

CONGLETON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAR PARKING REVIEW

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CONGLETON BOROUGH COUNCIL

CAR PARKING STRATEGY

OFF STREET CAR PARK CHARGING STUDY

A) Introduction

- i) As part of an overall car parking review, Congleton Borough Council commissioned this report. The aim of the report is to advise Borough Member on whether there is a need to introduce 'car park charging' on 14 selected 'shopping' car parks in the Borough and to advise on the practical implications of implementing a charging system.
- ii) The report reviews current practice within the parking service and also informs Members of the remedial work required to bring the 28 car parks within the study to an acceptable civil condition.
- iii) Benchmarking tariff bands against neighbouring authorities has been undertaken as part of this report.
- iv) For the purpose of a base point the Consultant has assumed that the Car Parks are to be either allocated as long stay with no time limit or short stay with a maximum 3 hour stay with no return in 2 hours.
- v) For cost modelling purposes, the same tariff band was applied to all car parks with an all day tariff available on those designated long stay. This tariff band was applied irrespective of location and current usage of the car parks. This element of the work may be extended at a later date should the Council wish to pursue the introduction of charging to the car parks to ensure that local charges are consistent with the specific circumstances at each location eg. higher demand for spaces will need a greater degree of control.
- vi) Usage surveys on the car parks were undertaken on a weekday, market day and Saturday where required.
- vii) The recent publication of the Traffic Management Act 2004, includes measures that may force Cheshire County Council (CCC), as Highway Authority, to introduce Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) in throughout Cheshire. This proposal can allow on and off street enforcement of parking to be undertaken at District level. Any surplus monies generated by the on-street regime are retained by the Highway Authority to be spent on closely defined highway functions. Surplus monies generated by the off street regime are retained by the District to be spent as they wish.
- viii) Cheshire County Council is currently in the process of introducing DPE in 4 of the 6 Districts in Cheshire. Congleton and Vale Royal being the two that are not within the process at present.

- ix) As a result of this initiative by CCC, it is important that all the Districts involved review their current parking management operations in advance of making long-term commitments to the introduction of DPE.
- x) This CBC investigation of off-street car park charging has important links to the future introduction of DPE . Although specifically excluded from the scope of this report, the future introduction of DPE would be vital to delivering holistic management of car parking. It would force those currently parking illegally on street to seek legal spaces off street or to find alternative modes of transport.
- xi) Introduction of DPE would see an increase in usage of off street parking provision and without effective controls / capacity in place, tension among car park users would result.
- xii) In the future, it will be essential that off street parking provision is regulated by means of Off Street Parking Places Orders and appropriate enforcement schemes. This would not necessarily mean that car park charging would be required as local politicians are empowered to choose how locally raised taxes are used ie subsidising car park management systems using the basic council tax income is a legitimate option. However, an effective enforcement regime would require significant year on year funding and without the income available from car park charging, funding for other Council services would inevitably be reduced.

B) Executive Summary

- i) Based upon car park usage surveys and the clients description of the desired usage of each site (shopping or long-stay / business use), the report concludes that there is a need for improved usage control to aid the availability of car parking for shopping purposes.
- ii) Some improved parking control could be delivered without implementing car park charging. However, the absence of charges would reduce the effectiveness of the control measures and the medium to long term financial sustainability of the measures would be questionable.
- iii) To deliver the legal framework for the implementation of improved parking control, the Consultant recommends that the current off-street parking orders are reviewed and that a new Off Street Parking Places Order is made under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act to cover all Borough car parks.

This will also allow CBC to enforce on these car parks against those who contravene the regulations. Not all the controls will be needed on all the car parks and the Order should be scheduled accordingly.

- iv) In order to deliver holistic car parking management both on and off street, it is recommended that CBC pursue the introduction of Decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) through the powers available under the 1991 Road Traffic Act. This should be progressed as soon as practicably possible following the introduction of improved car park management processes. It is likely that

adoption DPE will be forced upon those Councils who have not adopted the powers on a voluntary basis by 2011. Introduction of DPE without effective management of the off-street car parking provision would lead to very significant problems for the Council.

The report does not cover the practicalities or cost of delivering DPE as it was specifically excluded from the scope. However, as a traffic management tool DPE has proven successful in over 160 Authorities in England and Wales

- v) Usage surveys were undertaken in the 13 of the 14 car parks proposed for the introduction of charging and in addition Congleton Leisure Centre was surveyed for completeness. The surveys revealed that of the 13 car parks surveyed for potential charging, on weekdays, two had less than 75% occupancy. Similar surveys revealed that on market days the same car parks had a minimum occupancy level of 78% other than Fairview and on Saturdays this figure was still at a minimum of 75% other Chapel Street. This shows that there is very little spare capacity on the car parks which would be required to be available should DPE be introduced and displacement from on street occurs. Controlling this spare capacity is of paramount importance and to avoid the car parks running at full occupancy levels it is essential that a means of increasing turnover is introduced.
- vi) Antrobus street, Princess Street and Chapel Street car parks in Congleton all revealed over 100% occupancy at certain times of the day. This is due to cars being abandoned out of bay, causing obstruction to other users and danger to pedestrians within the car park. It is these issues that need addressing urgently.
- vii) Effective enforcement of the recommended revised off-street parking order would require the equivalent of 3 full time 'Wardens' and a central administrator with appropriate IT and legal support. It is estimated that this would cost £96,000 per annum.
- viii) There are options with respect to how this enforcement could be delivered ranging from use of an external contractor to complete 'in-house' management and delivery. Although all of these options should be explored further, it is recommended that in the first instance, the Council should employ its own Wardens but work with a neighbouring Borough to deliver enforcement administration.
- ix) The study included a review of the civil condition of 28 car parks. In general the assets were found to be in good condition with only low level capital remedial works (£61-65k) required to make them fit for purpose. However, future investment in excess of current revenue budget provision will be required to maintain an acceptable asset condition in future years.
- x) The funding of car park management is a matter for local political determination as there is no statutory requirement to charge for car parks at the point of use. However, as Councils have the powers to implement car parking

charging regimes, failure to do so is often viewed by 'outside observers' as a failure to provide value for money within the car park management service.

- xi) Should the Council wish to consider the implementation of a car park charging regime on the 14 designated 'shopping car parks' on either 'control' or 'process funding' grounds, the report also outlines the costs and high level issues to be addressed.

This assumes charging for a total of 972 spaces in the off street car parks with the remainder of the car parks to stay 'free'.

- xii) Tariffs should be made simple to understand and only two tariff bands are recommended, one for short stay parking and one for long stay parking.
- xiii) In general, long stay parking should be encouraged away from the centre of the amenities to allow short stay visitors easier access.
- xiv) It is recommended that disabled Blue Badge holders are not charged for short stay parking (although there is not statutory impediment to doing so). However, consideration should be given to charging for blue badge holders when parked in a paid for bay for more than three hours and when not parked in a designated disabled bay.
- xv) The revenue income stream from the proposed charging and the income from the parking tickets for non compliance has been estimated. Based upon the car park usage surveys, investigations on the parking tariffs in neighbouring Boroughs and the anticipated level of enforcement notices issued, a gross income stream from the 14 designated shopping car park of between £337,000 and £713,000 per annum could be anticipated.
- xvi) Balancing the cost of running an improved car park management process against the new revenue stream from charging on the 14 designated shopping car parks, the Borough Council could move from the current net expenditure of £207,000 to a net expenditure of £90 k or if the most favourable income projections are taken, a net income position of £286k.
- xvii) Adjacent authorities already charge for off street parking and these have been studied in line with this report. By example Macclesfield have 4053 paid for spaces and realise £2.3m annually from pay and display and a further £276,000 from fines issued for non compliance.
- xviii) The number of shopping spaces proposed for CBC is 972 and although it can not be assumed that income will be pro rata to that of Macclesfield, it gives a clear indication that visitors are willing to pay to park, on a regular basis, close to the amenities.

C) Background Document Review

- i) Previous reports on the car parking stock have been undertaken and these include
 - Car Park Management March 2001: to Highways and Transportation Joint Committee For Congleton
 - Public Car Park Maintenance and Upgrading Cost Estimates: Report to Environment Select Committee January 2004
 - Car Park Management Efficiency Review: Report to Executive December 2005
 - Study in to future parking management in the Borough of Congleton:
 - ii) Of the above reports the Dec 2005 report recognised the salient points as
 - Challenging free parking at cost to tax payer
 - Long stay 'non shopper' parking
 - Options of car park management
 - Asset condition and improvement of stock
 - Better control of misuse of parking stock.
- Best value reviews on parking provision have shown that the cost of this is borne by all taxpayers and not just the motorist and the businesses that benefit from this provision. There is an argument that non car users or those that use other more sustainable modes of transport should not be asked to make contributions to this cost. CBC parking budget is in deficit year on year as there is currently no income from the parking stock. The introduction of charging will relieve this burden on CBC and will apportion the cost of the parking provision against those that utilise the facilities.
 - It has to be noted that some improved parking control could be delivered without implementing car park charging. However, the absence of charges would reduce the effectiveness of the control measures and the medium to long term financial sustainability of the measures would be questionable. Controls such as introducing maximum length of stay or parking within a marked bay for example would need some form of enforcement regime to maintain the integrity of the controls. If charging is not taking place then the burden of cost of enforcement would be added to the existing parking budget which is already in deficit.
 - It has been shown by the usage surveys that the level of inappropriate long stay use of parking immediately adjacent to the shopping amenities varies between car parks and between towns. Congleton and Sandbach shopping car parks could warrant better usage management but the need or scope for similar measure in the other towns is debatable. The inappropriate long stay use is accepted to be made by either workers in the shops and offices or commuters who transfer to other means of transport and prevent the use of the car park spaces by short stay visitors and shoppers to the centres. Displacing the long stay parkers away from the centres will allow better usage of the car parks by yielding a higher turnover in short stay parking which in turn brings in more footfall to the centres.
 - Management of the car parks can be by both in-house or external provision. This is discussed later in this report in more detail. Some authorities have sold off their car parks to private developers or have decided to lease them out in order to gain capital

or revenue receipts. If CBC can manage the car parks in house then all the revenue is retained as well as the land value within CBC.

- This report included an asset condition review of the parking stock and this is discussed later. A separate review will be undertaken to determine the requirements on the car parks to bring them up to 'Park Mark' status which is a national scheme to improve quality across the parking stock and primarily to reduce crime and the fear of crime.
- Misuse of parking stock can only be effective by having the correct regulations in place and by having an effective enforcement regime backed by an effective collection process for non payment of fines.

D) Details of Study Tasks

a) Current Parking Management Review and options available

1. The current parking management comprises one part time parking manager who has overall responsibility for the management and maintenance of the car parks.
2. The car parks are assigned an annual budget from which all costs must be covered.
3. No car parks are currently charged for and most have no controls on them whatsoever.
4. No enforcement of the car parks is currently undertaken.

Potential Options available

- a) Do Nothing: the parking stock deteriorates, leading to higher insurance claims, higher maintenance costs and lower market values,
- b) Introduce off street parking places orders and introduce effective control of the car parks. Introduce charged for parking off street. Undertake remedial works to the car parks to improve the parking stock.

Variation within both of the above options exist. The above measures can be undertaken in-house or by an external provision.

In-House:

- a) For an in-house function to have the required control, there would need to be a decision to introduce DPE to CBC at an early stage and definitely before or at the same time as the introduction of charged for parking. All the car parks would require a review of their current off street orders and a consistent approach to off street parking adopted by means of a new overall Off Street Parking Places Order.
- b) An enforcement team and an administration resource would have to be identified, a new IT system procured specifically for parking administration and space found for the new staff to be located.
- c) The study has shown that the above provision is a viable option even allowing for the set up and ongoing costs. This option also allows CBC to retain control of the

land ownership while gaining income from a valuable asset.

External :

- a) There are essentially two options for external provision with variations on these themes possible.
 - a) The first option is to sell off the parking stock in its entirety to private developers.
 - b) This option would pass control of the potential to charge to the private sector and CBC would have no means of regulating this. CBC would also relinquish valuable assets in town centres and in the event of the introduction of DPE would have no control over off street parking provision to accommodate those displaced vehicles. There would be no on going revenue stream to CBC for future provisions.
 - c) The second option is to lease some or all of the car parks to a private developer under specific conditions that CBC retain some control over usage, tariff bands etc. this option is the better of the two external options but is fraught with problems should the two parties disagree on future car park usage and provision. The advantage to CBC is that the developer would inject finance in to the system to improve the parking stock although most of the income generated would be retained by the developer as pay back. CBC would retain the asset but would yield very little in terms of an income stream to the council.
5. The current parking stock comprises 29 car parks, a total of 1714 spaces, throughout the Borough, none of which are charged for.
 6. Of these it is proposed that 14 of the car parks, a total of 972 spaces, be converted to paid for parking.
 7. These car parks are located across the Borough in Congleton, Macclesfield, Sandbach, Alsager and Holmes Chapel.
 8. Improvements to the parking stock will reduce the number of insurance claims against the Council thereby releasing more funds to the general fund.
 9. In all the above options there lies the choice between the introduction of pay and display and pay on foot systems to the car parks. Each has its own benefits and disadvantages.
 10. Pay on Foot is where the cost for parking is directly related to the length of stay. The motorist pays for their parking as they return to the vehicle. The system is highly automated and has barrier controls to the car parks. Little or no enforcement is needed other than to check that vehicles are parked wholly in bays and are not left overnight or abandoned. Coverage is generally by CCTV. The main drawback to this system is that the security presence on the car parks is diminished and the fear of crime increases for the vulnerable motorist. If a barrier malfunctions there has to be an engineer on instant call out for all the time the car parks are operational and there is the disgruntled motorist who cannot exit the car park and in some instances will resort to vandalism to raise the barrier. Pay on foot machines are very expensive to purchase

and maintain and for the smaller car parks will not be viable as you will not recoup the necessary income to cover the costs of the machines and barriers. The issue of penalty charges is low which affect income streams that pay for the security presence in the first place.

11. Disc Parking and scratch cards have been tried throughout the country and very few Authorities still use these as a means of controlling off street parking. It is difficult to manage the system and the income derived from sales is usually well below the costs of administering the system through a network of shops and business close to the car park locations. It is recommended by the Consultant that neither of these two options are pursued further in terms of future car park control as modern technology is advancing so quickly they would be obsolete within a year or two.
12. Pay and Display is an effective means of controlling parking in smaller towns and villages. The machines are relatively cheap to install and maintain, the public understand the concept and the enforcement of the car parks while looking for vehicles parked without payment provides a visible security presence to the public. The relatively small size of several of the car parks in CBC that are recommended for charging means that pay and display is ideal. The machines are adaptable to upgrades in modern technology and by linking them in to a central control point it is possible to undertake maintenance visits only when absolutely necessary. Basic faults in the machines can be rectified by the parking attendants and cash collection is undertaken on a regular basis to maintain income streams for CBC.
13. From the make up of the parking stock the consultant recommends that pay and display is adopted as the method of charging for parking across CBC.

b) Current Revenue Budget Overview

- i) The current revenue budget is contained within the CBC general fund: 05411 car parks cost centre.
- ii) The estimate for the 2006/2007 parking budget shows an expenditure of £207,000 which includes a £105,000 capital financing charge.
- iii) There is no income to the budget so the whole of the expenditure is raised through council tax.
- iv) It is estimated that by introducing charging to the 14 car parks using a low tariff band and predicting low to medium occupancy levels the income would be in the region of £258,000 per annum.
- v) It is further estimated that by introducing charging to the 14 car parks and enforcing them under DPE the potential income from off street penalty charge notices alone is estimated at £80,000.

Effective enforcement of the recommended revised off-street parking order would require the equivalent of 3 full time 'Wardens' and a central administrator with appropriate IT and legal support. It is estimated that this would cost £96,000 per annum. With a potential return of £80,000 per annum from the penalty charge

notices this is almost breakeven as a stand alone system. Allowance for the costs of purchasing and supporting an IT system in the region of £45,000 over the 5 years would have to be made.

- vi) Enforcement of a revised off-street parking order that did not include for charging but introduced controls, such as out of marked bay and overstay, would require the equivalent of 1 full time 'Parking Attendant' and a part time central administrator with appropriate IT and legal support. It is estimated that this would cost £30,000 per annum. It is debatable as to whether a bespoke IT system would be required for the estimated 1000 penalty charges issued under this regime. Income would be in the order of £24,000 per annum.
- vii) The parking budget would have the above income offset by the set up costs and the on going operational costs. These costs are relatively stable whereas the predicted income stream is based on conservative estimates. The overall effect on the budgets is calculated in Appendix C to this report.

c) Comparison of neighbouring Tariff bands to proposed

The tariff bands for Macclesfield and Staffordshire Moorlands have been studied by means of comparison to estimated tariff bands for CBC.

Macclesfield BC

- i) Macclesfield BC charge in Macclesfield (2401 spaces), Wilmslow (849), Alderley Edge (181), and Knutsford (645).
- ii) All the car parks are central to the amenities with none further than 250m walk from the car park.
- iii) Long stay parking is available at a premium rate in all the towns with all but one in Macclesfield being long stay.
- iv) Tariffs range from 25p to 50p for the first hour up to £1.30 to £1.70 for up to four hours. Stays of over 4 hours range from £1.70 up to £4.30.
- v) Alderley Edge is the cheaper of the tariff bands while Macclesfield is the dearest option.
- vi) Macclesfield have 4076 paid for spaces and realise £2.3m annually from pay and display and a further £276,000 from fines issued for non compliance. Fines are £50 reduced to £25 if paid within 14 days.

Staffordshire Moorlands DC

- i) Staffordshire Moorlands DC charge in Leek (783 spaces), Cheadle (520) and Biddulph (288).

Congleton Borough Council

- ii) Leek is the predominant charged for area having 16 car parks, with only two car parks each in Biddulph and Cheadle.
- iii) The car parks are again centred around the main shopping areas with the longest walking distance within 250m.
- iv) Staffordshire Moorlands have a policy of short or variable stay parking with the maximum paid for stay set at 6 hours on any car park as the charging period is 9.30am-3.30pm Monday to Saturday.
- v) Tariffs range from just 30p for up to an hour to £1 for up to 6 hours.
- vi) Biddulph is the cheaper of the tariff bands with a 20p tariff for the first two hours.
- vii) Despite these low tariffs, pay and display income on the 1591 spaces is £360,000 per annum with a further £70,000 realised from parking fines issued for non compliance. Parking fines are £40 reduced to £25 if paid within 14 days.

Proposal for Congleton BC

- i) Proposed tariff bands for CBC are as shown in the tables below. Depending on the income stream required and the potential usage of the car parks predicted the estimated pay and display income is as follows.

Tariff A	Low Proposed Tariff Bands		
short stay	short stay	long stay	long stay
0-1 hours	£0.20	0-2 hours	£0.50
1-2 hours	£0.50	2-4 hours	£1.00
2-3 hours	£1.00	over 4 hours	£1.50
over 3 hours	not permitted	max stay 10 hours	

Tariff B	Average Proposed Tariff Bands		
short stay	short stay	long stay	long stay
0-1 hours	£0.50	0-2 hours	£1.00
1-2 hours	£1.00	2-4 hours	£2.00
2-3 hours	£2.00	over 4 hours	£2.50
over 3 hours	not permitted	max stay 10 hours	

- ii) Depending on the income stream required and the potential usage of the car parks predicted the estimated annual pay and display income is as follows.
 - o Average tariff bands with medium to high occupancy levels : £633,000

- Average tariff bands with low to medium occupancy levels : £520,000
 - Low tariff bands with medium to high occupancy levels : £315,000
 - Low tariff bands with low to medium occupancy levels : £257,000
- iii) Making a direct comparison with Staffordshire Moorlands as a neighbouring Authority it is clear that the worst case scenario of an income at £257,000 on a pro rata basis per space would give an expected income of £220,000. ($972/1591 \times £360,000$). It is to be remembered that Staffordshire Moorlands only charge for 6 hours per day and CBC is recommended to charge between 8am and 6pm to prevent commuter parking.
- iv) Using the lowest proposed tariff and a low to medium occupancy predicted level:
- A) 5 year income through pay and display =£ 1,290,000
 - B) 5 year income through PCNs issued = £400,000 (£80,000 per annum)
 - C) Total 5 year expenditure on the proposed pay and display car parks = £693,000 at an average cost of £713 per space (excluding current parking revenue budget figures.)
 - D) Current revenue budget figures = £207,000 per annum.
 - E) **Including** current revenue budget overall surplus is predicted at $A + B - C - (5 \times D) = (£38,000.)$ A net gain of £0.997 million.
 - F) The above is the lowest projection estimated. A more realistic mid point would be the parking income at £1,630,000 over 5 years (£326k per annum). The same calculation yields a budget overall surplus of £302k. A net gain of £1.34 million.
- v) Of the 14 car parks proposed for pay and display, four of these show a small negative return over the five year period equivalent to just 1.7% of the overall surplus. It is essential that these car parks are included in the scheme to maintain overall control in the towns proposed for charging.

d) Asset Survey report

- i) The study included a visit to all 28 car parks to establish estimates for remedial work required simply to bring them to an adequate operational standard.
- ii) This operational standard covers matters of safe use of the car park by both pedestrians and motorists to reduce the chance of accidents and to improve traffic flow around the car parks.
- iii) The work described will also improve the condition of the car parks where items such as poor drainage have been identified which may cause slips or falls as a result of detritus remaining on the surface.
- iv) This work is not consistent with a full refurbishment of each of the car parks or to cover the costs of upgrading each car park to comply with the safer parking scheme.

Town	Car Park	Overall Cost of Remedial work	Cost per space
	Proposed Pay and Display Car Parks		
Congleton			
	Antrobus Street	£1,500	£17.86
	Fairground	£400	£3.92
	Princess Street	£400	£4.44
	Chapel Street	£900	£17.31
Middlewich			
	Seabank	£120	£5.22
	Southway	£0	£0.00
	Civic Way	£370	£4.40
Sandbach			
	Little Common	£630	£22.50
	Scotch Common	£15,700	£112.14
	Hawk Street	£1,400	£127.27
	Well Bank	£1,740	£124.29
	Crown Bank	£1,400	£127.27
Alsager			
	Fairview	£0	£0.00
Holmes Chapel			
	Parkway	£100	£6.67
	London Road	£0	£0.00
		£24,660	£25.37
	Proposed free car parks		
Congleton			
	Back Park Street	£8,900	£90.82
	Blake Street	£4,825	£137.86
	Park Street	£0	£0.00
	Roe Street	£200	£8.33
	Rope Walk	£10,600	£365.52
	Royle Street	£7,800	£278.57
	Thomas Street	£200	£4.35
	West Street	£300	£1.71
	Rood Hill	£100	£12.50
Sandbach			
	Brookhouse Road	£750	£5.10
Alsager			
	Fanny's Croft	£0	£0.00
	Station Road	£650	£10.83
	Well Lane	£2,200	£122.22
		£36,525	£49.23

- v) The above table is backed by individual sheets for each car park as Appendix D which give details of the works required and a breakdown of cost items.
- vi) From the above table the total estimated cost of the remedial works is £61,185 which is split between those car parks proposed for charging and those that are to remain free for the time being.
- vii) The consultant recommends that the car parks are assessed as soon as possible for the safer parking scheme and the work to introduce car park charging, safer parking and the remedial works could be carried out together or coordinated at the very least to save costs.
- viii) The study included a review of the civil condition of 28 car parks detailed above. In general the assets were found to be in good condition with only low level capital remedial works (£61-65k) required to make them fit for purpose.
- ix) However, it is important to note that future investment in excess of current revenue budget provision will be required to maintain an acceptable asset condition in future years. This is not possible from current budget provision and a means of funding this essential maintenance work needs to be identified.

e) Usage survey report

- i) Usage surveys were undertaken in the 13 of the 14 car parks proposed for the introduction of charging and in addition Congleton Leisure Centre was surveyed for completeness.
- ii) Current long stay usage overall indicates that 15% of the spaces available are utilised for long stay every day. This would give strength to any proposal to introduce an all day charge should the short stay tariffs also be adopted as there is an obvious demand for all day parking.
- iii) Only three car parks yielded average occupancy levels under 75%. These were Congleton Leisure centre on both survey days, Civic Way Middlewich on a weekday and Chapel Street Congleton on a Saturday.
- iv) Middlewich car parks are adequate for the current usage, however if DPE is introduced and displacement occurs even these car parks will come under pressure.
- v) Chapel Street car park during the week yielded over 100% occupancy for the majority of the day and with Saturday usage on the same car park being low this shows how long stay usage can affect turnover of spaces.
- vi) The surveys revealed that of the 13 car parks surveyed for potential charging, on weekdays, only one had less than 79% occupancy. Similar surveys revealed that on market days the same car parks had a minimum occupancy level of 78% and on Saturdays this figure was still at a minimum of 75%.

- vii) This shows that there is very little spare capacity on the car parks which would be required to be available should DPE be introduced and displacement from on street occurs. Controlling this spare capacity is of paramount importance and to avoid the car parks running at full occupancy levels it is essential that a means of increasing turnover is introduced.
- viii) Antrobus Street, Princess Street and Chapel Street car parks in Congleton all revealed over 100% occupancy at certain times of the day. This is due to cars being abandoned out of bay, causing obstruction to other users and danger to pedestrians within the car park. It is these types of issues that need addressing urgently.
- ix) The summary sheet at Appendix E gives details of the breakdown of length of stays and occupancy levels at various times of the day on all the car parks surveyed.

Discussion by car park:

- i) Congleton Car Parks:
 - **Antrobus Street** car park was surveyed on 3 days. A market day, weekday and a Saturday. This car park is central to the amenities. Over the three days the number of vehicles staying less than one hour was between 61% and 69%. Approximately 20% stayed for between 1 hour and 4 hours and around 15% stayed for over 4 hours. Long stay was least evident on Saturday where only 8% stayed for more than four hours. On all three days the car park showed usage at between 90 and 100% from 9am to 3pm. Over capacity was achieved by illegal parking on the afternoon of market day. This car park is recommended for long stay.
 - **Fairground** car park was surveyed on 3 days. A market day, weekday and a Saturday. This car park is central to the amenities. Over the three days the number of vehicles staying less than one hour was between 65% and 68%. Approximately 27% stayed for between 1 hour and 4 hours and only 7% stayed for over 4 hours on all three days. On market day and Saturday the car park was generally 70-80% full between 10am and 4pm and on the weekday it was between 70-75% full at these times. This would show that a short stay tariff is suitable.
 - **Princess Street** car park was surveyed on 3 days. A market day, weekday and a Saturday. This car park is central to the amenities. Over the three days the number of vehicles staying less than one hour varied between 34% and 71%. Parking for over 4 hours was around the 35% mark on a weekday and market day with this trend reversed on a Saturday where predominantly short stay parking occurred. This would point to long stay office worker and commuter parking during the week. On all three days between 9am and 3pm, occupancy was mostly at full capacity with small turnover during the week. A short stay tariff would redress this trend but a third of the car park is used by long stay parking.
 - **Chapel Street** car park was surveyed on 2 days. A weekday and a Saturday. This car park is central to the amenities but is difficult to access for the less able bodied due to the gradients up to the car park. During the week the car park yielded over

100% occupancy between 10 am and 4pm with the majority of parking being up to 4 hours stay and only 13% on average staying over 4 hours. This car park is situated where long stay parking could be better encouraged and the tight layout of the car park is such that a high turnover should be discouraged to avoid conflicts.

- **Leisure Centre** car park was surveyed on 2 days. A weekday and a Saturday. This car park is not central to the amenities but provides dedicated parking to the leisure centre and adjacent facilities. An industrial estate is immediately opposite this car park. On both survey days the maximum take up of spaces was 57% with occupancy at 35% most of the time.

ii) Sandbach Car Parks:

- **Scotch Common** car park was surveyed on 2 days. A weekday and a Saturday. This car park is central to the amenities and is used to host the market on market days. On a weekday this car park was over 100% occupied for long periods of the day and overall yielded 98% occupancy levels. On the Saturday occupancy was 68% overall but in the middle of the day the car park was at 98% occupancy. Majority of visits were under 1 hour and only 5% were over 4 hours. This is a car park that would require short stay parking controls to make it work effectively.
- **Little Common** car park was surveyed on 1 day a Saturday. This car park is central to the amenities and is used for the market. On the Saturday the car park was 80-90% occupied from 8am to 4pm with 65% of parking under 1 hour. 20% of the parking was over 4 hours. This car park could be used to encourage long stay parking and to displace the short stay on to Scotch Common adjacent.
- **Hawk Street** car park was surveyed on 2 days. A market day and a Saturday. This car park is slightly off central to the amenities by 100m. On market day the car park was 100% occupied from 8am to 6pm and on the Saturday it was 90% full from 8am to 4pm. This is one that could be used for long stay parking.
- **Well Bank** car park was surveyed on 2 days. A market day and a Saturday. This car park is slightly off central to the amenities by 100m. On market day the car park was 95% occupied from 8am to 6pm apart from a lull in the mid morning for two hours and on the Saturday it was 86% full from 8am to 4pm. This is one that could be used for long stay parking.

Crown Bank car park was surveyed on 2 days. A market day and a Saturday. This car park is slightly off central to the amenities by 100m. On market day the car park was 100% occupied from 9am to 3pm and on the Saturday it was 90% full from 8am to noon and then 65% until 4pm. This is one that could be used for long stay parking.

iii) Middlewich Car Parks:

- **Civic Way** car park was surveyed on 1 day only a weekday. This car park is the main car park for all the amenities in Middlewich. The car park was only 50-60% occupied during the day with a peak at 2pm to 3pm of 90% when parents were

picking up from local schools. It is recommended that this car park be designated long stay.

iv) Alsager Car Parks:

- **Fairview** car park was surveyed on 2 days. A market day and a weekday. This car park is the only one in Alsager that is central to the amenities. Occupancy levels overall were as low as 43% and maximum occupancy was 62%. This car park could be charged at long stay rates however there is no current need to introduce control measures to keep occupancy levels at a standard rate. Consideration of whether this over capacity could be freed up for alternative use should be considered.

v) Holmes Chapel Car Parks:

- **Parkway** car park was surveyed on 1 day only a weekday. This car park is central to the amenities. On the day of the survey this car park was 100% occupied very early in the morning and remained so for the rest of the survey. Long stay parking made up 25% of the spaces. It is recommended that this car park be designated long stay.
- **London Road** car park was surveyed on 1 day only a weekday. This car park is central to the amenities. On the day of the survey this car park was 100% occupied very early in the morning and remained so for the rest of the survey. Long stay parking made up 22% of the spaces. It is recommended that this car park be designated long stay.

E) Recommendations:

- i) To ensure CBC retain control of car park usage it is essential that off street parking provision is regulated by means of Off Street Parking Places Orders that can provide means of enforcing car parks. This can be applied where charging to park or free limited stay is available and also gives a means to default those that contravene the regulations to the detriment of others. It is recommended that these are introduced on all car parks as soon as possible.
- ii) The Consultant recommends that an Off Street Parking Places Order is made under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act to cover all of these car parks to introduce further measures to control usage of the car parks. This will also allow CBC to enforce on these car parks against those who contravene the regulations. Not all the controls will be needed on all the car parks and this should be scheduled accordingly. That the Off Street Parking Order to incorporate new/ further controls in all of the Council owned and Council managed car parks. These controls to include some or all of the following at each car park:
 - off street charging,
 - weight limits,
 - height restrictions,
 - limited waiting restrictions. (daytime and nighttime)

- parking in marked bays
 - obstruction
 - disabled bays
 - tariff levels
 - excess charge levels
 - valid tax discs to be displayed
 - mother and Toddler bays
 - permitted uses
- iii) Following detailed analysis of the car parks the Consultant recommends that charging is introduced on 14 of these car parks. A total of 972 paid for spaces in the off street car parks. The remainder of the car parks to stay as free for the time being.
- iv) Tariffs should be made simple to understand and only two tariff bands are recommended, one for short stay parking and one for long stay parking.
- v) It is not recommended that charging for Blue Badge holders be considered at this time.
- vi) It is recommended that consideration may be given to charging for blue badge holders when parked in a paid for bay for more than three hours and not parked in a designated disabled bay.
- vii) The study recommends that CBC increase the parking management resource to include for the increase in the control of enforcement, administration and cash collection counting and banking. This is in addition to the current roles of managing the car parks.
- viii) The Consultant also recommends that CBC pursue the introduction of Decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE), as soon as possible, through the powers available under the 1991 Road Traffic Act. This will allow effective enforcement of the car parks and also streamlines the collection of monies from those who have been issued a parking ticket for contravening the regulations.
- ix) From the make up of the parking stock the consultant recommends that pay and display is adopted as the method of charging for parking across CBC.
- x) It is further recommended that the tariff bands in C) xv) be considered and a decision on the band to be adopted be made.
- xi) The Home Office have a safer parking scheme (Park Mark) where operators are encouraged to build in or introduce crime deterrents to their car parks. It is recommended that some of the surplus generated by the Pay and Display regime be directed in to improving standards in line with this scheme. The public perception will then be improved if they can see results of their expenditure.
- xii) To achieve 'Safer Parking' status requires that certain standards are met in accordance with the criteria laid down by the Association of Chief Police Officers

in conjunction with the British Parking Association. It is recommended that CBC make contact with the scheme organisers to develop an initiative within CBC.

- xiii) The proposed tariffs to be applied to each car park in the scheme are as scheduled in Appendix A to this report.
- xiv) A review of all other free car parks in the District be undertaken a maximum of twelve months after a successful implementation of charging in the initial tranche of car parks.
- xv) Displacement to on street parking to be monitored on an ongoing basis and corrective action to be instigated by Cheshire County Council where proven to be detrimental to highway safety.
- xvi) That a review of the number of disabled bays made available on each of the car parks be undertaken at local level.
- xvii) Disabled parking should remain at no charge to be levied on legal users of these bays at this time.
- xviii) That the Council should consider the introduction of Mother and Toddler bays on those car parks adjacent to shops and charges for parking in these spaces be payable in accordance with tariffs applicable to each car park.
- xix) That residents and other users be eligible to purchase long term, contract parking permits at reduced fees commensurate with the length of contract purchased. These reduced fees to be agreed by Council in a subsequent report based on acceptance or otherwise of the proposed tariff bands contained herein.
- xx) Contract parking to be only available on the long stay car parks where space is known to be available all day. Number of contracts to be limited to 30% of the capacity of the car parks. Provisionally the value of contract parking to be based on 312 days at 75% of daily rate with a £15 administration charge per each renewal. This makes annual contracts cheaper than quarterly. Table D at £1.50 per day is charged at $312 \times 0.75 \times £1.50$ plus £15 = £ 366 for an annual contract, rising to £411 for 4 quarterly contracts. (an 11% increase in cost).
- xxi) The minimum length of contract is to be quarterly with no refunds available and a maximum contract to be 12 months with up to a maximum of 6 months refundable on early termination.
- xxii) That the Council should adopt a policy to improve the infrastructure of the car parks in accordance with the current Park Mark scheme. Should funds be made available as a surplus from the off street charging regime or otherwise.
- xxiii) That the Council should request that Cheshire County introduce on street TROs where displacement is proven to have occurred following the introduction of charging, to the detriment of Highway Users. CBC to offer to County to internally fund and coordinate any local consultations in this matter to assist the process.

- xxiv) The consultant recommends that the car parks are assessed as soon as possible for the safer parking scheme and the work to introduce car park charging, safer parking and the remedial works could be carried out together or coordinated at the very least to save costs.

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED TARIFF BANDS

All charged for car parks to be 6 days a week with controlled hours to be 8am to 6.00pm, Monday to Saturday in all car parks.

Table A:

All charged for car parks to have the same tariff bands dependant on short or long stay status of:

MONDAY TO SATURDAY 8am to 6pm (INCLUSIVE)

Tariff A	Low proposed Tariff Bands		
short stay	short stay	long stay	long stay
0-1 hours	£0.20	0-2 hours	£0.50
1-2 hours	£0.50	2-4 hours	£1.00
2-3 hours	£1.00	over 4 hours	£1.50
over 3 hours	not permitted	max stay 10 hours	

Tariff B	Average Proposed Tariff Bands		
short stay	short stay	long stay	long stay
0-1 hours	£0.50	0-2 hours	£1.00
1-2 hours	£1.00	2-4 hours	£2.00
3 hours	£2.00	over 4 hours	£2.50
over 3 hours	not permitted	max stay 10 hours	

Table B: Recommended Tariff Bands

Item Ref no.	Car Park Name	Proposed Maximum length of Stay during Controlled hours	Recommended Scale of Charges
	CONGLETON		OPTION OF Tariff A or B or other ??
1	Antrobus Street	10 HOURS	
2	Fairground	3 hours no return within 2 hours	
3	Princess Street	3 hours no return within 2 hours. (10 hours)	Possible Long Stay to match usage survey
4	Chapel Street	10 HOURS	
	MIDDLEWICH		
5	Seabank	10 HOURS	

6	Civic Way	10 HOURS	
	SANDBACH		
7	Little Common	10 HOURS	
8	Scotch Common	3 hours no return within 2 hours	
9	Hawk Street	10 HOURS	
10	Well Bank	10 HOURS	
11	Crown bank	10 HOURS	
	ALSAGER		
12	Fairview	10 HOURS	
	HOLMES CHAPEL		
14	Parkway	10 HOURS	
15	London Road	10 HOURS	

Reasons for the above Tariffs.

- i) It is important to try to provide a consistent approach to tariffs in short stay car parks as they typically have similar convenience values to the users.
- ii) With long stay car parks, the tariffs should be set commensurate with the locality to amenities and to be set such that short stay usage of the car parks is discouraged.
- iii) It is also important to appear consistent with neighbouring authorities to avoid displacement of shopper's away from the local amenities within CBC.
- iv) The short stay tariffs are where the car parks are a relatively short distance from the amenities, the long stay tariffs are where they are further out from the amenities

Appendix B: Estimated Revenue income stream-tabulated

- i) The attached Spreadsheet gives details of the breakdown of income estimated by car park and by tariff band on a weekly and annual basis.
- ii) The estimated income from the issue of Penalty charge notices is based on a £60 fee reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days.
- iii) Predicted issue level is 4,050 per annum at an average income of £26.13 per every ticket issued. $4,050 \times £26.13 = £105,800$.

Appendix C: Estimated Expenditure profile for introduction of Pay and Display

See the attached Spreadsheet which gives details of the breakdown of capital and revenue expenditure estimated by car park. These include set up costs and on going annual costs.

Appendix D: Summary Sheets to car parks civil works survey

Congleton Borough Council

See attached spreadsheets for individual survey details.

The attached costings spreadsheet gives the estimated remedials costs per car park.

Appendix E: Usage survey summary sheet as attached spreadsheet