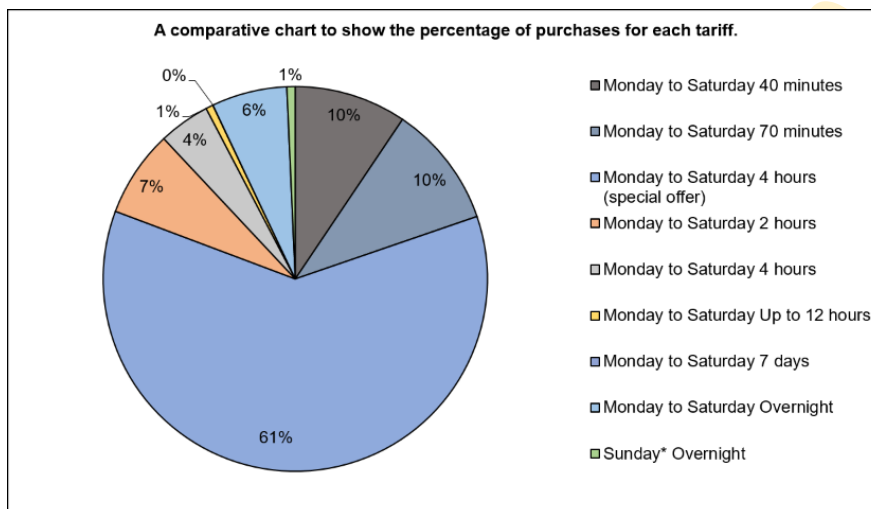


The offer was designed to encourage shoppers to stay a little longer, and also took away the threat of receiving a Penalty Charge Notice by offering much longer stay than that usually purchased: i.e. 4 hours for £2.50 instead of 2-3 hours which was the previous most popular time purchased).

Much has been learned from this exercise in terms of targeting special offers and there is scope for more, as set out through this document.



Despite being available off-peak only, the offer dominates Britannia car park ticket sales and has become the primary tariff.



The offer has been very successful both in terms of influencing arrival time and building a market. It is hoped that during the term of this Plan we can build on that experience.

Other places that could be considered include Rowan House car park – making this available at weekend for Pay & Stay parking (depending on any lease issues).

This could be implemented very simply by adding the car park to the Parking Order as a MiPermit site.

We could offer Concessions – for example for trading such as ice cream vans – so they are directed towards better places where it is preferred they trade.

Other areas to re-investigate include: Car Clubs, Love Ur Car bays, and any links to providing electric vehicle clubs.

Issues relating to accessibility – and Disabled Badge Holder use – need further investigation. This may include moving bays from On-Street locations into car parks, for instance in connection with works near the Mercury Theatre.

Outlying Off Street Areas

Outlying car parks and other town centres have remained largely unchanged.

- Provision in Mersea is under agreement with the town council,
- Provision in Wivenhoe is under agreement with the town council, and
- Provision in Dedham is under agreement with the parish council;

Issues in outlying areas include:

- The amount of parking in Dedham is at a severe premium due to the tourist medium term parking at the village location.
- A link to Park & Ride or further parking provision could reduce the pressure.
- We also look at the interface between our provision and the County Council's Park & Ride, including considering some other uses for Park & Ride (e.g. to Dedham, using local buses en-route) – although this is controlled by the County Council, a link could provide an alternative to village parking in Dedham.

Recommendation : 1

Income is generated as a by-product of managing demand. We should continue to explore options for management through charging and dealing with income on a profit share basis where partners are working together to support additional, new events that would increase the use of the parking facilities over and above that which is currently the case

Factors affecting Colchester town centre:

- Vineyard Gate development and the changing ways that residential provision may form a large part of this development.
- Britannia development/capacity – likely uses may change if Britannia is developed, and the site and alternatives will need to cover any Vineyard Gate development
- St John's and St Mary's car parks changes in style of use in order to cover the changes above.

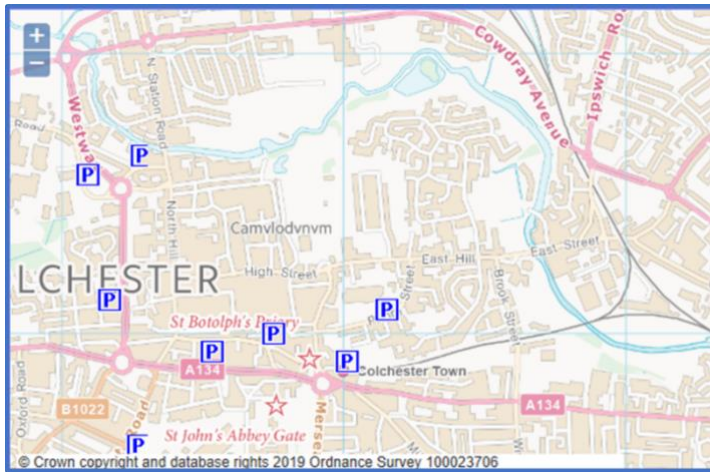
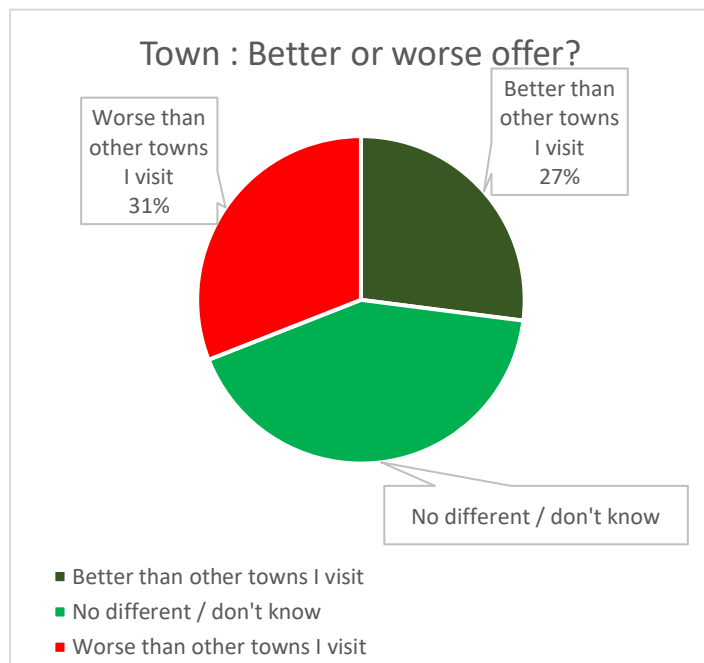


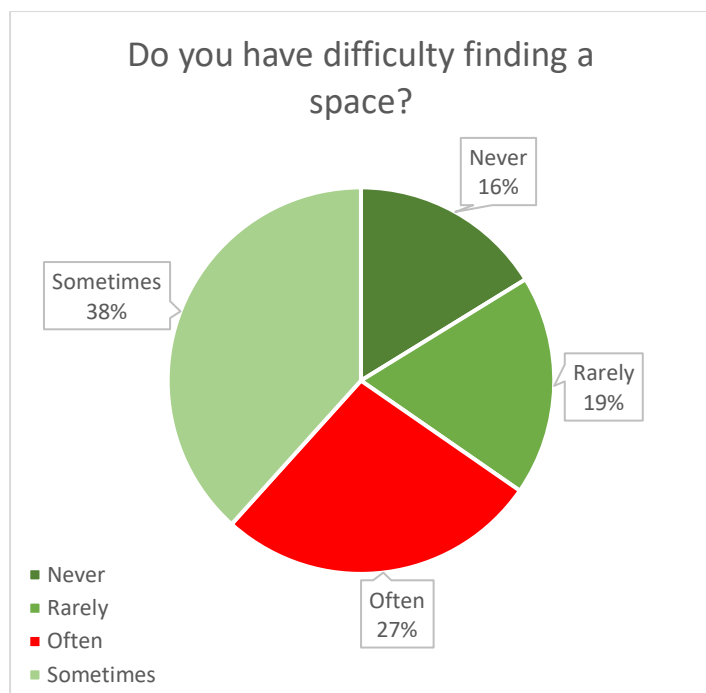
Figure 1 Map of town centre parking

Developing the thinking

Comparison with other places

When questioned, survey respondents did not have a particularly good or bad comparison to draw; over two thirds of people ranking Colchester the same or better than other towns they had visited.





Under a third of people had difficulty finding a space often, and a third had difficulty finding a space sometimes. The previous plan was to make the best use of the car park by pricing to try to nearly be full at most times. This would also seem to suggest that supply and demand are in balance, and there is little scope for reducing prices.

Discussed Themes

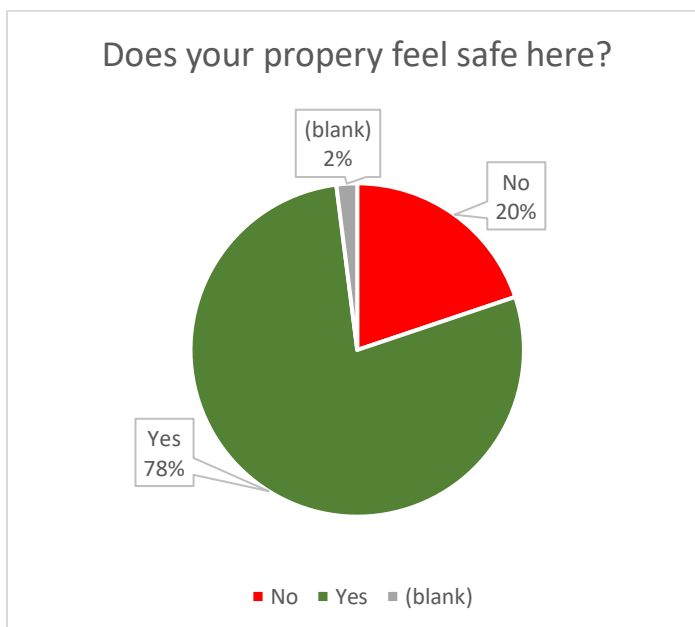
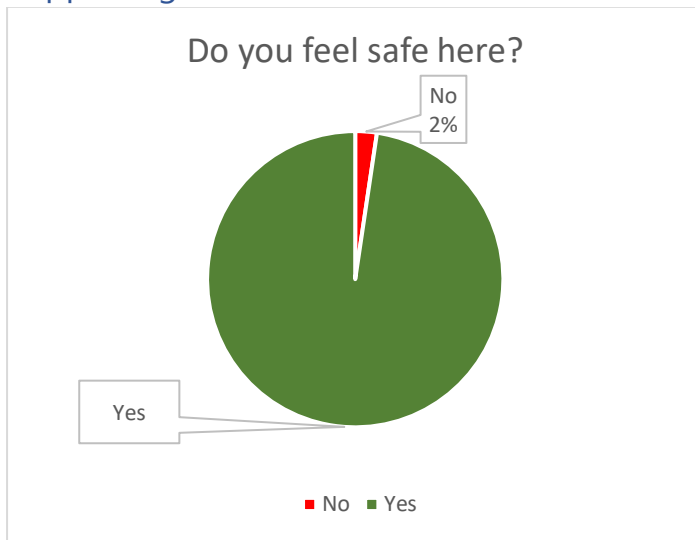
Looking at Usage Statistics has and will produce examples of popular parking – say, for a complete month; from that capacity and utilisation can be plotted. Capacity vs. Utilisation is considered under the Parking Requirements section.

For usage vs. Ticket sales and utilisation, the Strategy Group considered: –

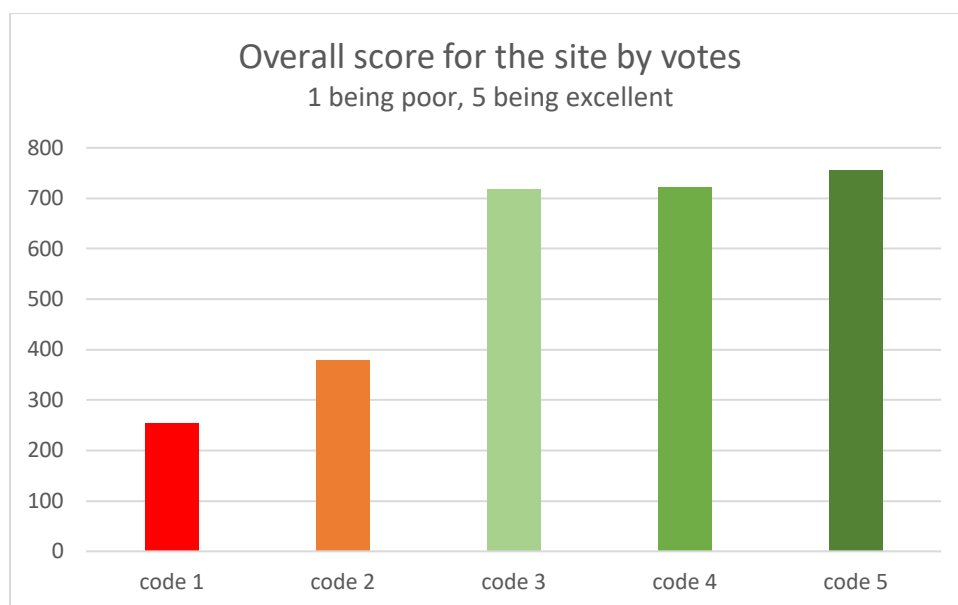
- MiPermit can output, we need to include all sales
- Town Centre - Long stay dominates – Park & Ride comparisons can be drawn
- Outlying areas with Parish Agreements work well in terms of localism
- Seasons and motorcycles need to be reviewed
- Anonymised data could be produced and published
- Private Non-Residential parking is a large-scale issue for Colchester

Recommendations are made in the Online Payment & Technology section below.

Supporting data



Having carried out a lot of work to secure community safety and security in the town, it was reassuring to see such a high score for personal safety amongst respondents. There was a slightly lower score, albeit still well over three quarters, thinking their property was also safe.



By far the largest groups rated the sites average or above for an overall score.

Matching provision and place

Whilst provision to date has concentrated on long stay and short stay in separate locations, with the shorter stays nearer the town centre, there may be a case for adding short stay tariffs to outer town car parks to make them multi-purpose, for example for shorter visits nearby long stay car parks.

Long stay has been provided to the north, west and south of the town, but provision is lacking to the east.

Recommendation : 2

It is not considered favourable in transportation terms to allow any long-term parking within the town centre core or nearby in the 'central zone'; the roads nearby cannot cope with additional commuter traffic at peak times.

It is recommended to keep the current limit of a maximum of 4 hours stay within the central zone and 2 hours within the core area (except for disabled badge holders).

It will be important to link additional provision in the town to any new development in future (via the s.106 or CIL process).

Over time, and with redevelopment proceeding, it will be probably to have to consider moving provision to cope with Vineyard Gate and Britannia developments. This may require a change of tariff design and stay types at St John's and St Mary's car parks, and to reallocate parking between sites through improved and better signage.

The types of parking provision are also linked to recommendations in the Local Plan, the provision of good public transport provision – buses, trains, Park & Ride, cycling and walking, or even working from home, as alternatives to private car use.

Recommendation : 3

Other improvements in car parks should be considered, perhaps linked to a slightly higher tariff for a gold service: wider bays, redesigned parking bays in the high traffic area of multi-storeys, CCTV, lighting and other secured parking improvements could be linked.

Recent moves have been made to effect a deep clean of the multi-storey car parks, and decoration in car parks – such as the St Mary's West Staircase mural; and other decoration generally, as well as cleaning. These details also lend to a feeling of safety and security.

Outlying car parks and Partnerships

The Council also provides Secured Resident Off-Street car parks at St Julian Grove, Walsingham Road and Alexandra Terrace. The provision at these locations varies in quality and occupation. Adjusting the prices in line with local elasticity is recommended to make best use of these locations.

Consideration may need to be given to:

St Julian Grove - Priory Street redevelopment has a knock-on impact here.

There are 14 Bays, 1 spare. A waiting list of 5 applicants (at Aug 2019). Currently the area is full of season ticket holders and a permit costs £175 pa + £20 key.

The site provides parking additional to Resident Parking Zones.

Alexandra Terrace – There are 7 spaces, and all are taken. A waiting list of 13 further applicants (at Aug 2019).

Walsingham Road An area of verge made into perpendicular bollarded bays, but no keys exist for bollards. It has been checked and this area is not on the highway – the site has a total of 4 bays, but no bays are taken up (Aug 2019). Cost is £203 p.a.

Three Crowns Road was a secured site which was under-used. This has been converted to part pay to park/part resident reserved bays.

Better use could be made with 2 available spaces (no 5 & 16) (at Aug 2019) out of 10; 4 bays recently already offered out of 7 applicants on the waiting list – 3 still remain on waiting list. Cost for a Resident Bay is £72 p.a. or £92p.a. for the second permit.

West Mersea, Dedham, Wivenhoe - other free car parks

St Christopher Road and **Lexden Road** are all 3 hrs, uncontrolled.

Prettygate is not time bound.

Payment options

The MiPermit cashless parking system has been developed in conjunction with Chipside. More on this is discussed in the **Online Payment** section.

Working with other partners

We have an ongoing dialogue with the Colchester Institute, about uses for their site.

Strategic Issues

Reviews generally take a view of town centre car parks in context of future development, growth and supporting urban environment. The location of a car park can define how a town centre is used both by circulating car movements and by the pedestrian access to and from the car park itself.

Car parks can define streets not just in their physical structure but by how they are accessed, by enabling more aesthetic and economic generators to utilise the space above and around the parking spaces. They can give an initial view to the visitor of the town centre offer providing a 'gateway', according to the British Parking Forum: Crucially, the car park is the first thing motorists see on arrival, and the last thing they remember.

“Parking as a Service” demonstrates to the customer that while car access is important, what the town centre has to offer and the ease of access for the pedestrian is more important.

The exact location of the car park asset in relation to the place as well as any places of interest needs to be taken into account as this would have a direct impact on the amount of traffic on the network.

Recommendation : 4

To reduce impact on the transport network, car parks furthest from town centres should be cheaper than those prime assets located in close proximity to the centre. Those in the town centre should be managed by maximum stay. This principle directly links to the discussion under the Place heading where we discuss providing certain provision for particular uses at specific locations.

This principle also supports healthy lifestyles by encouraging walking from car parks which are further away from the final destination. It should be acknowledged that parking charges are required to manage not only traffic flows but also the levels of usage within parking facilities.

While there is an assumption that free parking would benefit an area, this is rarely the case. Areas whereby parking is free are likely to be fully occupied at all times often not by those visiting the area but rather by commuters leaving the car all day.

As such there would be little in the way of parking turnover meaning that fee parking provides spaces for those who are making visits for social and recreational purposes.

The lack of available parking spaces would act as a deterrent from making such further visits and therefore could impact the level of inward investment and general spending in the area as a whole.

It is generally suggested that there should be at least 15% of the total number of spaces free for such visits to stimulate and encourage economic growth. This turnover is only possible through the setting of appropriate parking tariffs.

The parking data shows that St Mary's car park operates at 60% capacity – an additional targeted special offer could fill in the gap, such as the 4-hour offer currently available off-peak at Britannia. Data should be checked to ensure only the time when spaces are most available is selected.

Recommendation : 5

Reserved parking spaces within off-street car park assets should be considered a premium product / facility, the cost of which should be reflective of the demand held for that particular asset.

A tier charging system should be introduced or considered so that the price of a reserved parking space is also a reflection of what the space is being used to support e.g. resident or business.

Categories of such spaces could include short stay spaces close to the town / city centres, long stay spaces for shoppers / visitors located further away from town / city centres and long stay spaces for residents who cannot be accommodated through on-street parking provision.

While reserved spaces should be considered a premium, they should be priced to encourage their usage to reduce the number of unnecessary vehicle trips by those searching for a parking space and to increase the efficiency of overall traffic movements.

Every Council owned car park has a business rate and maintenance charge associated with it. It provides a service to the community and a tariff charge should be applied in recognition of this.

Ranking Car Parks against criteria

An idea from Cornwall's recent review is for car parks to be categorised as 'Gold'; 'Silver'; or 'Bronze' – the ranking relating to facilities and maintenance.

'Gold' car parks will have a variety of additional pre-defined features including, where appropriate, lighting up to British Standards, clearly marked out bays, managed traffic flows and CCTV equipment in place.

'Silver' car parks will bridge the gap between these two standards. Having specific standards in place helps achieve some of the main factors that parking should consider when being provided in a Town Centre setting as indicated by the British Parking Forum, namely the provision of secure and quality facilities.

A 'bronze' car park will have an up to date condition survey and will be in a safe condition.

- Pay after Parking systems installed in 'Gold' and 'Silver' car parks

Recommendation : 6

Car parks should be ranked according to current and potential usage and value to their town centre. A customer using a gold standard car park should expect a wider range of facilities and standards than the basic minimum. This car park will also be prioritised for maintenance similar to the Highways hierarchy.

Payment after Parking

For retailers this supports the shopping experience. For the car parking service, evidence has also shown that **Pay after Parking** technology can increase the income from a car park on average by as much as 15%. Often this is provided through the expensive 'Pay on Foot' system with barriers, with a large installation cost and ongoing maintenance and staffing overheads, but other technological solutions are available.

Across North Essex, payment systems are also delivered via the **MiPermit** App. Customers can use the MiPermit App to identify themselves on arrival, then extend the stay right up to the time for departure. Using the App in a slightly different way could enable MiPermit to calculate the overall fee, process payment and "check out" the vehicle at the end of the stay.

This removes the need for customers to estimate their stay length on arrival. This approach has been successfully piloted at a number of Councils across the UK including Newcastle, Lichfield and Basingstoke.

Recommendation : 7

Enabling **Payment after Parking** enables customers to spend the time they want in the town centre without having to rush back to the car park to avoid penalty. They pay for the time they have used as opposed to having to guess what time they may need at the start of their visit.

The customer doesn't have to worry about having the correct change or understanding tariff bands at the start of their visit. In the example suggested for Colchester, customers could elect to purchase an initial sum, then extend dynamically 'by the minute' after that for as many minutes as they need – and then pay at the end.

State of the built environment

Make more of land, more provision (link to Local Plan), perhaps by provisioning more multi-storey car parks, or it may be possible to add more decks to existing structures or over-decking existing sites. Alternatively, thought could be given to extending provision of the Park & Ride scheme in order to improve air quality within the town.

Minimum standards for car parks

Our car park assets are a valuable commodity to our communities and town centres and represents a significant business to the Council. Car parks are currently inspected on a hierarchical basis, depending on their proximity to town centres and the savings that they produce.

Short stay visitors and shoppers are looking for accessible, convenient spaces so that the journey from the car park is not a detriment to their visit and can compete with the out of town supermarket.

Recommendation : 8

Where town centre car park assets allow, the long stay commuter spaces should be consolidated further from the centre. This also has the benefit of managing peak traffic demand on the town centre road network, providing priority for public transport in the peak hours.

Additionally there is a wealth of research which concludes that free or even cheap parking results in capacity saturation and a lack of turnover ,or churn, which has a negative impact upon economic development within towns.

Our customers should expect as a minimum: clear signage, clear parking bay lines, working machines, litter free, smooth surface, clear walkways. This should support the environment within which the car park sits.

Signage to and within car parks

The Strategy Group reviewed network signage which supports access to car parks. It found that the Variable Messaging Signage (VMS) – the directional signs showing the number of spaces in each direction – does not cover all town centre car parks.

The use of such signage is recommended by the British Parking Forum. Signage should be considered holistically with links to pedestrian routes and rights of way.

Colchester has lodged as part of a bid to the North Essex Parking Partnership Reserve Fund review and fund improvements to the directional signage to all long and short stay car parks.

All VMS systems will be fully integrated into car park data gathering / analytics where possible. The same system should also be driving interfaces for the deployment of enforcement.

Recommendation : 9

The signage on our network must give clear direction to the driver in terms of long stay/short stay car parks, and the Council should provide VMS where applicable to prevent unnecessary traffic movements in our town centre.

Local directional signage to car parks should also be reviewed to ensure clarity and fitness for purpose. Named car parks should be provided on fixed directional signs

TRL research has suggested that there are more important factors which limit car travel other than the cost of parking. The Review Group considered the review off-street car park signage (i.e. within car parks) and initial messaging to improve legibility and 'welcome'

Pay area for machines and signs should provide a 'Welcome' – be light and clean – considering 'first impressions' of the town are experienced at car parks.

Working with the North Essex Parking Partnership, we have enabled contactless card payment in our car parks. This reflects the move to contactless payment generally and provides an alternative, easy mechanism of payment for the customers who wish to use it. It also minimises vandalism, reduces maintenance and re-programming issues associated with coin machines.


Active travel (walking and cycling) is an important element within healthy lifestyles. By putting in cycle parking provision and signing walking and cycling routes from car parks to key destinations, people will find it easier to choose to walk and cycle as part of their journey.

Options


X

Recommendations

X

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Provision Place: car park provision 	<p>Place: To provide excellent parking facilities at an appropriate cost to users and Council Tax Payers, compared with other modes, whilst contributing to the economic vitality of our town centres.</p> <p>To determine the adequacy of off-street provision in terms of volume, location and mix of short v long stay and permit parking to determine whether it meets the needs of customers.</p>	<p>To be concluded following consultation</p>

2. Perceptions

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Perceptions Impressions: customer perceptions 	Customers and retailers' perception of parking provision in the Borough Questionnaire and consultations facilities, accessibility, provision, experience, data	Impressions: To consider views and opinions of key stakeholders including residents, businesses and shoppers and allow them to help form the policy To design the Council's current pricing and payment mechanisms.

Introduction:

In this section we consider engagement with stakeholders.

Prior to creating the draft document we surveyed the public and sought views from key business groups. Surveys were carried out at sites and via a web survey which was publicised locally.

We asked a range of questions including those involving environmental and safety aspects of visiting car parks.

For the final draft, it is proposed to ensure all key stakeholders are consulted – possible consultees are set out in the text below.

Issues

Stakeholder Engagement and Surveys

A link to the survey data is [here](#)

We have collected and collated a wide variety of data as part of the project. We have looked at maximum occupancy and times of over-capacity, which indicate where the tariff or price elasticity no longer fits the market. We also intend to review inner and outer town centre car parks.

We have also conducted a range of customer and public surveys, working with the council's Research and Engagement Team. Customers were surveyed both at car parks and online.

Through our survey work we captured journey origin postcodes, and these are outlined anonymously in Figure 2 below:

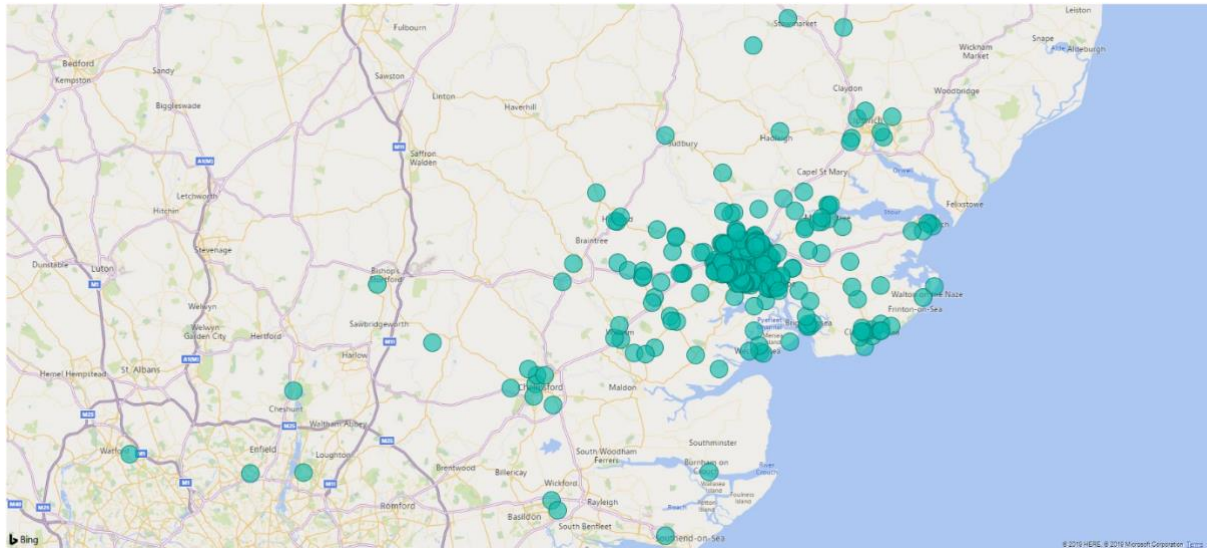


Figure 2 Postcode of origin of trip

Whilst many trips originated from inside the Council boundary, some also travelled far greater distances than the average journey-to-work time (approx. 20-30 mins for the area, see Figure 3 below).

Office For National Statistics		
Labour Force Survey		
OD 2018		
Weight 2018		
Variables used: PWT18 , TrvTme, Usaladgb		
Please note - Usaladgb refers to the respondents home location not place of work		
TRV/TME Usual home to work travel time (minutes)		
	Desc	Mean
	22UC Braintree	2
	22UF Chelmsford	3
	22UG Colchester	2
	22UK Maldon	3
	22UN Tendring	2
	42UB Babergh	3
	42UD Ipswich	2
	42UG Suffolk Coastal	2
Created on 8/07/19 by Office for National Statistics		
http://www.ons.gov.uk/		
Crown Copyright applies unless otherwise stated, Copyright@ons.gov.uk		

Figure 3 ONS travel to work times 2018 for surrounding districts

Developing the Thinking

Methodology

The survey work resulted well in excess of 400 records. The questionnaire was conducted in January/February 2019 and it is recommended to repeat the exercise at other times of the year in future – say, in summer, or before Christmas.

The Snap survey tool we used records time and days of the surveys.

Outcomes

Car Park Survey 2019			
Location	Amount		
St Johns Car Park	29		
Butt Road Car Park	8		
St Marys Car Park	38		
Priory Street Car Park	49		
Vineyard St Car Park	47		
Britania Street Car Park	22		
Middleborough Car Park	25		
Total	218		

The split of car parks where recorded showed a reasonable cross-section of sites.

We had 180 responses in total from the Online questionnaire and received data from 232 face-to-face surveys.

- In terms of representation, this is a very reliable sample number of returns.

Other Outputs:

Beside the survey work, we are looking to build research (surveys, insight) with Research & Engagement Team and Other stakeholders (inc tourism).

In addition, the British Parking Association, in support of the Positive Parking Agenda is sponsoring some national research, which will be of interest to local authorities.

We have also included research from the British Parking Forum and other local authorities, including Cornwall on whose template this report is based.

Developing the thinking

Engagement - stakeholders

In order to provide the draft recommendations, we have engaged with the public and the ourColchester BID.

Additional stakeholders will be consulted with the production of a draft version of this document.

We are looking to build research (surveys, insight) with Research & Engagement Team with other stakeholders as part of the consultation on the draft version of this Plan. This may include: organisations such as : –

- Residents
- Access Group/Disabled Motoring UK
- The ourColchester BID;
- Tourism representatives;
- Essex County Council, Parishes and Town Councils, other neighbouring councils and the emergency services;

- Local authority colleagues from areas including Transport Strategy, Local Plan, Built Environment, Licensing;
- Groups which make use of the facilities, including: – Arts Centre, Mercury Theatre, Headgate Theatre, The Odeon, Business Groups (own parking, through season tickets), Institute, VI College, University;
- Groups with input or output impacts on use of parking facilities, including: – Bus Companies, Taxis, Freight Transport Association, Amphora.

This could take the form of drop-in sessions at FirstSite as location. Library Hub, Town Hall, or on site with a Trailer.

Recommendation : 10

As part of the wider Draft Consultation Review, we should look to survey the views of other organisations including Business, Shopping Centres, Access Groups and Disabled Motoring UK. The full draft will be consulted on – possibly with “drop in” sessions at the BID and/or further work with the Research Team.

A mixed ‘freeform question’ set of responses was received to the open question about cost of parking. This also shows that there is more to be done to explain the reason for the tariffs in connection with supply, demand and reducing congestion.

From the Survey:	“Car parks to expensive need to be cheaper would draw more people to shop in town
From the Survey:	“Change should be given or pay on exit with vehicle registration recognition.
From the Survey:	“Chapelfield carpark in Norwich is an excellent example of a modern, clean carpark, as is the carpark near to John Lewis in Chelmsford
From the Survey:	“Charges need to be cheaper
From the Survey:	“Cheaper parking or cheaper park and ride.
From the Survey:	“Colchester car parks are the worst I have been too. I have worked in. Other locations and have felt much safer however never feel safe walking to my car in Colchester.
From the Survey:	“Colchester parking is too expensive compared to other towns so does not encourage people to the town
From the Survey:	“Compared with other towns and cities Colchester has some of the best car parking and it makes me mad when less well travelled people complain
From the Survey:	“do not use car parks - too expensive and pay on entry is unfair
From the Survey:	“Don't have blue badge but struggle to walk any distance due to joint and back problems
From the Survey:	“Far too expensive. We avoid the town centre unless absolutely necessary. We go to the cinema in Ipswich, much better, and free parking.

There is some evidence in the survey responses to suggest that users of the private NCP car parks do not understand the difference between these private businesses and the council-run car parks.

Controlling the costs of private car parks

Customers often refer to the cost of parking in privately-run car parks such as those at Nunns Road and Osbourne Street when talking about the cost of parking in Colchester. This can have a negative impact on the view of shoppers car park costs in the town, given that Nunns Road is so closely located to a major retailer.

The Council does not directly control the cost of parking at these sites, but there are mechanisms that could be brought into use should the need arise.

The Department for Transport alluded to these measures in a letter to all parking managers on 14 June 2011.

Department for
Transport

Zone 2/06 Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
LONDON SW1P 4DR

alan.irving@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Ref: 110614/dearparkingmanager.doc

14 June 2011

Dear Parking Manager,

Control of Off-Street Parking

You may be aware that last year a Private Member's Bill concerning off-street parking was introduced into Parliament by the Hon Member for Crawley, Henry Smith MP. The Bill, if enacted, would place a duty on local authorities to licence all publicly available off-street car parking places where a fee was charged.

The Bill is currently being considered by Parliament. In the meantime I would like to take this opportunity to remind parking managers of the current discretionary licensing powers that exist in relation to off-street car parking places.

Sections 43 and 44 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the associated Control of Off-Street Parking Orders 1978 and 1986 provide local authorities with discretionary powers to control off-street parking through a licensing scheme. Copies of these instruments may be viewed at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/27/contents>
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1978/1535/contents/made>
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1986/225/contents/made>


Where you take the view it is necessary and appropriate you may wish to consider the use of these powers to licence off-street parking places. The powers allow, following appropriate consultation with stakeholders, for local authorities to establish controlled areas within which no person other than the local authority may operate a public off-street parking place of a prescribed description except under and in accordance with the terms and conditions of a licence granted to that person by the local authority.

Alan Irving
Traffic Management Division
Department for Transport


Options

X

Recommendations

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
<p>Perceptions</p> <p>Impressions: customer perceptions</p> 	<p>Impressions: To consider views and opinions of key stakeholders including residents, businesses and shoppers and allow them to help form the policy</p> <p>To design the Council's current pricing and payment mechanisms.</p>	

3. Parking Requirements

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Parking requirements Technology: requirements for parking 	Special parking requirements Occupancy and turnover Disabled, young children, cyclists, electric vehicles Payment mechanisms, concessions, season tickets, resident parking in car parks, special offers and other incentives such as loyalty schemes	To recommend the future systems mix from the choices of Pay and Display against cashless alternatives including digital accounts or Pay on Exit.

Introduction:

In this section we discuss how statistics relating to tariff and custom can be used to predict uptake of offers and inform the best mix for the future, incorporating: –

- Tariff Usage, Offers, patterns, turnover.
- Tariff types and geographical location/access to short/long stay
- Use of assets at other times – e.g. investigating Rowan House P&D at weekend
- Offers: £2.50 offer, £3.50 offer - after peak, contra peak; Car Club, Love Ur Car, links to new Electric Vehicle charging.
- Accessibility – and Blue Badge use - plus any new developments following the scheme's review.

Issues

Tariff and Custom

Our survey reveals that customers sometimes think our tariff structure is complicated, and perception of higher fees can be biased by bad choice of car park. Additionally, other modes are not seen as an alternative. Flexibility is mentioned, but the structure must be kept understandable.

From the Survey: "Parking charges are unfair and complicated.
If you pay cash you don't get any change which means you could end up losing out on a lot of money.
Also, what you put in the machine should be done by hours not how much you are going pay.
This system is complicated and many times I have struggled or seen others struggling and not paying

617		for enough hours so then having to buy another
618		ticket meaning you are charged twice."
619	From the Survey:	"Parking is generally too expensive in Colchester & I
620		dread the day I have to rely on buses!! The bus service
621		is generally a mess & needs a complete rethink."
622	From the Survey:	"The car parks in Colchester are numerous and cheap.
623		This encourages people to drive into the town, thus
624		increasing congestion and pollution. People should
625		be encouraged to drive to the park and ride service."
626	From the Survey:	"We need more car parks for commuters you took
627		away Sheepen Road and replaced it with offices
628		putting more pressure on already stretched spaces.
629		For a flexible working mum the park and ride is too
630		far out for me to drop off the kids and then be at
631		work for 9.30. Parking is a struggle"

The details here can be avoided by using our *MiPermit* service, including its *Extend Your Stay* feature for which more information is given in the **Online Payment & Technology** section below.

The system could be made less complicated by moving to 'by the minute' charging, with much more granularity introduced in to the tariff bands; this could work in conjunction with a minimum payment, so that transaction charges are always covered, but extending parking is made simple.

Differentiation

Town centre Car parks in Colchester have traditionally been divided into shoppers, short stay and long stay. Those in the long stay area, outside the town centre, have traditionally had only a full or part day tariff.

Tariff Statistics for Town Centre Car Parks

Britannia

Just under 200% occupancy every Sunday - need to restructure tariffs because usage suggests it is too popular – perhaps increase tariff?

Butt Road

Low occupancy on Sundays - perhaps lower all day tariff?

Usage on other days around 100% - perhaps increase the day tariff Monday to Saturday? - Don't want to compete with NCP £2.90 offer.

Middleborough

30%-40% occupancy on Saturdays and Sundays - perhaps extend Monday to Friday tariffs to Saturdays and decrease Sunday tariff.

Napier Road North

100% occupancy from Monday to Saturday.

Low occupancy on Sundays - perhaps lower all day tariff?

Napier Road South

Duplicate North, same issues.

Priory Street

Weekday occupancy weaker than weekend - perhaps change tariff structure completely and separate weekends from weekdays.

Sheepen Road

Around 50% weekday usage - perhaps introduce special offer (like Middleborough car park) Monday-Saturday.

10-20% weekend usage - perhaps decrease Sunday tariff.

St Johns

50% occupancy on Sundays - perhaps lower tariffs or introduce special offer for Sundays, and potential to include Saturdays too.

St Marys

Between 50-60% usage Monday-Friday, without staff parking included.

Around 80-90% on Saturday.

Developing the thinking

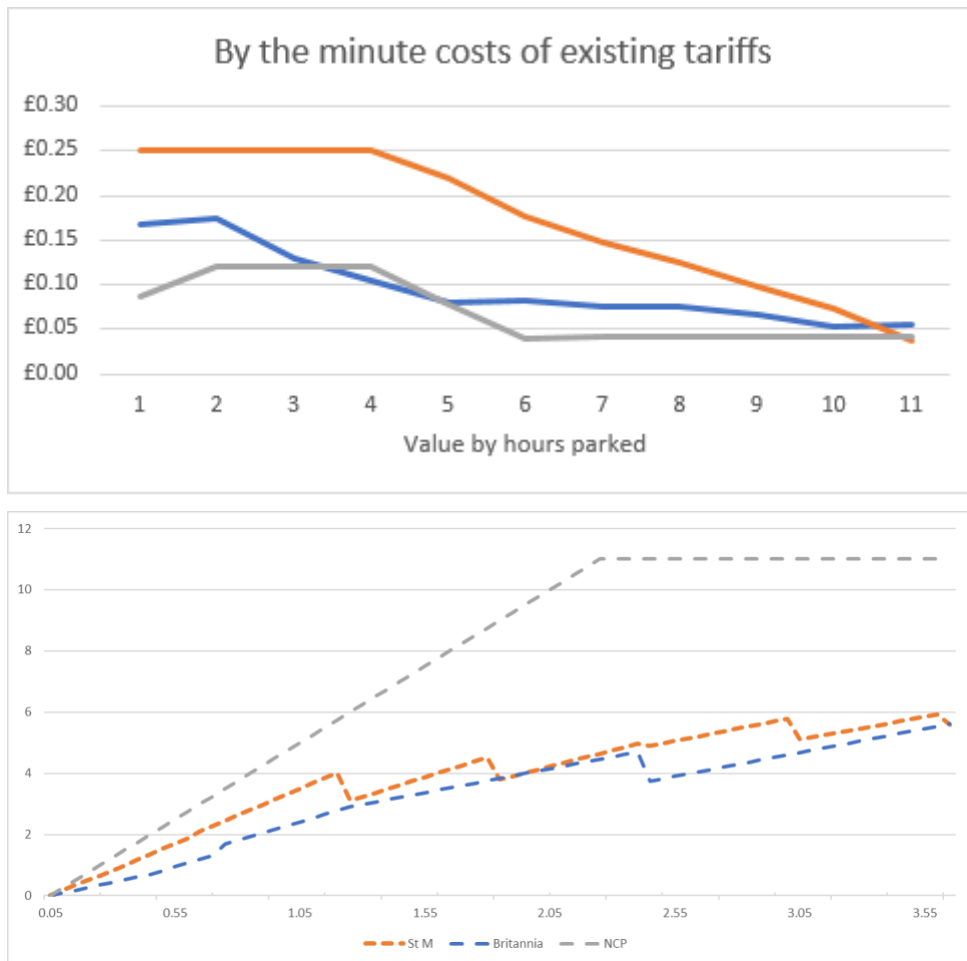
As a part of the working undertaken, collated cash, contactless and MiPermit purchases to help understand current tariff usage trends. We then analysed these trends to identify where improvements can be made.

Day rate tariffs seem popular, and there is a suggestion that we need a structured Sunday tariff to match.

Short stay should be maximum stay (not high price penalty).

Recently a number of offers have been considered or implemented, including: –

- £2 after 2pm - Priory St Marys, MiPermit only (from the second week of January onwards – from 2pm - 6am).



By-the-minute charging could be implemented for Top Ups on the MiPermit service after an initial payment has been made – topping up by time would be of benefit to the customer when they are in town – customers can choose a time of departure (and keep adding) rather than having to guess a time or a tariff.

Options

Things to consider

Recommendation : 11

We may look to implement: –

- Short stay tariffs in addition, in the long stays
- An offer tariff where there is capacity
- Encouraging the county council to provide Park & Ride at the other side of town, including peak hour tariffs to encourage modal shift

Achieving policy Objectives

Recommendation : 12

It is recommended, in order to pursue policy objectives to curb travel in peak hours and encourage the use of other modes, to: –

- Ensure sufficient budget exists to cover costs of running,
- Maintaining and refurbishing car parks
- Increasing the amount of Blue Badge Holder parking to cover increased 'non visible disabilities' in the new Blue Badge scheme from 2019.


Recommendations

The Review Group recommends that the tariffs needing to be reviewed include: –


Recommendation : 13

We recommend the following changes;

- To increase the Sunday tariff in the Britannia car park from £1 to X.
- To decrease the Sunday tariff in the Butt Road, Middleborough, Napier Road North and South and Sheepen Road car parks, from £2.20 to X.
- To extend the special £3.50 offer in the Middleborough car park to include Saturdays.
- To introduce a special £3.50 offer in Sheepen Road car park from Monday-Saturday.
- To review the tariff structure in the Priory Street, St Marys and St Johns car parks, so tariffs are split between Monday-Friday and Saturday-Sunday – special offers?
- To decrease the evening tariff in the Priory Street, St Marys and St Johns car parks.

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Parking requirements Technology: requirements for parking 	To recommend the future systems mix from the choices of Pay and Display against cashless alternatives including digital accounts or Pay on Exit.	

4. Online Payment & Technology

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Online Payment 	Alternatives to the use of cash Cashless, online parking account Pay machine/operation type	Technology: To maximise opportunities for increasing the number of customers who pay by cashless parking.

Introduction:

In this section we consider everything to do with Technology, including: –

Digital Payment

- The digital parking account
- Comparisons; Cash; Cashless Wave&Pay; MiPermit - and other emerging technology
- Aim to reduce cash (new offers to be digital only)
- Changing usage by tariff break incentives and differential or dynamic pricing.

Other technological improvements that could be made.

Issues

Underutilised times - do these marry up with filing capacity without adding to congestion.

By the minute charging – we investigated the possibility of: –

- Tariff fit being aligned so it is not detrimental to income
- Not allowing overstay of the maximum time allowed
- Ability to Top Up in town
- Ability to scroll the time you want on MiPermit when topping up.

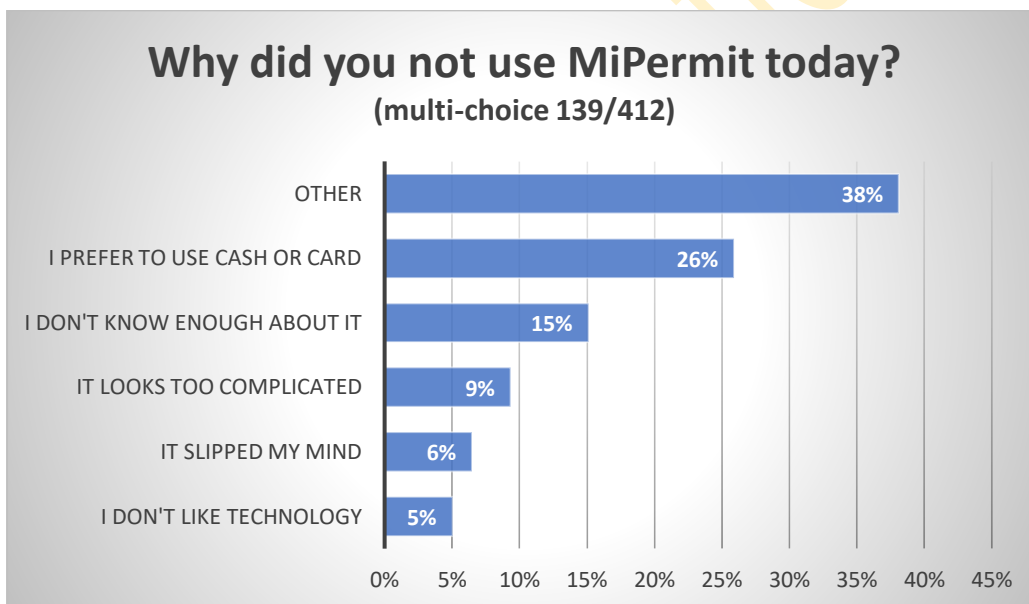
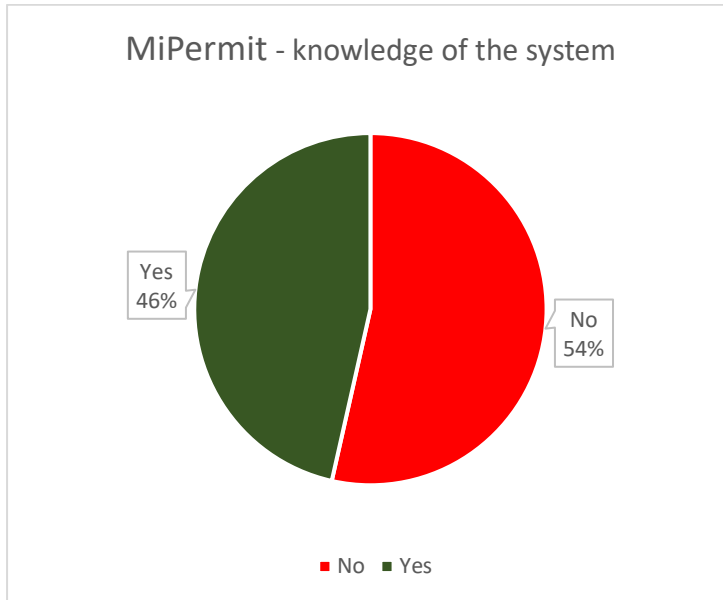
Recommendation : 14

New Technology enables a number of new opportunities. It is recommended that the Council investigates

- Granularity of tariffs.
- Increased use of Technology
- Scan to extend by 15 mins

Business Communities often cite pay on exit as the panacea to retain shoppers in town centres for longer, but the truth is that such systems are both expensive to implement and maintain.

Alternatives to pay on exit have the same result – that of enabling the customer to choose how long to stay up until the time they leave – in Essex this is MiPermit.



MiPermit – and other technology, can reduce cash handling (particularly when offers are digital only) – and the use of tariff break incentives could encourage more to use the service.

Developing the thinking

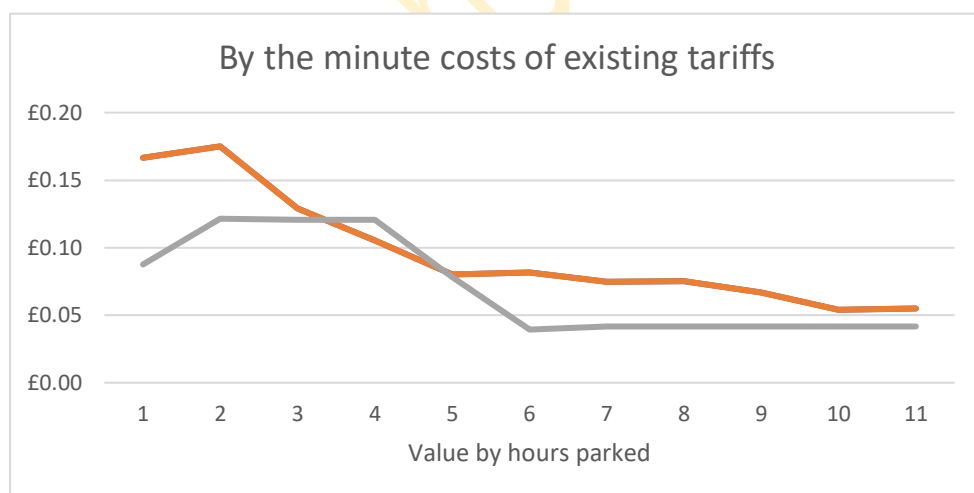
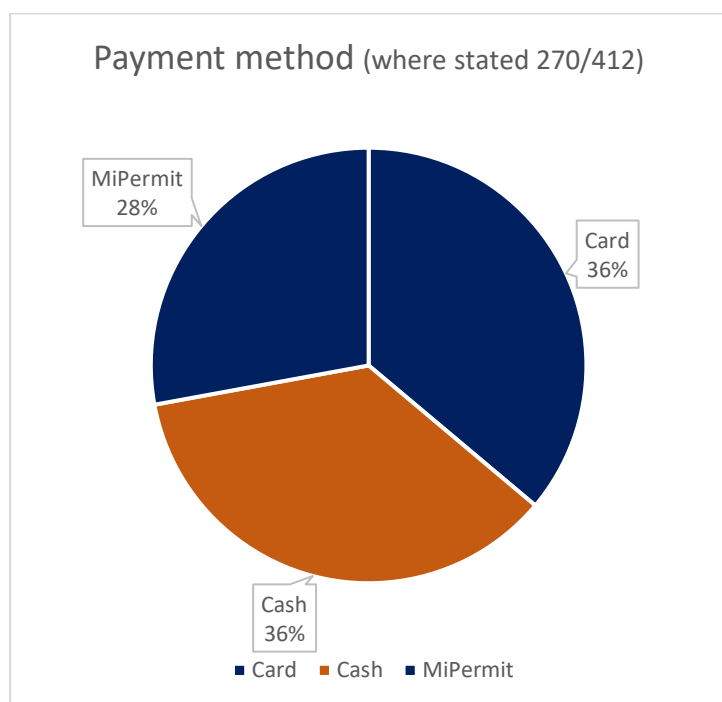
We have recently conducted a campaign to promote MiPermit generally, and in particular the 'extend' feature, and are working with the Our Colchester BID to promote more understanding of the additional benefits that MiPermit could bring.

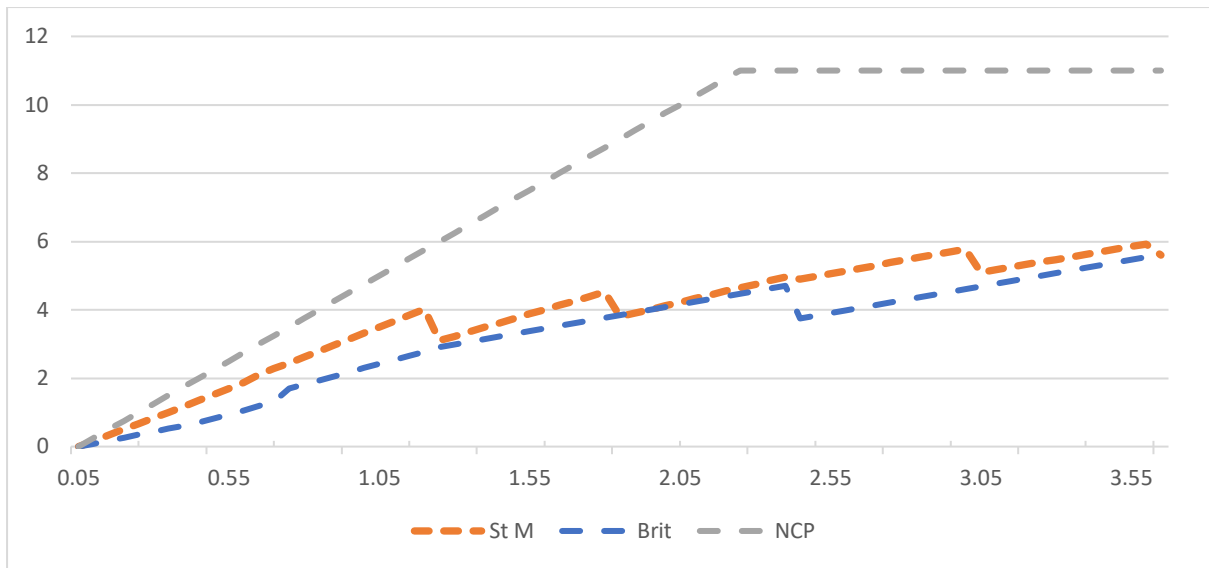
This might include possible alternative outcomes, such as exploring fixed tariffs and pay-by-the-minute charging, including ways to pay for parking in retrospect, or as part of an account.

We could also look to provide businesses customers, with MiPermit digital “Scratch cards” – where you could buy a book of tickets and call these off as required.

Cashless Parking

In promoting cashless parking we considered how traditional thinking about the tariff structure could be transformed by the use of technology.






Options


X

Recommendations

X

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Online Payment 	Technology: To maximise opportunities for increasing the number of customers who pay by cashless parking.	

5. Prosperity

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Prosperity Finance : economic prosperity 	District growth and development; Colchester town centre and other towns in the Borough Finance : MTFP, options, pressures, pricing, options, town centre vitality	Managing parking during regeneration and development. Increased economic prosperity: Working with our Colchester BID to provide the right range and mix of provision for identified needs whilst supporting the councils priorities and policies. To assess the financial impact of options and recommendations to identify the impact on budget.

Introduction:

This section looks at how the parking service can be efficient and effective and provide a service that is required and used. A variety of factors are taken into account including the number of spaces available, the most recent revenue figures, its impact on the nearest shopping area etc. This includes the following: –

Tariff and Custom

- Tariff Usage, Offers, patterns, turnover
- Tariff types and geographical location/access to short/long stay
- Use of assets at other times – e.g. investigating Rowan House P&D at weekend
- Offers: £2.50 offer, £3.50 offer – Off peak, after peak, contra peak; Car Club, Love Ur Car, EV link bays.
- Accessibility - and Blue Badge use - plus any new development

Outcomes

- Town Index; Congestion and Road Usage - from traffic model
- Payment Type review
- Outputs, marketing offers (link to BID), our Colchester

Provision Issues

- long stay on north west and east
- New development - provision? (and s.106)
- Local Plan, buses, P&R, alternatives to car...

Tariffs and Offers

BID feedback has been received; our tariff model is a positive and our strategy for parking is evident.

Parking is a longer-term aim for BID, but we have been requested to investigate ways to enable shoppers to have longer dwell time. The MiPermit app enables people to

top up whilst in town and is a more configurable alternative than costly systems such as pay-on-exit.

Bus operator feedback is that parking prices are too cheap.

We support the Park & Ride scheme by operating long-stay tariffs which encourage motorists to consider alternatives to travel in the peak. By doing so we fulfil a key role in managing traffic. The Park & Ride is otherwise fulfilling a different market.

The parking service must be efficient and effective and provide a service that is required and used. A variety of factors are taken into account including the number of spaces available, the most recent revenue figures, its impact on the nearest shopping area etc.

A scoring matrix has been developed to provide a score for each attribute which is then given a weighting in line with current Council priorities. Some research has suggested that in some instances retailers overestimate the number of visitors who travel to shopping areas by car. This perception can often lead to an unbalanced favouritism to more parking provisions than is actually required.

BID Details: Transportation in Colchester

Transport and roads are major infrastructure issues that are influenced and funded by national, county and borough governments. They are part of long-term strategic plans and funding sources.

As they impact directly on the town, Our Colchester needs to understand the strategic plans of the above bodies as well as to develop its own strategic response. Many issues such as car parks are both emotive subjects and very important to the success of a town centre.

To be taken seriously, Our Colchester must gain a consensus from businesses and to present a properly considered and united view to the relevant government bodies. To achieve this, it is proposed that an Our Colchester director takes a lead on the subject, supported by the chair and the board.

What is included?

- Parking/ car parks
- Public transport
- Park and ride
- Cycle paths and related issues
- Policy on congestion and how to deal with it.
- Major roadworks
- Town centre pedestrianisation.
- The development of new forms of transport such as trams
- The development of an infrastructure to support electric cars
- Other?

How to move forward?

Our Colchester needs to understand the issues of greatest importance to businesses and ideally to develop a common view on a route forward.

For example, parking may or may not be top of a list but in general, most people have a view. What is important is that Our Colchester take a considered and pragmatic view to understand the public body approach to the subject and to establish the facts.

If for example, it is the public body view cars are not welcome in town and congestion is the weapon to deal with this, Our Colchester might argue that this is not acceptable and such a stance will be a major contributor to a decline of town centres which are competing with online sales and out of town developments.

Likewise, if there is a perception that there are not enough parking spaces, Our Colchester needs to establish if that is true. If so, how can the subject be resolved?

These are quoted just as examples of a subject that needs proper consideration and discussion with the CBC along with other parties. This along with the other issues listed above are likely to require solutions that may take years to address.

Conversely, there may be parking initiatives and incentives that businesses and the car parks could take together to incentivise shoppers to behave differently.

Summary

Our Colchester must become a means of communication between businesses and the relevant public bodies to have credibility and to have influence for the benefit of the town. It must take a strategic view and work with the public bodies understanding the needs of all parties.

Given the latter, it is possible for Our Colchester to be part of a more positive approach to influencing policy and developments for the town centre.

Looking to build research (surveys, insight) with Research & Engagement Team

Other stakeholders (inc tourism - Claire)

Developing the thinking

The Strategy Group has considered the following: -

- Looking at possible outcomes, exploring fixed tariffs and pay-by-the-minute
- Day rate tariffs seem popular
- Suggestion that we need a structured Sunday tariff to match.
- Short stay should be maximum stay (not high price penalty).
- Also look at Dynamic Tariffs.

Transport Research Laboratory research has highlighted the fact that parking charges can be correlated to the level and quality of service provided in an area e.g. an area

with a quality mix of retail provisions would attract more visitors than other areas even if these had no charges in place.

It is further suggested by Transport Research Laboratory that it is retailers that object to parking prices rather than shoppers themselves. An effective, evidenced based tariff band proposal will be put forward for future years. This will include consideration of principles below.

Other measures - Town Index

How do we know that Colchester is doing well, generally? We use the following measures: –

- Benchmarking
- footfall etc.- links
- Capacity and utilisation

Flexible tariffs

The Strategy Group considered a number of different scenarios and options based on knowledge and best practice from other places.

Recommendation : 15

One of its recommendations is to look at the fixed tariff (banded payments) and explore:

- Dynamic tariffs, especially around busy times.
- Pay after parking: Pay by the minute after an initial sum
- Cashless parking - MiPermit and contactless only
- Sweden Model
- Visitor permit-like - more to use cash –
- Other incentives and offers

The Positive Parking Framework needs to be able to align itself with the costs of public transport networks in the Public Transport system. Tariffs of off-street car parks need to take into consideration the availability of alternative parking provision, both on-street as well as off-street private providers.

Research has suggested that those travelling by public transport or walking are increasingly likely to visit more shops and spend more overall compared to those arriving by car. The pull factor of car parks especially in larger towns needs to be fully appreciated and understood when setting the tariffs for that car park asset.

Whilst the Council does not wish to discourage motorists from using parking provision in villages, towns or cities the impact of these assets on traffic flows needs to be managed.

It can be assumed that these impacts would be greater in locations that have a higher number of overall car park assets, especially if these are large in size, and as

such the tariffs should be set in such a way to redirect as many longer stays further away from the town centres.

This may therefore require the introduction of tariff banding structure that is reflective of the geographical location of the asset.

A fundamental role of car parks is the direction and management of traffic within a particular place; as such the location and usage of a car park asset can have an impact on the overall traffic management workings of a place.

In order to promote alternative transport modes car park tariffs need to be priced in accordance to the available public transport price and availability, in particular Park and Ride, to be a consideration in tariff setting.

Economic baseline indicators reflecting health of town centre, to be a consideration in tariff setting

Recommendation : 16

In order to make the parking service appealing to the end users more attractive products and offers need to be established and effectively marketed to target audiences.


- Sale of annual or 3 & 6 monthly season tickets will offer the option of staggered payments to spread the full cost over a set period of time.
- The offer of part-time seasons (e.g. 3 out of ten days, call off/use before, etc) should be investigated.

Options


X

Recommendations

X

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Prosperity Finance : economic prosperity 	Managing parking during regeneration and development. Increased economic prosperity : Working with our Colchester BID to provide the right range and mix of provision for identified needs whilst supporting the councils priorities and policies. To assess the financial impact of options and recommendations to identify the impact on budget.	

6. Environment & the Bigger Picture

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Environment & Bigger Picture 	Supporting the aims of the Positive Parking Agenda Environmental factors County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP)	To encourage modal shift where alternatives are available, in support of the county council's Local Transport Plan. To support the county council's strategic aims of reducing congestion, improving air quality.

Introduction:

The work includes looking at issues such as:

- **Sufficient Provision, Positioning** – what about congestion; what are we encouraging people to do?
- **Transportation and modal shift, cleaner air, income**
- **Customers and retailers' perception** of parking provision; increased economic prosperity
- **Any special parking requirements**
- **Social Media, Communications** of car parking provision; promotion including Variable Messaging

Transportation Policy

Consultation Draft – Action : Attend to BID to ask questions

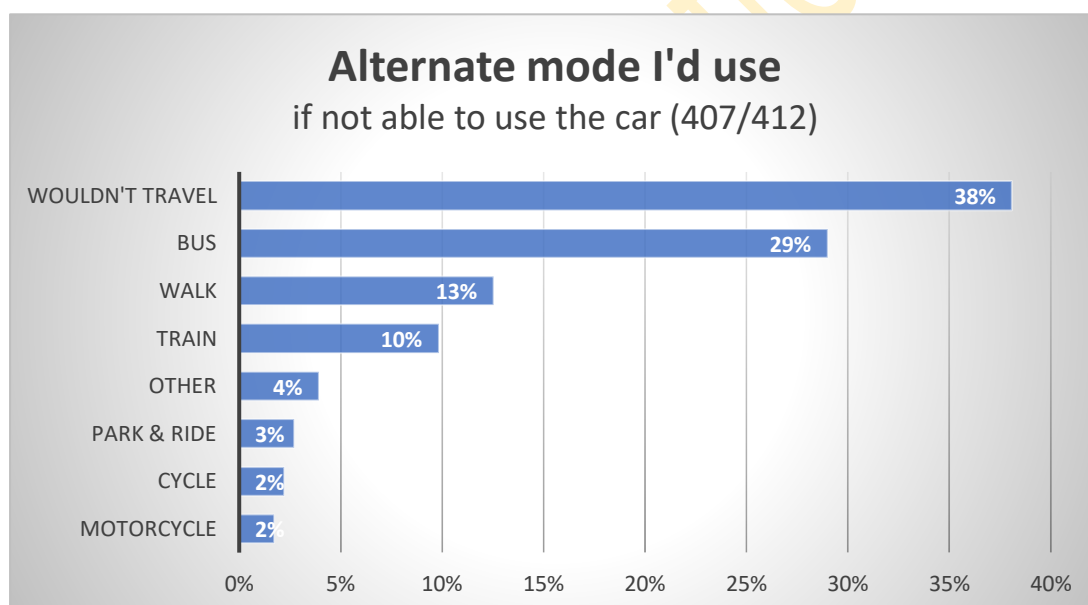
Parking Policy can support Transport Policy and Plans. Designing effective parking charges is unquestionably a compromise. In setting fees and charges, an authority should take account of:

- **Supporting town centre vitality**; influencing town centre: shopping footfall, dwell times be aware of price elasticity and resistance;
- **Achieving Policy Objectives**; pursue policy objectives to curb travel during peak hours;
- **Influencing supply, demand and congestion**; Influencing Congestion/Air Quality through pricing and offers, reducing traffic queues, influencing supply, demand and congestion, with the requirement to lessen travel in the peak;
- **Providing Income and Supporting the Costs** of running and refurbishing car parks. Income to the council as a result of operation to support the increasing costs of running and refurbishing car parks.



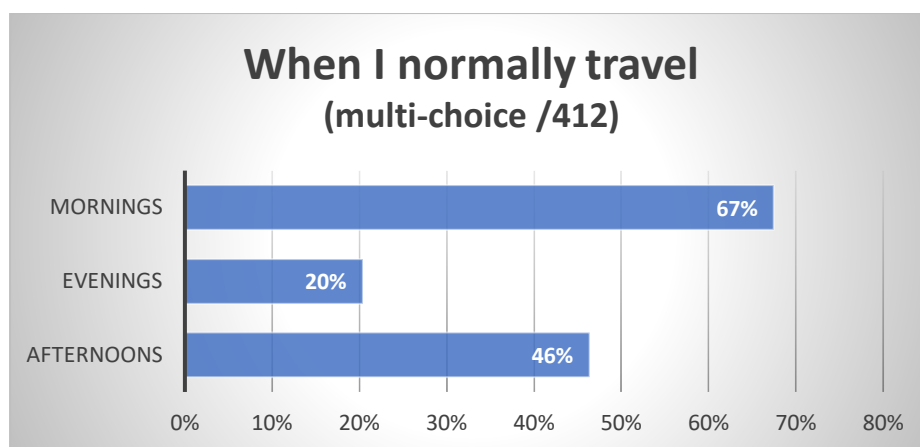
Outputs

- Transportation led
- Selection of choices, including special offers
- Business
- Congestion busting (drive across town vs. P&R)



The data shows spikes and troughs where our actions could be focussed: –

- Long stay car parks - Saturday shoppers
- Short Stay car parks - different peak and slope to peak
- Sunday one ticket bought and long stay for low value
- Evening peak



Developing the thinking

Directly linking to the amount of traffic using the network is the amount of pollution that is produced and therefore the overall air quality level. Further consideration needs to be given when either setting or reviewing the off-street car park tariffs as to whether the asset is located within an air quality management area.

Consideration should be given to potentially increasing the tariffs for assets that are in such areas as the impact of traffic accessing them would further compound to reduced air quality at the detriment of local residents.

Recommendation : 17

Air Quality Management Areas to be a consideration in tariff setting – with links to congestion and Climate Emergency.

Location in relation to town centre to be a consideration in tariff setting

Parking demand and underutilised capacity (85%:15% rule) to be a consideration in tariff setting

Long Stay tariffs and the Britannia Offer has factored for this (more expensive peak arrival or not available for arrival before 0900) and the availability of the Park and Ride also a key consideration.

Recommendation : 18

Peak/Off Peak pricing must be encouraged in order to effect a modal shift, a shift to Park & Ride or at least a shift traffic away from the most congested, peak times which contribute to air quality management issues.

Peak hours are considered to be 7am-9am. If people must continue to drive in to town, this is the time to avoid.

Air quality will also be considered as part of signage and place shaping.

Elsewhere, the council has been working on public realm improvements near the town centre, most notably the 'Mercury Rising' project around Mercury Theatre. Proposals there would make significant improvements to the public realm including

surfacing, and level access improvements; however this may result in the displacement of some on-street disabled badge parking.

Recommendation : 19

It is recommended to revisit the disabled badge parking offer, signing and bay marking, and links to the Theatre, in St Mary's car park, near the level access to Popes Lane – making use of the improved and widened Balcerne Hill crossing. There are some minor improvements required to the surfacing, lighting and handrail in this area.

Additional disabled parking has been requested near the pedestrian exit ramp to the north at the Manor Road entry. Some bays have previously existed near this pedestrian exit but have been re-purposed.

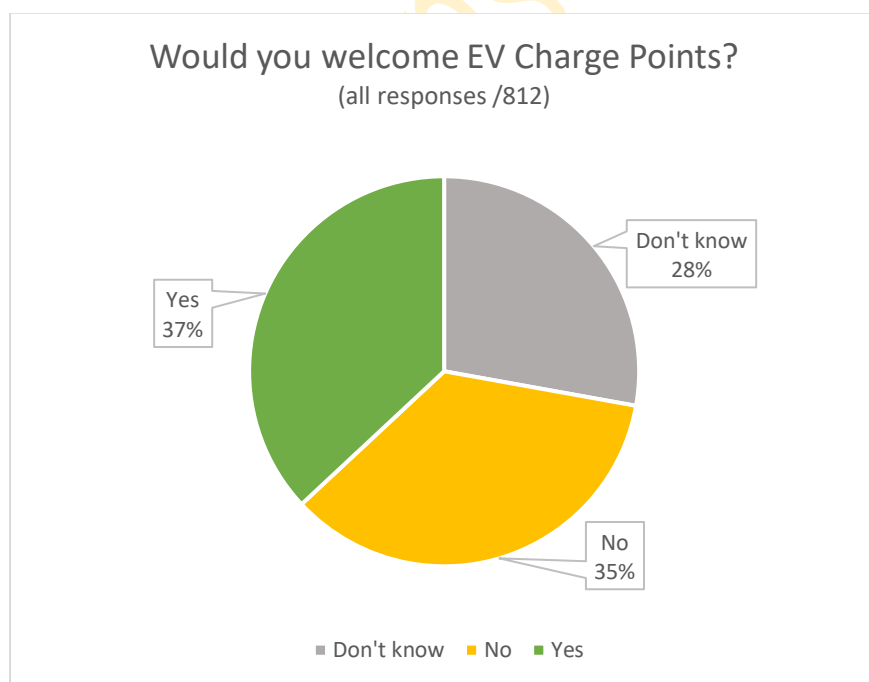
As with any offers, there is always a dilemma in encouraging undesirable cross-town journeys, so consideration should be given to similar but separate car park offers.

Seasonal Offers have traditionally been available – for instance the Late Night Wednesdays before Christmas – where a free parking offer is available from late afternoon into the evening. This has been reported by the BID to have had a limited effect, and some refreshed alternatives should be considered.

- Offers and Tariff are considered in more detail in the Perception issues section

Our survey for the first time has asked about Electric Vehicle (EV) charging

- Over a third of respondents would welcome an EV Charge Point. The demographic tended to reflect the older generations, perhaps due to the price premium of EV in the market at this time.



Congestion and Road Usage – cross-town traffic and traffic entering the core and at peak times is to be discouraged. This may be predicted from the traffic model (already-congested roads).

Town Centre Vitality – local discounts

By introducing a resident discount – this can be achieved using MiPermit - could be a discount available to all Colchester Council Tax Payers and enable an amount off parking off-peak, say 10p off a shopper stay, or more local – say 20p off a West Mersea carpark stay to West Mersea Residents, or hyper-local – say to Dedham parishioners in the Dedham car parks.

Another development may be the introduction of ‘rewards’ in conjunction with traders, where MiPermit users could scan a code in the shop in order to get a discount – advancing this thinking, further rewards could be earned by a combination of codes, or a number of stays.

Awards or badges for changing behaviour could be awarded with different types of challenge having different rewards.

The list of MiPermit Offer possibilities is only limited by the amount of things that can be logically described; it is recommended that the number of offers is kept to a maximum of five at any time, just to keep things simple to communicate and understandable.

Options

There is a need to explore tariffs to support the policy objectives. The areas that need consideration include: –

- Contra and off/post peak market - less congestion
- Tying together with Transport strategy LTP/TfC
- Short stay element in long stay
- By the minute charging
- Dynamic pricing for peak/off peak
- “Badges and Awards” incentives to do things differently, interrupt ‘bad habits’ (and cognitive dissonance)


Recommendation : 20

A variety of options is available including these measures using MiPermit. It is recommended that the Council introduces appropriate measures using the digital system including: –


- To introduce dynamic pricing with a peak hours surcharge
- To introduce minimum price with by-the-minute charging thereafter
- To introduce pay-as-you-go charging
- To introduce a resident discount – Borough wide, local or hyper-locally.
- To introduce a preferred parking or refund system with retailers via MiPermit
- To spread further the 'trusted customer' collection system to save transaction charges
- To introduce offers, badges and deals to regular trusted customers.
- Maintaining the long stay outer/shorter stay inner car parks but varying the stay type on the outer car parks
- Liaising with the town and parish councils about the outlying car park tariffs.

Recommendations

X

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Environment & Bigger Picture 	Supporting the aims of the Positive Parking Agenda Environmental factors County Council Local Transport Plan (LTP)	To encourage modal shift where alternatives are available, in support of the county council's Local Transport Plan. To support the county council's strategic aims of reducing congestion, improving air quality.

7. Promotions

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Promotion car parking Communications 	Communications: internal, external stakeholders, information Communications, promotion	Working with our Colchester BID (Business Improvement District) Communications: Providing information about the services

Introduction:

In this section we discuss Marketing and Communications including where to market, what to market, and which media to use. This may include: –

- Behaviours, target habits, perceptions,
- VMS influences, messaging - 'you can always get a space'
- Comparisons; Cash; Cashless Wave&Pay;
- MiPermit - and other emerging technology
- Aim to reduce cash (new offers digital only) - use by tariff break incentive
- Radio, bus back, poster/banner, professional publications and social media

What and how we promote:

A car park is often the gateway or the entry to a town – the first thing a visitor sees (and also the last thing they remember about a place).

Signage to and within the car park fits into a number of categories

- Highway (directional) signage
- Highway (information) signage
- - car park entry signs
- - Tariff Boards
- - Our own pedestrian direction signs

These each have their own style, although some improvements could be made to the highway signage, this is the remit of the County Council. A single style is portrayed on the tariff boards, and we are always looking to simplify the directions these give.

First impressions

We are looking at 'first impressions' and pay areas.

Perceptions and usability of a site stems from the first impressions. It is important to be clear in the details included around the machines and use simple 1-2-3 explanations on signs to explain processes that may not be obvious at first, for

instance the Yellow button offer – where we explain the process and tariff this enables.

To establish more of a brand, it is possible to vinyl wrap machines, to treat the area behind machines – say with a colour code.

Developing the thinking

Dynamic Tariffs & Dynamic charging

Areas which could be considered for differential, dynamic or special offer charging include looking at:-

- Saturday tariff on St. Mary's - change to Sunday tariff; Sheepen, Middleborough, Napier all offer £2 - twice the Vineyard and Britannia offer.
- Rates for the day - St Johns is popular
- Vineyard St - maximum stay 2 hours throughout
- Structured tariff on Sundays to match
- Short stay car parks should be maximum stay (not high prices)
- Badges, challenges, footfall, in store PoS QR discount codes

Things to avoid, include:

- Making frequent changes or sporadic piecemeal and scattergun amendments – the Council needs to use this Strategy for tariff planning and give the options time to settle in.

Recommendation : 21

Through working with local businesses, a series of discounts, benefits and offers can be established and introduced which ultimately provide a reward to the customer for using the Council's parking service.

For example, other authorities have systems in place whereby customers can obtain a discount on the price of parking if a certain threshold of expenditure is reached at a local business.

App based parking systems such as MiPermit allow for businesses to refund a proportion (decided upon by themselves) of their customers parking charges made via the MiPermit system. Businesses provide customers with a code which is entered into the MiPermit system, which generates a refund to the customers debit / credit card.

Recommendation : 22

Consistent messaging and branding should be provided.

Welcoming, clear signage must be provided for customers including familiar branding and explaining the payment types and facilities available.


Also review the opportunity to explain to customers what the car park charges are used to support.

Options


X

Recommendations

X

Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Promotion car parking Communications 	Communications: internal, external stakeholders, information Communications, promotion	Working with our Colchester BID (Business Improvement District) Communications: Providing information about the services

8. Communications

Theme	Inputs	Outputs
Publicity Marketing and publicity 	Marketing: the position, the town's unique offer, types of media, tariff structure, stakeholders. The right publicity , a good communication Plan, Social Media, Adequate signage and advertisement of car parking provisions including Variable Messaging	Marketing the Council's pricing structure for the coming years including the use of concessions/special offers designed to increase utilisation of car parks and footfall in town centres.

This section will be further expanded when the draft circulation has been completed.

Introduction:

In this section we look at ways we can develop our communications with customers and stakeholders, considering trends that are covered in the rest of the document, including: –

- Outputs, marketing offers (link to BID), destination Colchester
- Social Media, marketing, campaigns, posters and advertising
- Helping people better understand the need for charging

Marketing and Comms –

The Review Group considered where best to market, what to market, and other media such as bus back advertising and use of radio. We are not now tied into any particular contract which makes things simpler in future for advertising.

Some of the biggest communication issues include:

- People don't read the display
- Lots of words on the tariff boards
- Need to separate price from regulations – and have a clear quick reference guide to using the car park.
- People need to take time considering the machines, entering coins/wave&pay
- Too many prices for different tariffs confuses people who do not take sufficient care due to environmental pressures.

There is a need to direct people's behaviours when choosing tariffs, using machines and selecting, payment methods. There is a need to target good habits, which could lead to better perceptions.

There is a chance to promote VMS influences, messaging - 'you can always get a space'

Comparisons

Traffic Research Laboratory (TRL) research has suggested that there are more important factors than cost which limit car travel other than the cost of parking.

We need to use consistent messaging and branding across all media, web sites, signage and other media. Welcoming, clear signage for customers possibly linking to the Parking Partnership brand.

Also need to use the opportunity of this Review to explain to customers what the car park charges are used to support.

Smarter Parking

Pay and extend your stay the easy way with the MiPermit app.

Download for iPhone

Download for Android

MIPERMIT



Over the summer, the North Essex Parking Partnership ran an advertising campaign promoting the use of the MiPermit App, including the 'extend' the stay feature.



Developing the thinking

Trends


- 1138 The current trend is for a gradual but steady conversion from coin to cashless
1139 payment methods.

Options

1140 X

Recommendations

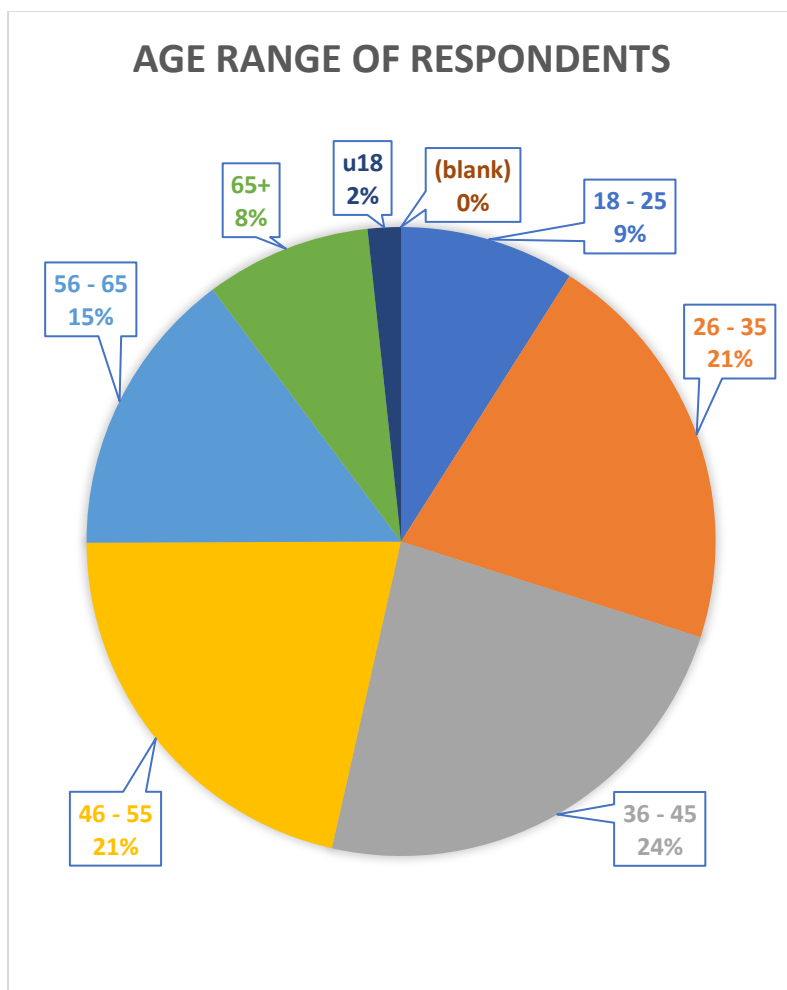
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Theme	Outputs	Recommendations
Publicity Marketing and publicity 	Marketing: the position, the town's unique offer, types of media, tariff structure, stakeholders. The right publicity , a good communication Plan, Social Media, Adequate signage and advertisement of car parking provisions including Variable Messaging	Marketing the Council's pricing structure for the coming years including the use of concessions/special offers designed to increase utilisation of car parks and footfall in town centres.

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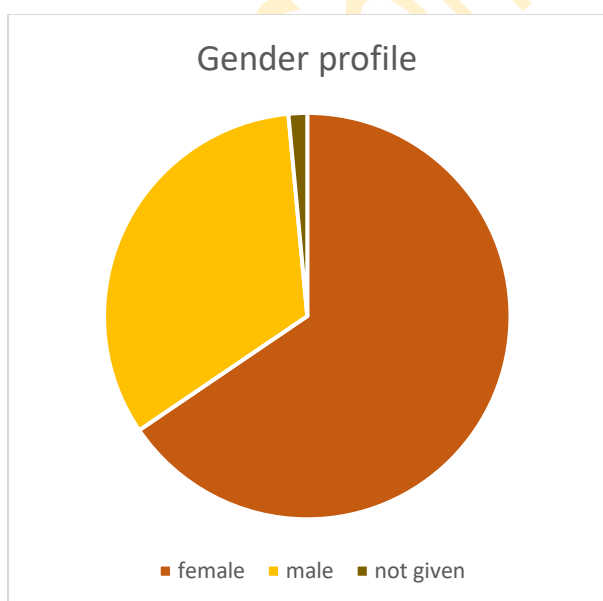
Appendix A – Survey data

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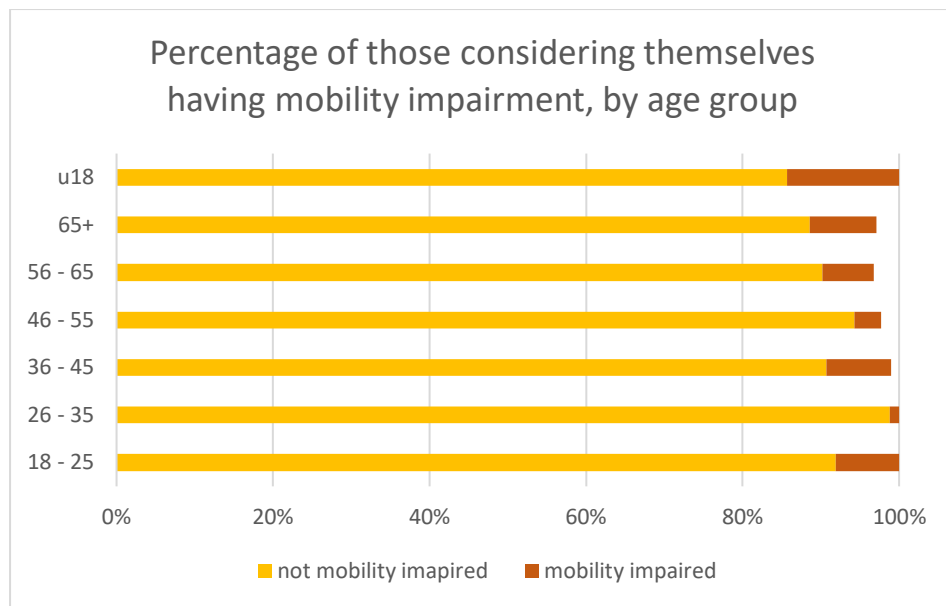
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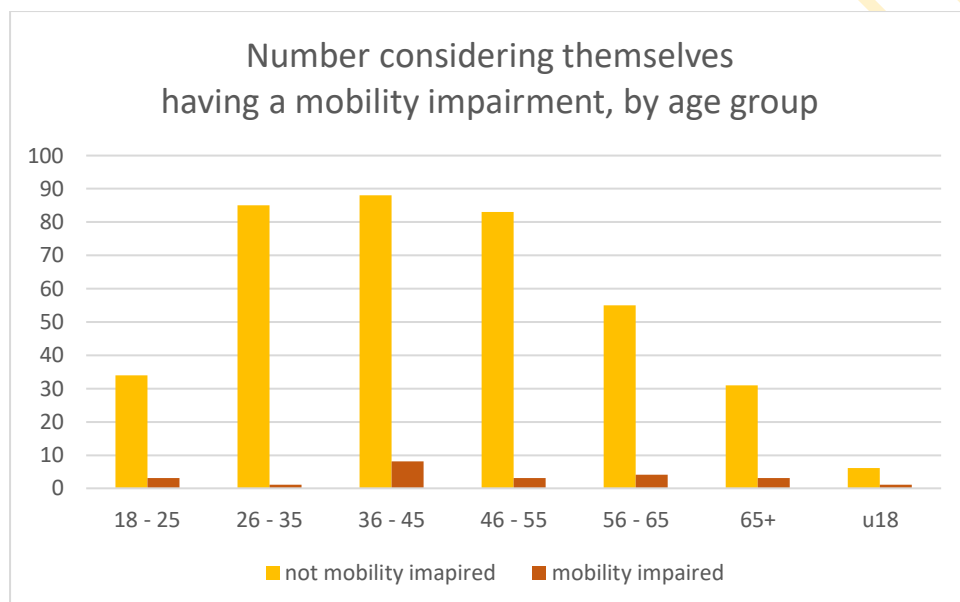


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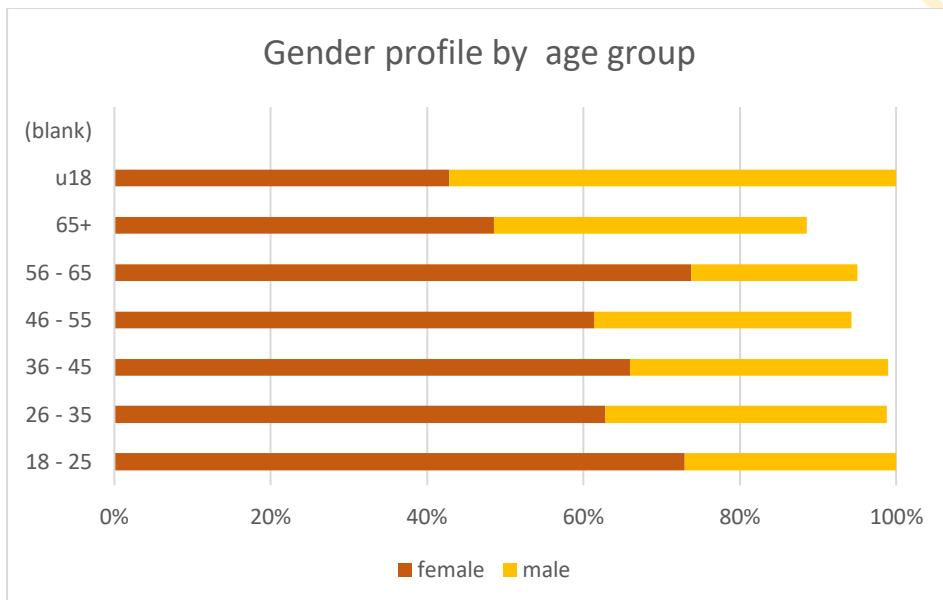
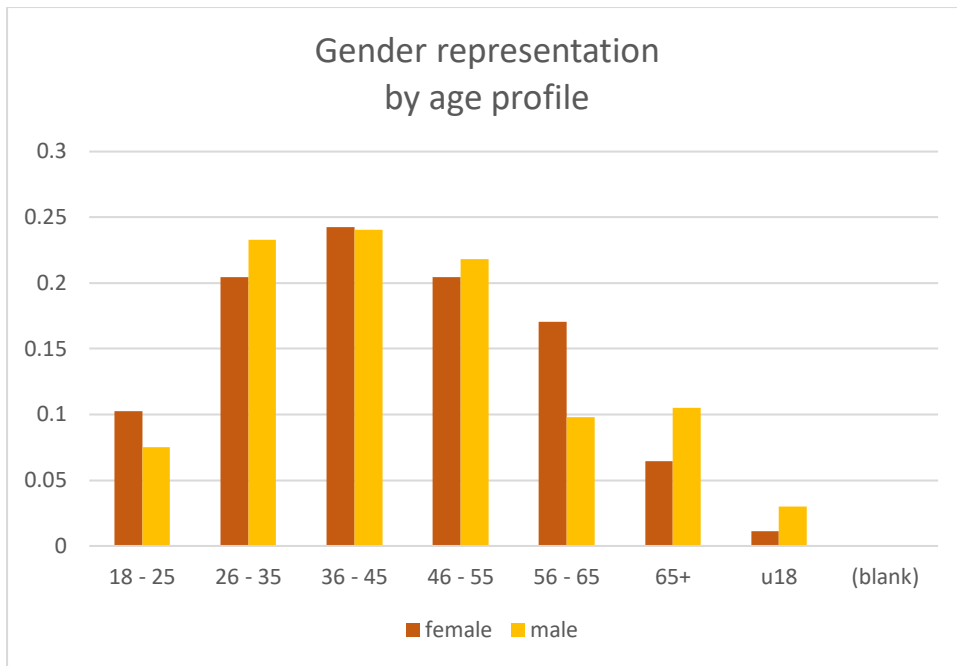
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Timescale

To be confirmed following circulation of draft document

SMT decisions

SMT presentation mid-August (RW/RB)

Strategy options (a number of choices) prepared by Christmas

Strategy options needed by Christmas

Draft produced

Draft – circulated internally, informally

Report

Draft Consultation

Final version

Recommendations to Cabinet

Outcomes