Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 22 February 2018

Refresh of Taunton Parking Strategy

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Roger Habgood

Report Author: Ian Timms, Assistant Director - Business Development

1. **Executive Summary**

1.1 This report covers the adoption of a refreshed parking strategy for Taunton. The strategy has been produced against 5 key objectives which are set out in the report. The strategy produced nine recommended areas for action which will be developed into an action plan. This action plan will deliver the strategy objectives.

1.2 To produce the strategy a comprehensive review of the current development position has been combined with analysis of a range of parking related data sources which included physical survey work. This data has been reviewed against the strategy objectives to produce a series of recommendations which are outlined in section 3.2 of the strategy which is forms the basis of this report.

1.3 This strategy forms a key element of the Taunton twenty year transport strategy which is also being presented to members for adoption.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Council adopt the refreshed Taunton Parking Strategy.

2.2 Council note the nine recommended areas for action within the strategy and the recommendation from Scrutiny that a five year action plan is created to address them.

3. Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The council lacks a clear, up to date position on it`s approach to car parking	5	3	15
Adopt an up to date strategy which provides clarity on a range of actions	2	3	6

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
			Impact				

Likelihood of risk occurring	**Indicator**	**Description (chance of occurrence)**
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4. Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 This parking strategy is a key component of the council`s plans for Taunton and covers the period to 2027. This document will replace the current strategy which was adopted by the council in 2011. There has been significant change since 2011 related to development activity in the town which means that this new document is required to give clear guidance on the approach to parking over the strategy period. Whilst this period is ten years the strategy actions will become part of the council`s overall approach to management of its objectives.

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4.3 The strategy was produced using five key objectives which are derived from national and local policy. These objectives are:

1. Prioritise town centre spaces for short term visitors shoppers and visitors

2. Provide for specific users e.g. Disabled spaces, Motorcycle bays

3. Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution

4. Improve actual and perceived safety and security of car parking

5. Improve the quality of car parks and the customer experience

4.4 A range of data was analysed which is outlined in the strategy and has enabled the evaluation of a range of options matched to the council`s objectives. This gives a comprehensive view of current provision, costs and existing issues. Section seven looks at key risks and opportunities going forwards taking into account likely development plans. This includes a thorough review of the decking options that may be applied in Taunton which are Appendix D of the strategy.

4.5 There are a number of key statistics which are of interest within the documents:

- There are 4000 publicly accessible off street parking bays in Taunton town centre. 2800 (68%) are owned by TDBC with the remaining 1200 being associated with major supermarkets.
- There are 1600 Park and ride spaces. 1000 at Gateway (Junction 25) 600 at Silk Mills
- There are 145 on street bays owned by SCC
- 25 % of income is derived by pay and phone, 75 % through pay and display terminals
- Shopper car parks 70% of all stay are 2 hours and below 10% of all stays average 4 hours
- Commuter sites average of 50% pay for 4 hours, Kilkenny has highest average at 6 hours
- Park and ride use at Silk Mills is 75% Mon – Fri, 32 % Saturday
- Park and ride use at Gateway is 37% Mon –Fri, 15 % Saturday
- VMS will service 9 sites – the two park and rides and 7 TDBC owned sites.
- There is 25% capacity in TDBC car parks and 17 % spare capacity in privately owned car parks at peak times.
- The strategy accounts for 425 spaces at Firepool and reduction of 70 at Coal Orchard

Analysis of these statistics and application of the Taunton Strategic Transport model, which indicates a rise of 10% traffic through to 2031 means that we have adequate Town centre stock for demand across the strategy period.

4.6 Building on the statistics and using the objectives a range of options were assessed to address parking requirements in the town centre. These have resulted in nine areas that are recommended for action by Taunton Deane BC or partners.

1. The proposed creation of long and short stay tariffs/ designations to simplify the tariff approach for customers. Short stay would be a maximum of 3 hours.
2. Visitor Management Plans for major events for example cricket and the flower show are needed and further development of these is required to ensure that adequate travel plans are in place for these activities
3. It is suggested that we should explore incentives for the use of the Orchard (Paul Street) and High Street sites due to available capacity. This should include addressing their appearance and reviewing tariff rates.
4. Extend the use of the Variable Message Signage to utilise live data or App`s when generating parking data.

5. Review the provision of blue badge spaces and motorcycle spaces to provide them in suitable and appropriate locations.
6. Improve the maintenance and aesthetic environment of the car parks. Improve wayfinding and information for those leaving the car parks.
7. Installation of electric points. Review how to deliver these, the most appropriate route to do so and implement spaces in appropriate locations.
8. More efficient use of the spaces by possible consolidation into larger car parks and reduce the use of smaller car parks.
9. In partnership with Somerset County Council review the model of operation of the park and ride sites to enable delivery of a comprehensive solution for parking.

4.7 The recommendations will now be formed into a five year action plan which will be reviewed annually or at a frequency in line with the performance approach of the transformed council. This will be progressed by the operational car park team in association with the necessary partner organisations.

4.8 Members should note that due to physical size appendices are not provided with the report. They contain a range of data which supports the main strategy and this is listed in the appendix list at the base of this report.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 The strategy forms an element of the delivery of Key Theme 3 of the corporate plan. The corporate plan contains an action relating to delivery of variable message signage and converting 7 car parks to pay on foot (pay on exit). This action will aid in delivery of the strategy.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 The Financial implications of this strategy will depend on implementation of the actions identified within the strategy. These will need to be shaped into a clearly defined action plan with associated costings.

6.2 The council has approved funding for the conversion of seven existing TDBC car parks to provide pay on foot/pay on exit provision. This conversion is associated with Variable Message Signage which will guide drivers to these specified car parks.

6.3 Provision has also been made within revenue budgets to deal with maintenance of the car parks. Plans are being developed to deliver an effective programme of annual maintenance.

6.4 The strategy has examined the indicative cost of providing decking to a number of car parks which is included for completeness. If this option were to be progressed and appropriate case for capital investment would be required.

6.5 Resources for matters under TDBC` s control will be provided through the operational arrangements that the council has in place for it`s car parks.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The strategy identifies a number of recommendations which require action. The majority of these are optional. However there are actions such as the number of spaces available to disabled motorists that the council needs to address to discharge it`s duty as a public body under the equalities act.

8 Environmental Impact Implications

8.1 One of the strategy objectives is to “reduce the impact of congestion and pollution”. This is tackled in a range of ways within the strategy, an example being the installation of variable message signage which reduces the time that motorists will take in searching for a parking space. The strategy also specifically identifies the need for electric charging infrastructure. This is in line with recent Government announcements relating to the changing nature of motorised vehicles.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 The parking environment provides a key gateway into any town. In Taunton where 2800 of the publicly accessible spaces within the town centre are owned by the council this places particular emphasis on the council to address safety and security of the car parks.

9.2 The strategy makes recommendations around this area relating to aesthetics and maintenance of the car parks. These are important aspects of any parking site as they give a general impression of safety to customers using the sites.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 The analysis of data associated with the document has established that work is required to provide appropriate disability spaces in line with national standards. As stated in the strategy the minimum requirement is generally recognised as being six per cent of each car parks capacity. This work will need to address location of these spaces as it may be more appropriate to locate them in locations that work more effectively for individuals who have significant mobility issues.

10.2 It should also be noted that blue badge holders can park on street using the provisions of this badge. However this cannot mitigate the need for TDBC to make provision within its own sites.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 The strategy recommendations may lead to procurement of further services. This will need to take account of this factor and be built into any procurement exercises.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 This Strategy has been developed in partnership with Somerset County Council (SCC). It is expected that SCC will endorse the strategy through their own democratic processes. The strategy delivery does require a partnership approach in order to meet its objectives and this will be delivered through development of the action plan. In terms of wider partners the major supermarkets have enable the development of data related to the strategy which has meant we have a fuller picture of shopper behaviour in Taunton.

13 Asset Management Implications

13.1 The Council`s car parks are, of course, an element of its owned assets. There are a number of actions which impact on and are a key part of effective management of these assets. The development of the action plan to be associated with the strategy will inform

overall approach to the future management of the sites.

13 Consultation Implications

13.1 The strategy has been produced in association with SCC and has been shared with a range of specialist advisors retained by SCC. Key councillors have also been involved in workshops to develop the strategy.

14 Scrutiny recommendations

14.1 The Scrutiny Committee recommended that Council adopt the strategy. The Scrutiny Committee also recommended that a five year action plan is adopted to deliver on the objectives of the strategy.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny - Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

List of Appendices

Appendix A	Parking Strategy
	Appendices of strategy – available on request A Summary of relevant policy B Car parking surveys - data C Borough Council car park ticket data sales D Car Park Deck feasibility report (96 pages) • A Car park Study • B Site constraints plan • C Typical Structure Bay layout • D Site Photographs • E Currie and Brown optional costings report

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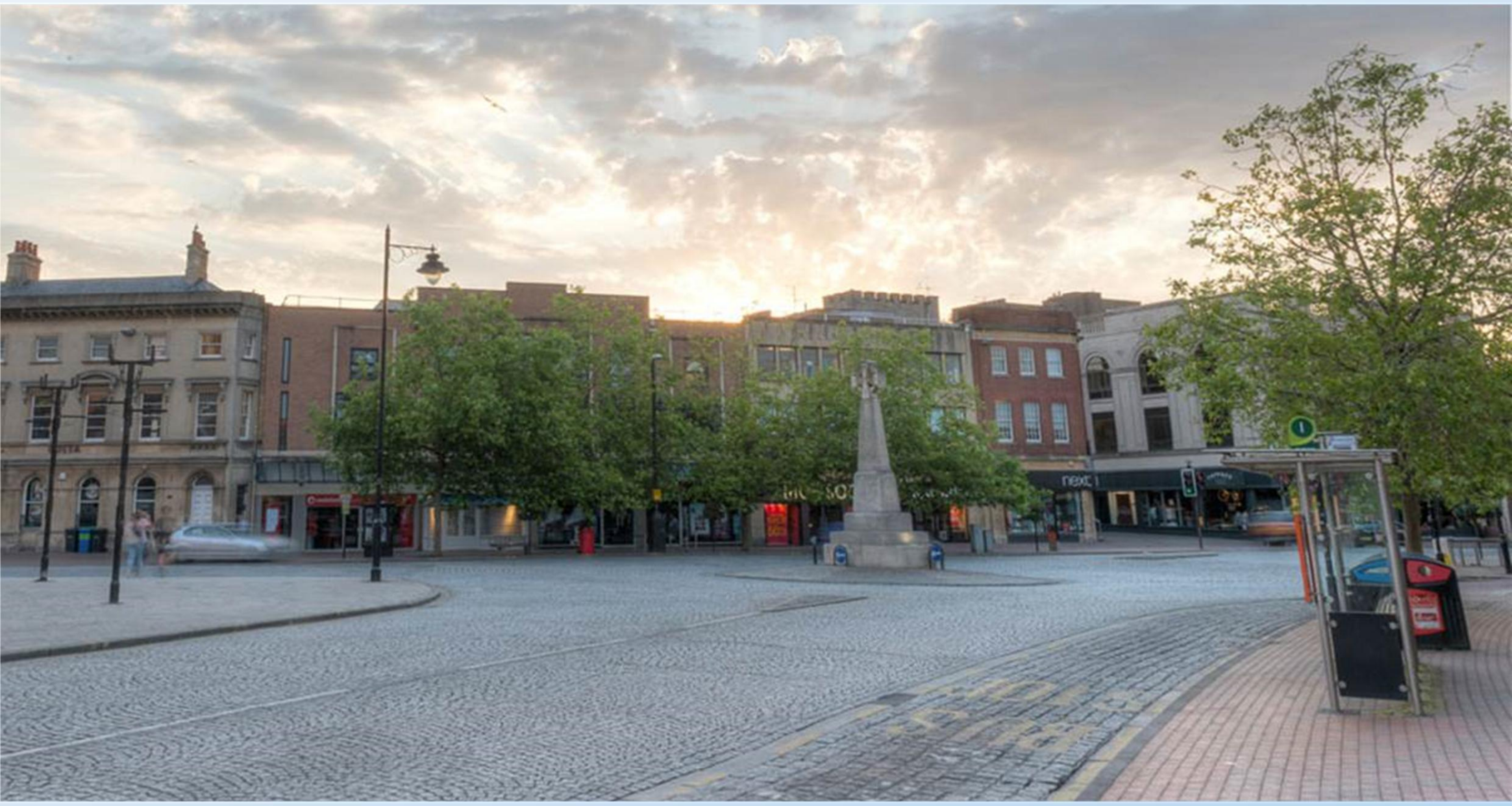
Taunton Deane Borough Council

TAUNTON CAR PARKING STRATEGY

2017 Revision



70027416
NOVEMBER 2017

PUBLIC

Taunton Deane Borough Council

TAUNTON CAR PARKING STRATEGY

2017 Revision

CHOOSE AN ITEM.PUBLIC

PROJECT NO. 70027416
OUR REF. NO. 70027416

DATE: NOVEMBER 2017

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QUALITY CONTROL

Issue/revision	First issue	Revision 1	Revision 2	Revision 3
Remarks	Draft for officer comment	Revision for further officer comment	Amendments arising from officer comment	
Date	September 2017	October 2017	November 2017	
Prepared by	Jess Railton	Jess Railton	Jess Railton	
Signature				
Checked by	James Purkiss	James Purkiss	James Purkiss	
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GLOSSARY

P&R	Park and Ride
TDBC	Taunton Deane Borough Council
VMS	Variable Message Signs, digital signs which can provide information on available parking spaces

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This updated Taunton Parking Strategy sets out the recommended approach for off-street parking provision in Taunton town centre until 2027.

The strategy has been based on five strategy objectives, which are to – (1) Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors (2) Provide for the needs of particular users - (eg disabled people, motorcyclists) (3) Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment (4) Improve actual and perceived safety and security and (5) Enhance quality and customer experience. These have been derived from national and local policies on parking.

WSP conducted a snapshot survey of 21 off-street car parks in June 2017 (16 Borough Council and 5 private retail) to provide insights into car park usage and occupancy. This, along with other evidence, including ticket sales data (both from machines and Phone and Pay), has been analysed to understand trends in car park usage, tariffs and key issues with parking.

Key findings are as follows:

- On weekdays there are just over 4,000 publicly available parking spaces in the town centre, with 2,800 of these (64%) being operated by the Borough Council. There are a further 1,600 spaces at the two park and rides (600 at Silk Mills and 1,000 at Taunton Gateway (M5 J25);
- On Saturdays there an additional 148 parking spaces available at Belvedere Road;
- 25% of all transactions in Borough Council car parks are made by Phone and Pay, with the remaining 75% at the ticket machines. However, the proportion of Phone and Pay tends to be higher in commuter car parks, with more than 60% using Phone and Pay in Kilkenny car park;
- Weekday surveys recorded 17,466 vehicles parked in 21 town centre car parks between 07:00 and 19:00. 9,892 (58%) parked in the five private retail car parks, with the remaining 7,574 (43%) parking in the 16 surveyed Borough Council car parks;
- Survey data shows that on weekdays he number of vehicles parked in the town centre car parks peaks in the late morning. At the time of maximum occupancy there are:
  - A total of 3,074 vehicles parked in the 21 surveyed car parks, with 916 available spaces. Of these:
    - 2,083 vehicles were parked in Borough Council car parks, with 678 available spaces (25% spare capacity); and
    - 991 vehicles were parked in private retail car parks, with 199 available spaces (17% spare capacity).
- Remaining spaces are not uniformly located across the town, with some car parks being at capacity at peak times, such as Castle Street, Crescent and Duke Street, whilst High Street and Orchard multi-storey are identified as having spare capacity;
- 28% of all vehicles parked in the Borough Council town centre car parks on a weekday are parked at the time of peak occupancy in the late morning (2,083 of the 7,574 vehicles recorded). The remaining 72% are spread out across the rest of the day when there are greater levels of spare capacity;
- Ticket machine sales indicate numbers of parked vehicles is 28% higher on Saturdays than on weekdays. Applying this uplift to weekday survey figures indicates that around 9,700 vehicles may park in town centre Borough Council car parks on an average Saturday.
- Applying the weekday pattern of vehicle arrivals and departures to Saturday ticket figures would suggest that the surveyed Borough Council car parks have approximately 7% spare capacity at the most popular times (about 2,715 parked vehicles in late morning / early afternoon, compared to 2,909 Borough Council parking spaces (including Saturday spaces at Belvedere Road). However, it is possible that parking on Saturdays may exhibit a lower, later, peak than weekdays, with parking demand spread over a longer time period, reflecting the different nature of weekend travel patterns and activities;
- Ticket sales indicate overall numbers of car park users have increased by 8% in the last years, with strong growth in commuter tariff car parks;

- Survey data found two thirds of shopper tariff car park users stay for less than 2 hours but 10% stay more than 4 hours. Ticket machine sales show that on average customers pay for 2 hours and this is the same for weekdays and Saturdays;
- Survey data found that more than 50% of commuter tariff car park users stay for less than 4 hours. Ticket machine sales identify that customers pay for an average of 4 hours' stay in commuter car parks and that average payments in Kilkenny are higher still, at more than 6 hours;
- Short stay parking charges are generally cheaper than comparison towns and long stay parking is on a par with Bristol and Exeter; and
- Season tickets are generally cheaper in comparison towns, and a wider range of options are available elsewhere (e.g. monthly, quarterly, annual);
- In terms of the average vehicle occupancy of the park and ride sites, Silk Mills is 75% full on weekdays, falling to 32% on Saturdays. Gateway is 37% occupied on weekdays, reducing to 15% on Saturdays. The data highlights the available spare capacity at park and ride sites, particularly at Taunton Gateway. The reasons are unclear, but are likely to be at least partly related to the excess of supply in the town centre. Further investigation would be useful to better understand why people are not using them; and
- Average occupancy of the park and ride sites has risen slightly over the last 3 years but there has been stronger growth in average daily numbers of daily park and ride bus service passengers over the same period

A range of changes already programmed will influence parking in the town. Developments will raise net parking supply by 355 spaces (an additional 425 from the submitted Firepool application minus the loss of 70 at Coal Orchard). Investment in variable message signs (VMS) will cover 9 car parks, including the park and ride sites, and pay on foot at seven car parks, which will help match drivers to spaces and improve customer experience.

Using the Taunton Strategic Transport Model future year (2031) we have looked at how the level of traffic is going to change in the future in Taunton town centre. The model takes into account all the development envisaged by the Core Strategy and forecasts an overall increase in town centre traffic of 10%. Following this logic, if we were to increase demand for parking by 10%, then this would show that, based on the existing surveys of spare capacity that there is sufficient weekday parking supply across the town centre to meet demand in 2031. Demand on Saturdays would exceed town centre supply (excluding the capacity which is available at park and rides) during the late morning and early afternoon. A range of options should be explored to help spread demand more evenly through the day and ensure that the strategy supports the Garden Town vision of less traffic in town centre streets and enabling more walking, cycling and public transport use.

A range of possible options have been considered as part of the strategy and assessed against the objectives. The following options performed well against the objectives and are recommended for inclusion in the strategy:

- *Creation of dedicated short-stay and long-stay tariff car parks* – this option is particularly aimed at ensuring that spaces are available, and used, for short stay visits, and to give certainty to customers. In parallel a small number of car parks should be dedicated to long-stay users. It may be appropriate for the four existing commuter tariff car parks to fulfil this purpose but this should be kept under review;
- *Visitor management plans for major events* – large-scale events tend to create spikes in demand for car parking and place particular pressure on the transport network in general. It is recommended that visitor management plans are prepared by event organisers in consultation with the Councils to ensure the parking and travel demands are addressed appropriately;
- *Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks* – these car parks were found to have spare capacity and are close to key retail areas. A range of measures should be considered, including upgrading their appearance and potentially a special tariff, to encourage their use;
- *Extend the use of VMS* – the existing investment in VMS and pay on foot can enable more detailed, real-time information to be provided to car park customers in advance of their arrival, with live information provided on the Borough Council website or via an app, helping shape travel choices;
- *Review provision for blue badge holders and motorcycles* – existing provision should be reviewed to ensure suitable space is being provided in the right locations;
- *Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme* and *improved information and wayfinding* – the appearance of the car parks, and the associated infrastructure to guide users to the rest of the town, can be an important factor shaping where people choose to park and influencing visitors' impressions of the

town. Investment in these aspects could help rebalance demand across the town, improve car park quality and customer experience.

- *Installation of electric charging points* – to provide facilities for people wishing to use electric vehicles
- *Make more efficient use of car park space* – this is a combination of option F and G. Consolidating the number of car parks into fewer, but bigger car parks will allow for a more efficient and cost effective maintenance and management strategy and will free up land within the town centre for development. Further work is required on this option to demonstrate that it has a robust business case before further pursuit.

A further 1,600 parking spaces are located at the two park and ride sites. Existing policy identifies their role in providing for commuters and long-stay visitor parking, supporting and supplementing the town centre offer. It is recommended that discussions are held to consider whether the following options may be suitable in the short term:

- Using the P&R to better meet parking demand for large-scale town centre events;
- Undertaking surveys into the use, and perceptions, of P&R; and
- Implementing modest bus fare increases to support the operation of the P&R services.

A review of existing on-street parking restrictions in surrounding the town centre may be required in parallel to the implementation of proposals in this strategy, to ensure that the needs of residents are put first in these locations, in accordance with Somerset Future Transport Plan.

This report outlines the strategy options considered and recommended options, followed by a series of chapters describing and analysing information relating to off-street parking, on-street arrangements, the P&R sites and future context and key issues.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY TIMESCALES

1.1.1. Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) has commissioned WSP to prepare an updated car parking strategy for Taunton, setting out a recommended approach for the provision of parking in the town centre over the next ten years to 2027. It mainly deals with car parking in Borough Council-operated off-street car parks in and around the town centre. However reference is also made to general arrangements and availability of on-street parking and the use of the town's park and ride (P&R) sites.

1.1.2. There are a number of privately-operated town centre car parks outside the control of the Borough Council. The Council recognises the role these play in providing parking for the town and information about these car parks is included in the strategy; however, the strategy recommendations do not cover them.

1.1.3. This periodic review includes survey data collected in June 2017, and reflects changes in circumstances which have occurred locally or nationally in recent years. It also considers how demands for parking are anticipated to change in future years.

1.1.4. The underlying context of the Strategy remains the requirement to manage the impact of congestion within the town whilst ensuring adequate parking provision for those needing to bring vehicles into the town for shopping, visiting or commercial purposes. The strategy aims have been informed by a review of several policies, including Taunton Deane Core Strategy and Somerset Future Transport Plan. This strategy supports *Connecting Our Garden Town,* which will set strategic direction for Taunton's transport investment, which has as one of its six themes *parking and park and ride*.

1.1.5. The Strategy aims are to identify measures which:

- Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors;
- Provide for the needs of particular users - (e.g. disabled people, motorcyclists);
- Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment;
- Improve actual and perceived safety and security; and
- Enhance parking quality and customer experience.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

1.2.1. A range of primary and secondary data sources have been used to inform this strategy, including the following:

- Snapshot surveys of car parks carried out on weekdays in June 2017 to understand current patterns of occupancy and duration of stay;
- Ticket sales data for Borough Council car parks to understand length of stay and patterns of occupancy;
- P&R traffic counts and bus passenger counts to understand usage;
- Benchmarking analysis of car park pricing structures in other towns; and
- Desk study into the feasibility of constructing additional decked levels in selected car parks.

1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER KEY DOCUMENTS

1.3.1. This revised parking strategy has taken account of policies in a number of key documents, as listed in Table 1 below. Relevant excerpts are set out in Appendix A.

Table 1 – Relevant transport and planning policy and guidance documents

Document	Summary
Connecting our Garden Town	Currently in draft form, this will outline the strategic direction for transport investment in Taunton. Proposals and policies for parking and park and ride is one of six themes covered by the document. It references the new parking strategy and has a commitment to implement policies and proposals contained from it.
Local Transport White Paper[1]	The White Paper, entitled *Cutting carbon, creating growth: Making sustainable growth happen* outlined that the priority for local transport is to *Encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion.*
Department for Transport Policies[2]	The department outlines summary policies on *Local transport*, *Roads and traffic* and *Transport emissions* outlining the government's broad approach to these topics.
National Planning Policy Framework[3]	Sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these should be implemented. It constitutes guidance for preparing local plans and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development and recognises three interlinked dimensions to achieve this – economic, social and environmental.
Operational Guidance to Local Authorities: Parking Policy and Enforcement[4]	Published by the Department for Transport in 2015, this sets out the policy framework within which the Government believes that all English local authorities, both inside and outside London, should be setting their parking policies and, if appropriate, enforcing those policies
Parking Strategies and Management	Guidance prepared by the professional body, the Institution of Highways and Transportation, in 2005
Planning Practice Guidance[5]	Web-based resource prepared by Department for Communities and Local Government bringing together planning guidance on various topics, with periodic updates to sections as required. Does not constitute government policy.
Somerset Future Transport Plan[6]	Sets out the transport policy in Somerset over a 15 year time horizon, with a strategy containing five transport goals entitled *Making a positive contribution*, *Living sustainably*, *Ensuring economic wellbeing*, *Enjoying and achieving* and *Being healthy*.
Taunton Deane Core Strategy[7]	Adopted in 2012 to provide strategic planning policy for the borough, with eight strategic objectives covering climate change, economy, town and other centres, housing, inclusive communities, accessibility, infrastructure and the environment.
Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan[8]	Adopted in 2008, this focused on the delivery of major regeneration projects for large parts of the town centre. It set nine strategic objectives, including for a town centre that is well connected and less congested. Site-specific policies included transport proposals, some of which identified parking

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-growth-cutting-carbon-making-sustainable-local-transport-happen
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/policies?organisations%5B%5D=department-for-transport
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf
[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operational-guidance-to-local-authorities-parking-policy-and-enforcement
[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance
[6] http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/future-transport-plan/
[7] https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/talking-tomorrows
[8] https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/1099/ttcaap-2008.pdf

1.3.3. The Somerset Future Transport Plan provides useful background context and commentary on the role of parking. It states:

The provision of opportunities to park in our town centres, employment sites, neighbourhoods and other essential destinations is key to enabling people the access to the facilities they need to visit to go about their daily lives. However, there are often competing demands for space and the management of parking is essential to ensure the continued vitality and viability of our neighbourhoods. Within town centres, there is a danger that long stay commuters can monopolise use of the car parks closest to shops, reducing the attractiveness of the town to car borne shoppers and visitors. The relative mix of long, medium and short stay parking, together with pricing approach, is therefore an important element of our strategy for the management of town centre car parking. The provision of Park and Ride facilities forms an important policy strand to the approach taken in major towns.

Where insufficient parking is available within both residential and employment areas, displacement of overspill vehicles can lead to congestion on nearby roads. It can also lead to vehicles being parked on footways and other anti-social behaviour, such as neighbour disputes. The management and enforcement of on-street parking restrictions is another element of our parking strategy, as is the application of appropriate parking standards for new development. The availability and cost of parking facilities can be a key determinant in how people choose to travel.

While recognising that we need to cater for car-drivers, we also need to encourage people to travel by more sustainable modes where they can as road and parking space is not unlimited. Provision of appropriately located and designed parking bays is essential for facilitating access for people with restricted mobility who are able to travel by car.

1.4 BACKGROUND TO STRATEGY

1.4.1. The Parking Strategy for Taunton originates from the late 1990s when various options for improving traffic and congestion management in the town were proposed. The original Strategy was produced jointly by Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and Somerset County Council.

1.4.2. The Strategy was developed alongside the County Council's Local Transport Plan, the Urban Design Framework, and the Vision for Taunton aspirations.

1.4.3. It was reviewed in 2005, and again in 2007, with reports going to the Borough Council Executive. The latter review looked at the impact of the first Park & Ride site at Silk Mills, the latest developments and timetable for the Project Taunton initiatives, and the overall need (demand) for off-street parking provision.

1.4.4. The Strategy was then updated in 2011 in the light of:

- The draft (at that time) Core Strategy;
- Programme for regeneration initiatives;
- The adopted Taunton Town Centre Action Plan;
- Changes in government planning policy;
- The Somerset Future Transport Plan (2011-2026);
- The planned introduction of county-wide civil parking enforcement; and
- The recessionary economic climate of the time.

2 STRATEGY OPTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1. A long list of potential options for action have been identified which have broken down into eight broad themes. The list has been informed by the data analysis (see Chapters 4 to 6), an understanding of future context and key issues likely to influence parking in the town (see Chapter 7) relevant policy (see Appendix A), as well as considering best practice from other urban centres and discussions with officers. The options relate to Borough Council off-street car parks.

2.1.2. The following key assumptions have been used to guide the development of strategy options:

- Surveys indicate that there is 25% spare weekday capacity across all Borough Council car parks at the time of weekday maximum occupancy. It is also anticipated that a net additional 355 spaces will become available for public use within the next five years as part of key town centre developments. There is calculated to be 7% capacity at the most popular times on Saturdays. On this basis an excess of supply is considered likely to continue in the short term and therefore there is no requirement to identify and provide for any further increase in spaces in the town centre;
- Looking into the longer term, additional parking spaces will be provided on the periphery of the town on the Wellington Road corridor (at Comeytrowe) and near Walford Cross (at Monkton Heathfield). This will either increase capacity further and/or provides the opportunity to reconsider the balance between town centre and periphery parking;
- In accordance with the Somerset Future Transport Plan, town centre spaces are prioritised for shoppers and visitors; and
- Providing parking is one part of the town's overall transport strategy, which also seeks to reduce congestion and recognises the larger contribution walking, cycling and public transport can have in the town. Emerging technology could also change travel behaviour, with implications for how and where people park or choose to travel. Some scenarios of the future suggest that current levels of town centre parking might not be required as people choose to travel in different ways. Levels of town centre parking for the longer term should therefore continue to be kept under periodic review.

2.2 OPTIONS AND APPRAISAL

2.2.1. Each option has been appraised against the five strategy objectives, outlined in Section 1.1, to gain a full understanding of each option and its likely positive and negative impacts.

2.2.2. The options have been scored against the following criteria, shown below:

- Strongly supports aim ü ü
- Partly supports aim ü
- Neither supports nor conflicts with aim –
- Conflicts with aim O
- Strongly conflicts with aim OO

2.2.3. An early sift led to some options being discarded. These include:

- Increasing the amount of long-stay parking provided in the town centre – this would be contrary to existing policy;
- Preferential spaces for car sharers and / or parent and child spaces – this was considered to give rise to enforcement difficulties;
- Airline style car park pricing which fluctuates according to demand – technology not thought to be fully developed or available at this stage; and
- Cycle parking – guidance indicates that cycle parking should usually be located as close to the entrance of key destinations as possible, which will include a range of on-street locations and not necessarily in car parks. It is recommended that the potential be explored for additional cycling parking to be installed in place of a small number of on-street car parking spaces.

2.2.4. Table 2**Error! Reference source not found.** overleaf lists all the remaining options. The table includes a summary description and documents the outcome of the assessment against the strategy objectives.

Table 2 – Appraisal of options

Option		Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors	Provide for the needs of particular users - (eg disabled people, motorcyclists)	Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment	Improve actual and perceived safety and security	Enhance quality and customer experience	Notes and appraisal remarks
Theme 1 - Options to rebalance provision in favour of shoppers / short stay							
A	Categorise car parks for either short stay users or long stay users	ü ü	–	ü	–	ü	Surveys indicated that more than 50% of users in commuter tariff car parks stay less than 4 hours. Length of stay could be limited in certain car parks, for example some or all of the car parks within, or adjacent to the 200m buffer of the primary shopping frontage could become short stay (Canon Street, Castle Street, Coal Orchard, The Crescent, Duke Street, High Street, Orchard Multistorey, Wood Street)[9]. Contributes to a higher turnover of shoppers, rather than commuters parking closest to the town centre. Is anticipated to lead to transfer of some long-stay parking to existing commuter tariff car parks and/or P&R. Care will need to be taken to sufficient supply of spaces are between different categories of car park.
B	Increase long-stay tariffs in Shopper 1 and / or Shopper 2 car parks / Increase short stay tariffs in Commuter car parks	ü	–	ü	–	ü	The car parking within Taunton offers relatively low charges for long stay parking. Increasing charges on long stay (over 4 hours) in both shopper car parks would make it a less attractive option for long stay parking in the town centre, and encourage the use of dedicated commuter car parks and / or the P&R. Increasing, rather than withdrawing, long-stay tariffs is likely to reduce but not entirely prevent long-stay users in central car parks. Similarly, higher tariffs for short stays in commuter car parks would limit the number of customers using them for these purposes. Whilst it retains car park flexibility it is considered less effective than option A.
C	Convert some commuter tariff car parks to short stay use only	ü ü	–	–	–	ü	Converting some existing commuter tariff car parks to short stay is anticipated to increase parking turnover and increase the availability of spaces for shoppers and visitors. It may encourage additional traffic into the centre. Whilst ticket sales data indicates that a substantial proportion of commuter tariff car park users stay for less than 4 hours, this does not take account of season ticket permit holders and thus the proportion of long-stay users is likely to be under-reported. It is suggested that this is not taken forward until after any options to more clearly differentiate between short and long stay car parks are implemented and outcomes monitored.
Theme 2 – Options to improve car park efficiency							
D	Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks	ü ü	–	ü	ü ü	ü ü	These two Shopper car parks are relatively under-used and have a large proportion of spare capacity. The reasons for this are not currently clear - it could for example relate to customer preferences, limited awareness of available spaces, or access issues (as vehicles can queue to enter the Marks & Spencer car park at certain times, and block the route to the Orchard and High Street car parks). The reasons could be investigated and, following this, measures introduced to encourage use. This could potentially highlight these car parks on VMS or place these car parks into a special tariff to encourage use, for example. This option is considered to perform well against several of the objectives. A separate tariff could, however, be confusing to customers.
E	Extend the use of VMS	–	–	ü ü	–	ü ü	The current VMS investment programme will cover seven town centre car parks and two P&R sites. The data collected for the VMS could be made available to the public in other ways, including real-time information online and via an app. This could encourage drivers to choose car parks with more available spaces, avoid the busiest times, reduce congestion and improve customer experience. In the longer term VMS could be made available to all car parks to enable drivers to identify available spaces and reduce numbers of vehicles driving around to find a space and contributing to congestion. It would be appropriate to monitor the impact of the existing investment in the short term before considering its extension.
F	Consolidate parking into fewer car parks (car park disposal)	–	–	ü	–	ü	Taunton has several car parks with a relatively small number of spaces dispersed around the town centre, such as Whirligig. This dispersal of spaces can contribute to more complex trip patterns across the town centre as drivers choose from the wide range of locations. One or more of the smaller car parks could be closed to concentrate parking into the larger car parks and could enable land to be redeveloped as part of the town's regeneration programme. Fewer car parks would allow for a more cost effective upgrade of infrastructure.
G	Make more efficient use of car park land in larger car parks (decking)	ü	ü	ü	ü	ü	There is an opportunity to make more efficient use of land at some larger car parks with the introduction of decking to provide additional spaces. Placing greater reliance on larger car parks which are further from the principal town centre retail areas may lengthen distances between parking locations and key destinations which has potential to impact on blue badge holders in particular. This will need careful consideration. The majority of the car parks considered for decking are well-located to the principal town access routes, such as Tangier Way, which can help to minimise town congestion. Combining this with Option F, fewer bigger car parks with improved facilities will improve customer experience.
Theme 3 – Options to manage parking outside of times of peak use							

[9] Whirligig is already short stay

Option		Prioritise town centre spaces for short-stay shoppers and visitors	Provide for the needs of particular users - (eg disabled people, motorcyclists)	Reduce the impact of congestion and pollution and enhance town centre environment	Improve actual and perceived safety and security	Enhance quality and customer experience	Notes and appraisal remarks
H	Implement Charges in the Evenings	–	–	ü	–	O	The current charging tariff ends at 6pm. One option is to charge a flat tariff after this time for evening use. This is most likely to affect residents parking in public car parks and people coming to the town centre for leisure and events. This option is anticipated to reduce vehicle trips into the town out of peak periods, encourage use of other travel modes, and would have implications for on-street parking in and surrounding the town centre.
I	Implement charging on Sundays	–	–	ü	–	O	The current tariff system does not charge for parking on Sundays. One option is to charge a flat tariff for Sunday use or alternatively implement a charging structure similar to other days of the week. This option is anticipated to reduce vehicle trips into the town out of peak periods, encourage use of other travel modes, and would have implications for on-street parking in and surrounding the town centre.
Theme 5 – Options to provide for specific user groups							
J	Visitor management plans for major events	ü ü	ü	ü ü	–	ü ü	Major events place particular pressures on the town's car parks and the transport network in general. Working with major event organisers to prepare and implement management plans which include information to visitors, promotion of non-car access and maximising the use of P&R will help to address impacts associated with spikes in parking demand and guide visitors who may not be familiar with the town. It could help to meet the environment and customer experience objectives.
K	Review provision for blue badge holders	ü	ü ü	–	–	ü	Existing blue badge holder provision varies widely between car parks. Where it is provided it tends to be located in the most accessible part of car parks. If blue badge spaces are full, blue badge holders may choose to park on-street, even if spaces are available in other parts of the car park. A review of the current demand for and location of disabled parking spaces will help to ensure sufficient supply, especially in the light of changing demographics. This will ensure the needs of travellers with disabilities are catered for, and provision is tailored in terms of locations and numbers of spaces. This option has the potential to contribute to improved parking quality.
L	Tariffs or dedicated spaces for electric vehicles	–	ü	ü ü	–	ü	There are currently no electric vehicle charging points in the Borough Council's car parks. Providing spaces to allow electric vehicle charging will accelerate the public take-up of cleaner vehicles and reduce vehicle emissions. Spaces in car parks could be located in preferential locations to benefit those users. In parallel discounts could potentially be provided to those who have electric vehicles. However these options are likely to require significant investment in technology and make give rise to enforcement issues. Provision of charging points in the car parks will help encourage the use of electric vehicles, which will improve the general environment in the town centre through reduction of petrol / diesel cars.
M	Review provision of motorcycle spaces	–	ü ü	ü	ü	ü	Current provision of motorcycle spaces is limited low and does not meet recommended standards. Nevertheless, local conditions vary, so an assessment of demand is required for Taunton. Appropriate provision for motorcyclists will encourage use as a mode of transport and reduce traffic congestion within the town centre.
Theme 6 – Options to improve customer experience							
N	Pay on foot for all Borough Council car parks	O	–	–	–	ü ü	Taunton Deane Borough Council uses Pay and Display in all of its car parks as well as operating Phone and Pay. Pay on Exit is a more popular option with users, as motorists are issued a ticket and pay for the time they stay. This option will remove the stress of having to return to the car in their allocated time, and allow shoppers to enjoy their experience in Taunton. Pay on exit is also more convenient for customers as more payment options are available. This option is however only feasible for car parks that can cater for barriers and where access is not required to third party property.
O	Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme	–	ü	ü	ü ü	ü ü	Well-maintained car parks with common standards for facilities, lighting, surfacing and appearance can increase customers' perception of safety and security and provide a better welcome to the town. Improving the aesthetics of the car parks will contribute to an enhanced town centre environment.
P	Improved information and wayfinding	–	ü	ü	ü	ü	Improved signage to the main shopping areas from the car parks can improve the welcome to the town, improve customer experience and overcome perceptions that car parks are distant or poorly connected to the town centre.
Theme 7 – Other options							
Q	Energy efficiency measures	–	–	ü	–	–	Measures such as solar powered ticket machines, LED lighting, and the potential for installing solar panels in the car parks to generate electricity could be considered when upgrading car parks as means of improving energy efficiency, reducing energy costs and reducing carbon emissions
R	Phased withdrawal of cash payments in car parks	–	O	–	–	O	Customers can pay with coins or using Phone and Pay, with a large proportion of customers now using the latter option. Cash payments still require collection from the car parks and gives rise to the risk of theft attempts. A move away from cash payments could eliminate this; however, it is unlikely at this stage that alternative payment methods are suitable and available for all customer groups.

2.3 OPTIONS FOR PARK AND RIDE

2.3.1. The P&R sites are managed by the County Council. Existing policy in the Somerset Future Transport Plan identifies the role of P&R sites for long-stay commuter and visitor parking. This strategy assumes that the P&R sites will maintain, enhance and consolidate these roles.

2.3.2. A number of options for P&R have been considered as part of this study. In considering their relationship to the strategy objectives, the P&R options tend to offer a range of benefits including reducing congestion and emissions in the town centre and contributing to an enhanced town centre environment. Encouraging the use of P&R contributes to a more efficient use of car parking spaces in the town centre, where they can be focused on short stay parking requirements.

2.3.3. However, some of the P&R options are in part reliant on strategy options for the town centre car parks (and vice versa). Key P&R success factors tend to include the level of town centre congestion, along with the availability and price of town centre parking spaces.

2.3.4. The options are described in Table 3**Error! Reference source not found.**. It is recommended that the following three P&R options are considered further in the short term, with the remainder considered in the medium to long term:

- Catering for large-scale town centre events at the P&R sites;
- Surveys into use and perceptions of P&R; and
- Modest bus fare increases to support the operation of the P&R services.

Table 3 – P&R options

Option	Description	Consider as short-term option
Cater for large-scale town centre events at the P&R sites	Large events cause increased traffic and parking demand in the town centre. Encouraging the use of the P&R sites will reduce the impact on the traffic network and retain town centre spaces for other categories of user. This should consider opening the P&R on selected Saturdays to provide additional parking for events	ü
Carry out survey into use and perceptions of P&R	Little is known about the travel characteristics of P&R users, or why other groups opt not to use it. A thorough survey of P&R users and non-users will build on the existing data to get a full understanding of customer usage and their requirements, as well as why people choose not to use the P&R.	ü
Provide additional customer facilities at Taunton Gateway	A range of good quality facilities, including toilets, on-site can help to widen the appeal of the P&R to users	O**(Medium)**
Extend the opening hours of P&R sites	Longer opening hours would provide greater flexibility for potential customers, including workers who start earlier or finish later than standard office or retail hours, and could widen the appeal of the sites. However, unclear as to whether demand exists to justify lengthened opening hours at present.	O**(Medium)**
Amend Review P&R bus service routes	Current P&R bus service routes may not best meet existing customer destinations or may deter potential P&R users. Understanding customer destinations would ensure the bus routes best meets customer requirements, including main employment centres and new developments.	O**(Medium)**
Amend bus fares	Taunton's P&R fares are at the lower end of the range when compared with other towns. Modest price rises could help support the service. This has to be balanced against the potential dampening of demand which may occur if this is progresses	ü
Reintroduce Saturday P&R services	This will reduce the demand for parking spaces in the town centre as well as traffic circulating around looking for parking spaces. However, if town centre supply exceeds demand or if prices are similar (P&R bus fares vs town centre parking) then demand for a Saturday P&R service will be remain dampened.	O**(Medium)**

Option	Description	Consider as short-term option
Rebalance levels of overall parking in favour of peripheral locations	Some car parks have the potential in the medium to long term to be redeveloped for other uses as part of the town's ambition to create a vibrant urban town centre. At that time it may be appropriate for a higher proportion of parking to be located on the periphery of the town, with improved connections into the centre. The success of this option would likely to rely on the P&R option to have a more attractive price than remaining town centre car parks	O **(Long)**
Plan for new sites at Comeytrowe and Monkton Heathfield	New edge-of-town parking sites are planned in the garden communities to the south-west and north-east of the town, adding to the town's total car park stock. These will be located adjacent to main road corridors into the town which do not have P&R services but which do have good frequencies of other bus services. It is assumed that, under existing policy, these would also be aimed at long-stay commuters and visitors. Demand for using these sites is likely to rely upon a range of factors, including: - overall numbers of people making long-stay trips to the town centre; - the cost and ease of use/access to the town centre from the edge of town sites relative to parking in the town centre. - the quality and frequency and journey times of available bus services.	O **(Long)**
Consider potential for Taunton Gateway as a wider interchange hub	Gateway P&R is well-located for the M5, which is served by intercity coaches, such as those serving Bristol Airport, and interurban bus services on the neighbouring A358. There may be potential for the P&R to provide a wider interchange role, as occurs at Oxford's Thornhill P&R or Exeter's Honiton Road P&R. This could increase demand but brings its own management challenges with a range of potential operators and journey patterns.	O **(Medium)**

2.4 ON-STREET PARKING

2.4.1. As indicated earlier, the availability and use of on-street parking is not the focus of this strategy; however it is recognised that it has an influence on how off-street car parking is used. A review of existing on-street parking restrictions in surrounding the town centre may be required in parallel to the implementation of proposals in this strategy, to ensure that the needs of residents are put first in these locations, in accordance with Somerset Future Transport Plan.

3 STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1. The options set in the previous chapter have been given numerical scores as follows:

Strongly conflicts with aim	Conflicts with aim	Neither supports nor conflicts with aim	Partly supports aim	Strongly supports aim
OO	O	-	ü	ü ü
-2	-1	0	1	2

3.1.2. The outcome of the option appraisal is set out below in Table 4 **Error! Reference source not found.**in descending order of their score.

Table 4 – Option Appraisal Scores

Option Ref	Description	Score
K	Visitor management plans for major events	7
D	Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks	7
O	Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme	6
M	Review motorcycle spaces	5
A	Categorise car parks for either short stay users or long stay users	4
E	Extend use of VMS	4
J	Provision for blue badge holders	4
Q	Improved information and wayfinding	4
G	Make more efficient use of car park land in larger car parks	4
L	Tariffs or dedicated spaces for electric vehicles	4
B	Increase long-stay tariffs in Shopper 1 and / or Shopper 2 car parks / increase short-stay tariffs in long-stay car parks	3
C	Convert selected commuter tariff car parks to shopper tariffs	3
F	Consolidate parking into fewer car parks	2
N	Pay on foot for all Borough Council car parks	1
Q	Energy efficiency measures	1
H	Implement Charges in the Evenings	0
I	Implement charging on Sundays	0
R	Phased withdrawal of cash payments in car parks	-2

3.2 RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

3.2.1. It is therefore recommended that a range of well-performing options be taken forward for implementation, as follows:

- *Creation of dedicated short-stay and long-stay tariff car parks* – this option is particularly aimed at ensuring that spaces are available, and used, for short stay visits, and to give certainty to customers. In parallel a small number of car parks should be dedicated to long-stay users. It may be appropriate for the four existing commuter tariff car parks to fulfil this purpose but this should be kept under review;
- *Visitor management plans for major events* – large-scale events tend to create spikes in demand for car parking and place particular pressure on the transport network in general. It is recommended that visitor management plans are prepared by event organisers in consultation with the Councils to ensure the parking and travel demands are addressed appropriately;
- *Measures to encourage use of Orchard multi-storey and High Street car parks* – these car parks were found to have spare capacity and are close to key retail areas. A range of measures should be considered, including upgrading their appearance and potentially a special tariff, to encourage their use;
- *Extend the use of VMS* – the existing investment in VMS and pay on foot can enable more detailed, real-time information to be provided to car park customers in advance of their arrival, with live information provided on the Borough Council website or via an app, helping shape travel choices;
- *Review provision for blue badge holders and motorcycles* – existing provision should be reviewed to ensure suitable space is being provided in the right locations;
- *Maintenance and aesthetic enhancement programme* and *improved information and wayfinding* – the appearance of the car parks, and the associated infrastructure to guide users to the rest of the town, can be an important factor shaping where people choose to park and influencing visitors' impressions of the town. Investment in these aspects could help rebalance demand across the town, improve car park quality and customer experience.
- *Installation of electric charging points* – to provide facilities for people wishing to use electric vehicles; and
- *Make more efficient use of car park space* – this is a combination of option F and G. Consolidating the number of car parks into fewer, but bigger car parks will allow for a more efficient and cost effective maintenance and management strategy and will free up land within the town centre for development. Further work is required on this option to demonstrate that it has a robust business case before further pursuit.

3.2.2. A further 1,800 parking spaces are located at the two P&R sites. Existing policy identifies their role in providing for commuters and long-stay visitor parking, supporting and supplementing the town centre offer. It is recommended that discussions are held to consider whether the following options may be suitable in the short term:

- Using the P&R to better meet parking demand for large-scale town centre events;
- Undertaking surveys into the use, and perceptions, of P&R; and
- Implementing modest bus fare increases to support the operation of the P&R services.

3.2.3. A review of existing on-street parking restrictions in surrounding the town centre may be required in parallel to the implementation of proposals in this strategy, to ensure that the needs of residents are put first in these locations, in accordance with Somerset Future Transport Plan.

4 ANALYSIS – OFF-STREET CAR PARKS

4.1 TOTAL CAR PARK CAPACITY

4.1.1. At present there are approximately 4,400 publicly available parking spaces[10] available for general use on weekdays in and surrounding Taunton town centre, distributed in 24 car parks. Summary details of car park name, ownership, tariff or use category, and the number of weekday spaces are outlined in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Schedule of Car Park Capacity by Ownership and Tariff

Ownership	Car Park Name	Weekday Spaces	Tariff / Use
Borough Council	Ash Meadows	39	*Shopper 2*
	Belvedere Road	117	*Shopper 2*
	Canon Street	306	*Shopper 1*
	Castle Street	51	*Shopper 2*
	Coal Orchard	118	*Shopper 1*
	The Crescent	232	*Shopper 1*
	Duke Street	58	*Shopper 2*
	Elms Parade	28	*Shopper 2*
	Enfield	149	*Commuter*
	Fons George	79	*Shopper 2*
	High Street	269	*Shopper 1*
	Kilkenny	224	*Commuter*
	Orchard Multi Storey Levels 1, 1a, 2, 2a, 3 and 3a	402	*Shopper 1*
	Orchard Multi Storey Levels 4, 4a, 5 and 5a	203	*Shopper 2*
	Tangier	219	*Commuter*
	Victoria Gate	72	*Commuter*
	Whirligig	37	*Very short stay*
	Wood Street	197	*Shopper 2*
Private	County Ground	200 approx	*Long-stay*
	Lidl	70	*Retail*
	Marks & Spencer	60	*Retail*
	Morrison's	470	*Retail*
	Railway Station	213	*Rail users*
	Sainsbury's	240	*Retail*
	Tesco	350	*Retail*
	Totals	**4,403**	

Source: Data for Borough Council car parks from TDBC website. Data for private car parks from 2017 surveys

[10] Includes spaces reserved for blue badge holders. Excludes 5 coach bays at Tangier, 10 limited waiting bays at Kilkenny, spaces reserved for medical centre staff at Victoria Gate and 15 limited waiting (1hr) bays at Belvedere Road (Deane House outer circle). Data for Borough Council car parks from TDBC website. Data for private car parks from 2017 surveys

4.1.2. The above table indicates that there are 2,800 spaces in Borough Council car parks, 1190 in private retail car parks and a further 413 in other privately operated car parks (County Ground and Railway Station). In terms of other headline statistics:

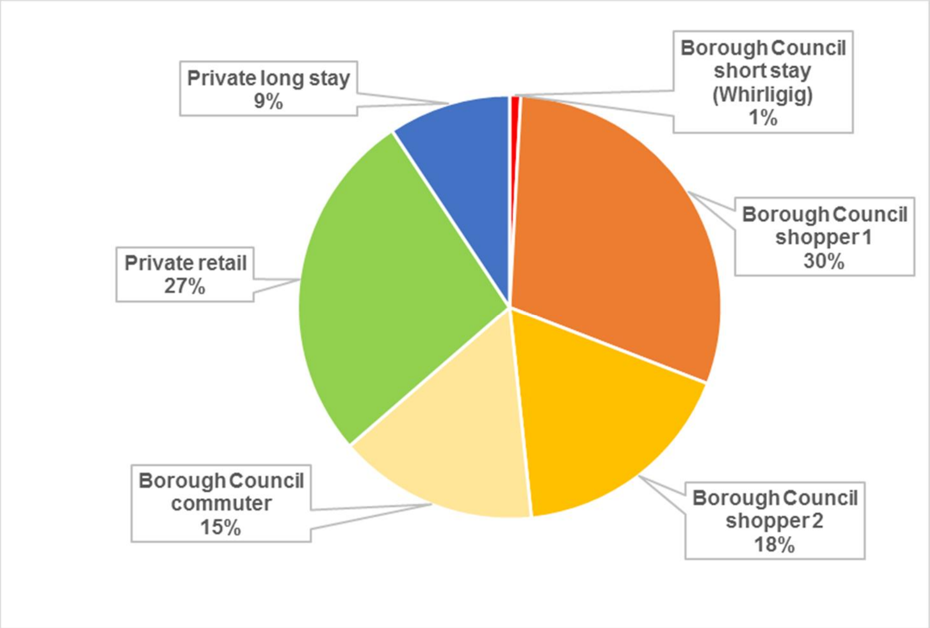
- Nine car parks have fewer than 100 spaces;
- Seven have more than 250 spaces;
- Four of the largest seven car parks are privately owned supermarket retail car parks; and
- The largest car park is the Orchard multi-storey, which comprises 14% of the available parking spaces.

4.1.3. An additional 148 general use spaces are available on Saturdays in the Belvedere Road car park.

4.1.4. Figure 1 below shows the ratio of public (Borough Council) to privately owned car park spaces. The key statistics are:

- The ratio of spaces in Borough Council control compared to those in private ownership is 64:36;
- Almost 50% of spaces are Borough Council shopper tariff spaces (aimed at short-stay users), with a further 15% of spaces being in Borough Council Commuter tariff car parks (aimed at long stay users);
- The remaining 36% are in private control, the majority of which are in 5 short stay car parks associated with retail stores. The remainder are provided on the south side of the railway station (car park tariffs aimed at providing long-stay parking for rail passengers) and at the County Ground, which is available for commuter parking on non-match days.

Figure 1 – Taunton town centre weekday parking capacity by category



Note: Based on 4,403 spaces

CHANGES IN PARKING LOCATIONS AND CAPACITY SINCE 2011

4.1.5. Since 2011, there has been a reduction in car parking capacity, through the closure of a couple of car parks, and a revision of others. Capacity has been reduced following the closure of the following car parks:

- Priory Bridge Car Park – closed to public use in preparation for the Firepool development. There were previously 464 commuter spaces available;
- Castle Green – this car park has been converted into a public square and resulted in the reduction of 61 shopper car parking spaces;
- Lidl – the store has relocated west of the former location; and
- Tangier Car Park – was revised with a reduction in 38 spaces.

This represents a loss of 563 car parking spaces in the centre of Taunton up to 2016.

4.2 CAR PARK LOCATIONS

4.2.1. Figure 1 overleaf shows the location and capacity of off-street car parks in and surrounding Taunton town centre, and their proximity to the town centre retail areas, with isochrones showing 200m and 400m distances town centre primary shopping frontages. Table 6 below summarises the number, and proportion, of spaces in each isochrone. It indicates that the majority of spaces are within 200m of Taunton's area of primary shopping frontages.

Table 6 – Parking spaces and distance from primary shopping frontages

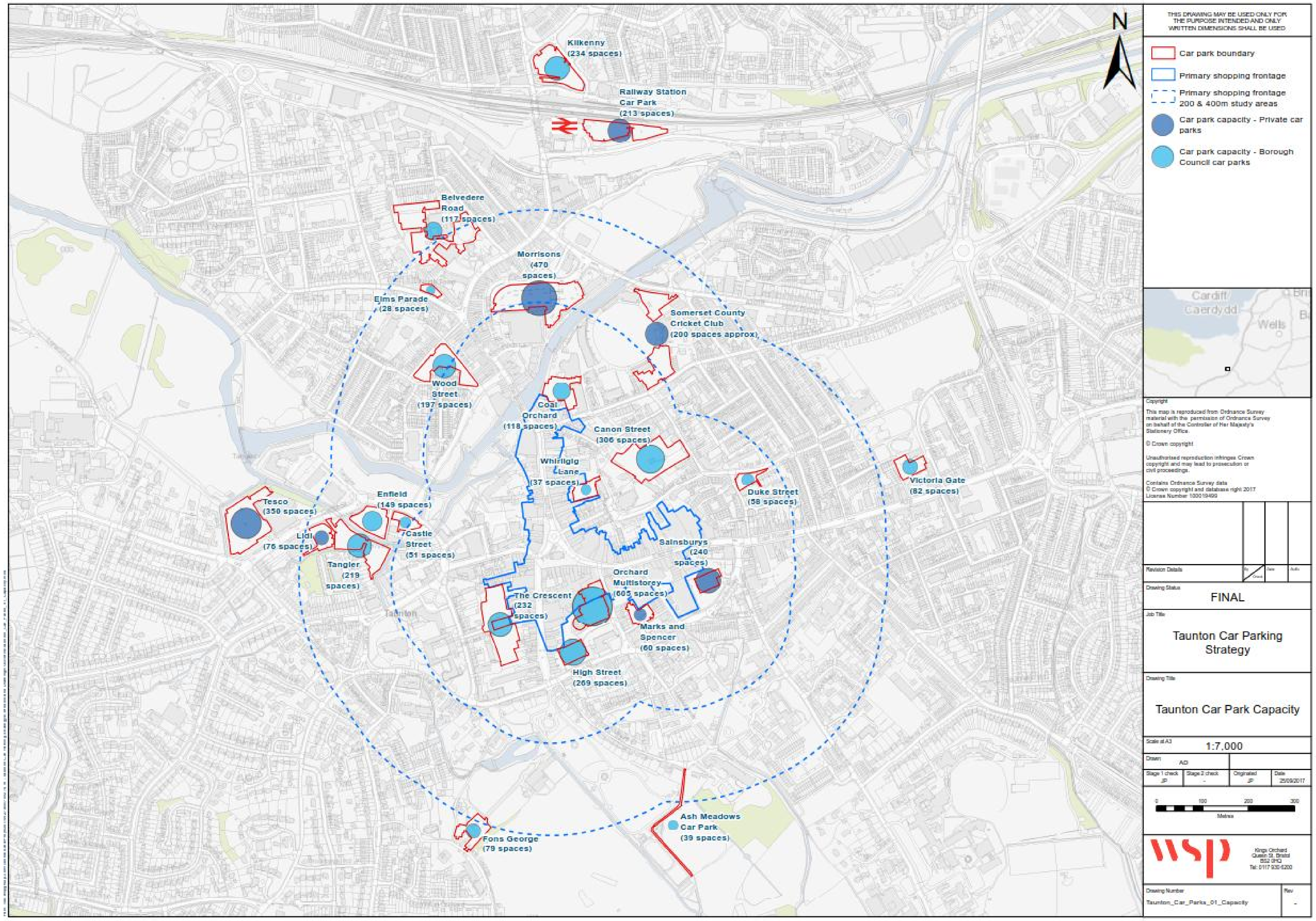
Distance from primary shopping frontage	Borough Council spaces	% of Borough Council spaces	Private spaces	% of private spaces	Total Number of spaces	% of total spaces
Within 200m	1873	66.9%	970	60.5%	2,843	64.6%
200m to 400m	631	22.5%	70	4.4%	701	15.9%
Beyond 400m	296	10.6%	1603	35.1%	859	19.5%
Totals	2,800	100%	1,603	100%	**4,403**	100%

Notes: distance category based on closest part of the car park

4.2.2. The Borough Council broadly uses distance from the shopping frontage to guide the setting of tariffs in car parks (Shopper 1, Shopper 2 and Commuter). The current outcome of this process is as follows:

- All car parks within 200m of the primary shopping frontages are either Shopper tariff or very short stay (Whirligig);
- Most car parks between 200m to 400m of the primary shopping frontages are Shopper tariff apart from Enfield and Tangier, which are Commuter tariff; and
- Car parks beyond 400m are designated as Commuter tariff.

Figure 2 – Location of key off-street car parks in and surrounding to Taunton town centre



PROVISION FOR SPECIFIC USER GROUPS OR VEHICLE TYPES

4.2.3. There are 79 blue badge holder spaces in the 19 Borough Council town centre car parks. This provision is set out in Table 7 below.

Table 7 – Blue Badge Holder spaces in Borough Council car parks

Car Park Name	Blue Badge Holder Spaces	Total Weekday Spaces	% of total capacity	Tariff / Use
Ash Meadows	0	39	0%	*Shopper 2*
Belvedere Road	7	117*	6%	*Shopper 2*
Canon Street	9	306	3%	*Shopper 1*
Castle Street	3	51	6%	*Shopper 2*
Coal Orchard	8	118	7%	*Shopper 1*
The Crescent	1	232	0%	*Shopper 1*
Duke Street	0	58	0%	*Shopper 2*
Elms Parade	1	28	4%	*Shopper 2*
Enfield	0	149	0%	*Commuter*
Fons George	2	79	3%	*Shopper 2*
High Street	12	269	4%	*Shopper 1*
Kilkenny	4	224*	2%	*Commuter*
Orchard Multi-Storey	20	605	3%	*Shopper 1 and 2*
Tangier	0	219	0%	*Commuter*
Victoria Gate	2	72	3%	*Commuter*
Whirligig	3	37	8%	*Very short stay*
Wood Street	7	197	4%	*Shopper 2*
Totals	**79**	**2,800**		

Note: * Excludes 5 coach bays at Tangier, 10 limited waiting bays at Kilkenny, the spaces reserved for medical centre staff at Victoria Gate and the 15 limited waiting (1hr) bays at Belvedere Road (Deane House outer circle).. Numbers of blue badge holder spaces were not surveyed in private car parks

Source – TDBC

4.2.4. Government guidance[11] identifies that car parks associated with shopping areas, leisure or recreational facilities should have a minimum of one space for each employee who is a disabled motorist, plus 6% of the total capacity for visiting disabled motorists.

4.2.5. The majority of public car parks have dedicated provision for blue badge holders, with four locations having more than 6% of the total capacity reserved for blue badge holders – Belvedere Road (6%), Castle Street (6%), Coal Orchard (7%) and Whirligig (8%). With the exception of Belvedere Road, these are some of the closest off-street spaces to the town centre principal shopping frontages. 13 of the Borough Council car parks do not meet minimum standard of blue badge holder provision. If dedicated spaces are full, blue badge holders may choose to park on-street, even if spaces are available in other parts of the same car park.

[11] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3695/inclusive-mobility.pdf

4.2.6. In terms of provision for other vehicle types:

- Limited numbers of motorcycle bays are available in three of the borough council's car parks – Crescent South (1 bay), Enfield (2) and Wood Street (2). Signed motorcycle spaces are also provided underneath the spiral ramp of the Orchard multi-storey car park, accessed from Old Pig Market beyond the multi-storey entrance. The British Motorcyclists Federation guidance suggests that one motorcycle space should be provided in every car park, with an additional 1 for every 10 car spaces, used as a minimum;
- Five coach parking bays are provided in Tangier Car Park, with a tariff of £6.00 per day;
- Motor home owners are advised to use Tangier Car Park. If a motor home takes up more than one parking space a Pay and Display ticket must be purchased for each parking space used; and
- 32 reserved shopmobility spaces in Orchard multi-storey car park.

4.2.7. There are currently no electric vehicle charging bays in Borough Council or private car parks.

4.3 OFF-STREET PARKING CHARGES

BOROUGH COUNCIL CAR PARKS

4.3.1. Parking charges are in force in Borough Council car parks from 8am until 6pm Monday to Saturday (including bank holidays). The current tariffs were updated in April 2017 and they are reviewed and updated annually.

4.3.2. In general three bands of charges are operated – shopper 1, shopper 2 and commuter. Shopper 1 car parks are located closest to the town centre retail area and have the most expensive scale of charges; commuter car parks tended to be furthest away from the town centre retail area and have the least expensive scale of charges. Whirligig has its own separate scale of charges which are higher than the shopper 1 and parking is restricted to a maximum of 2hrs.

4.3.3. The charges applicable to each car park are described below in Table 8. The car parks in each charging category are shown previously in Table 8.

Table 8 – Car Park tariffs

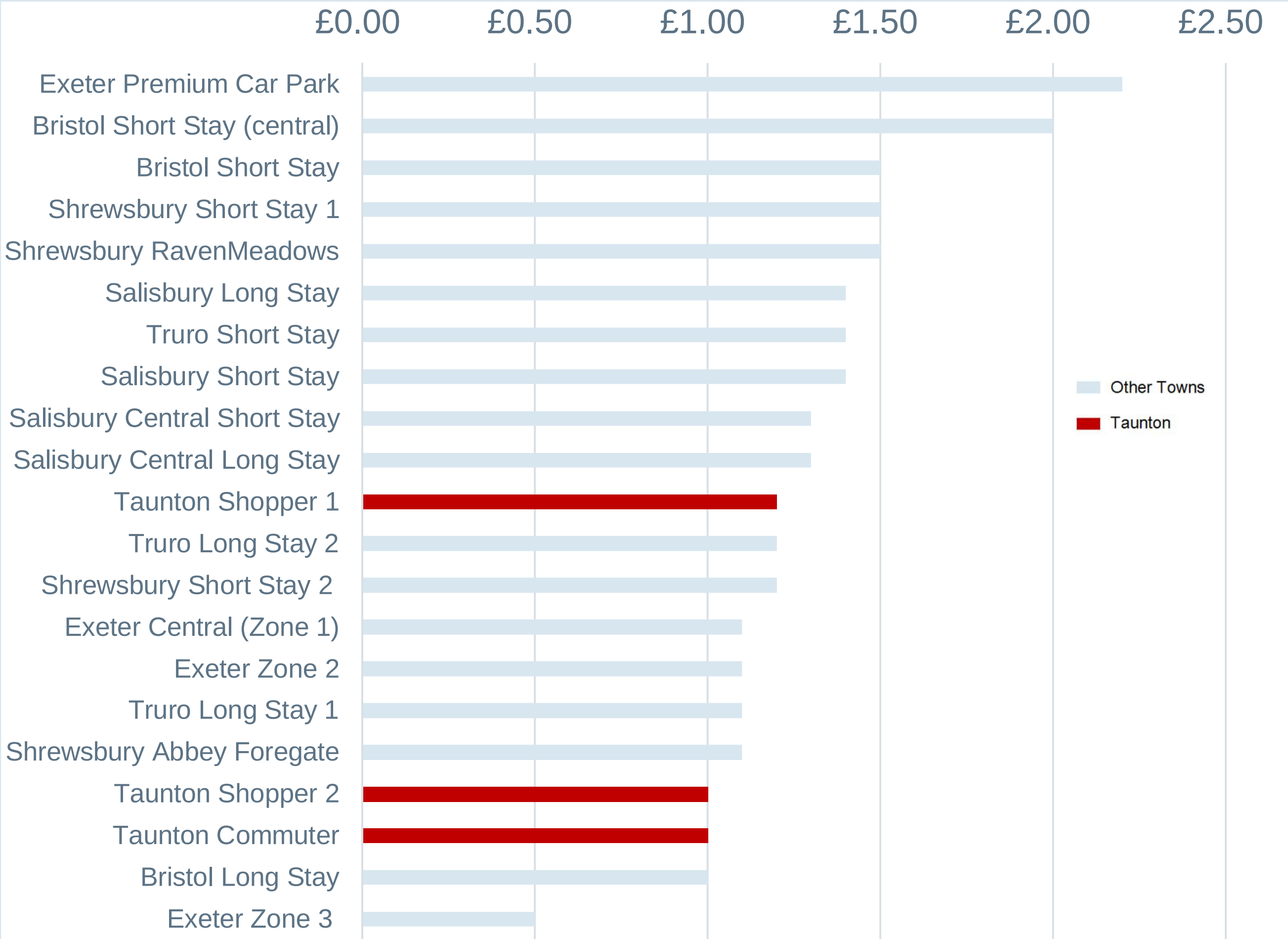
	Shopper 1	Shopper 2	Commuter	Whirligig (Short Stay)
Up to 1 hr	£1.20	£1.00	£1.00	£1.60
Up to 2 hrs	£2.40	£2.00	£2.00	£3.00
Up to 3 hrs	£3.60	£3.00	£3.00	N/A
Up to 4 hrs	£4.80	£4.00	£4.00	
Up to 5 hrs	£6.00	£5.00	£4.50	
Up to 6 hrs	£7.20	£6.00	£5.00	
Up to 7 hrs	£8.40	£7.00	£5.50	
Up to 10 hrs	£9.60	£8.00	£6.00	

Source: TDBC

BENCHMARKING OF PRICES

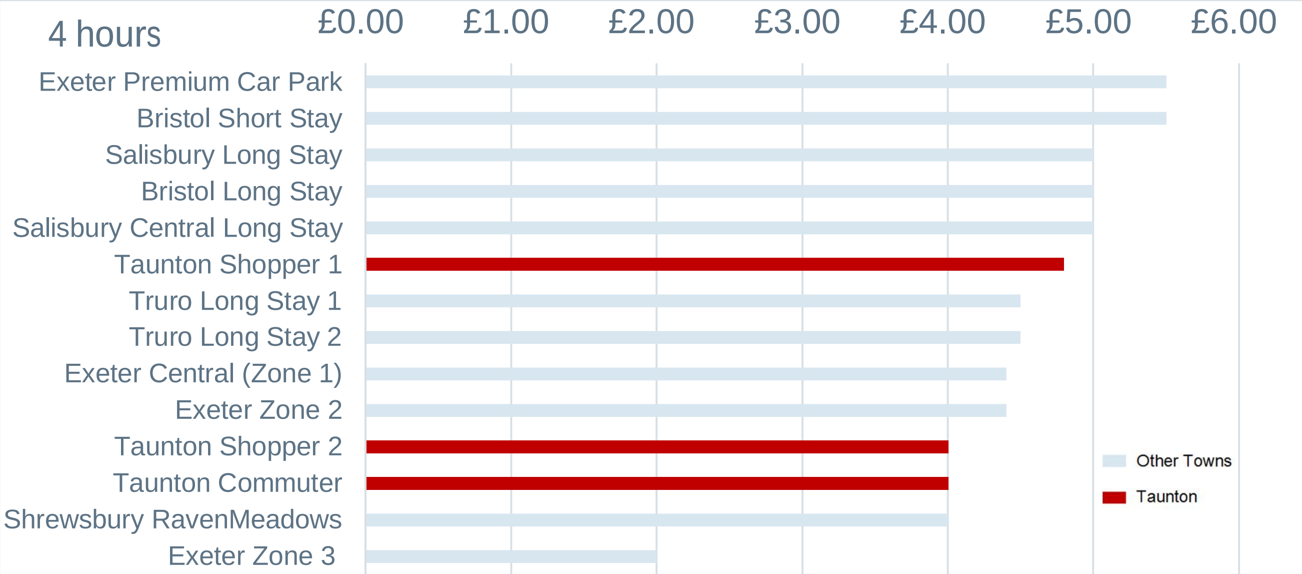
4.3.4. A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken of parking prices in Taunton and a selection of comparator towns. The outcome of this analysis is shown for 2 hour, 4 hour and 10 hour parking tariffs in Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5 respectively.

Figure 3 – Benchmarking parking tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 1 hour



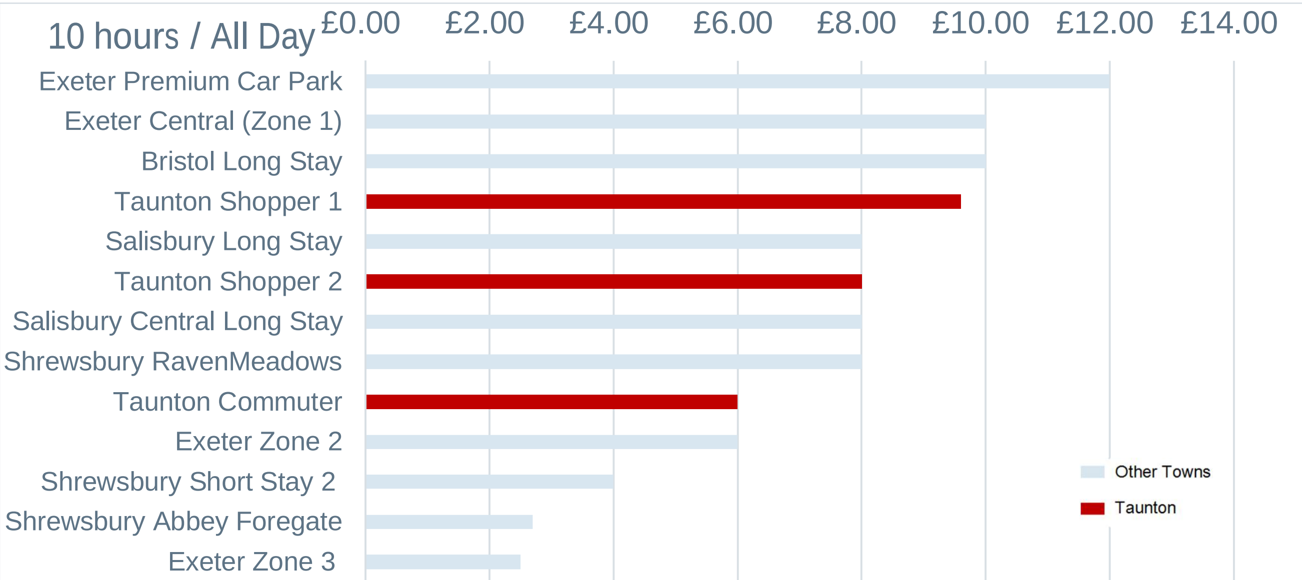
Source: Local authority websites. Note: Data correct at May 2017

Figure 4 – Benchmarking parking tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 4 hour



Source: Local authority websites. Note: Data correct at May 2017

Figure 5 – Benchmarking car park tariffs in Taunton and comparable towns – 10 hour



Source: Local authority websites. Note: Data correct at May 2017

4.3.5. The figures above highlight the difference in prices between Taunton and other comparable towns. It highlights that Taunton short stay parking (below four hours) offers cheaper parking charges than its comparable towns. The majority of selected towns only offer hourly charging up to three or four hours in the short stay car parks. An option for all-day parking is only available in designated long stay car parks in comparator towns, unlike in Taunton, where all-day parking is available in all of the car parks.

PAYMENT METHODS

4.3.6. Currently all Borough Council car parks operate a pay and display system, with two payment methods available – coin payments and the cashless Phone and Pay system[12]. Payment via the latter is accepted from all major cards via phone call, text or the smartphone app. 25% of Borough Council parking income in 2016/17 was derived from the phone and pay system; however this varies widely by car park, as set out in Table 9 below. The data indicates that Whirligig, with short stay tariffs only, has the lowest proportion of Phone and Pay transactions, whereas almost 50% of transactions in commuter car parks use this method.

4.3.7. At present customers are charged a 14p transaction fee for using Phone and Pay, which may disincentivise take-up of this payment method. It is understood that in some local authorities the transaction fee is higher, whereas in other areas no transaction fee is charged to customers at all.

Table 9 – Borough Council parking transactions by payment type and car park, 2016/17

Car Park Category	Car Park	% of payments by Phone & Pay	% of payments by Ticket machine
Short stay	Whirligig	12	88
Shopper 1	Canon Street	20	80
	Coal Orchard	22	78
	The Crescent	21	79
	High Street	19	81
	Orchard Multi- Storey 1-3	17	83
	All Shopper 1 car parks	*20*	*80*
Shopper 2	Belvedere Road	23	77
	Castle Street	31	69
	Duke Street	22	78
	Elms Parade	20	80
	Orchard Multi- Storey 4-5	33	67
	Wood Street	18	82
	All Shopper 2 car parks	*24*	*76*
Commuter	Enfield	33	67
	Kilkenny	63	37
	Tangier	46	54
	Victoria Gate	30	70
	All commuter car parks	*48*	*52*
Totals		*75*	*25*

Source: TDBC ticket sales data. Data not provided for Ash Meadows or Fons George

4.3.8. All pay and display machines will accept overpayment, but do not give change. The tickets issued are specific to each vehicle and are not transferable between vehicles or car parks.

4.3.9. A Pay on Foot payment system will be introduced to selected car parks over the next two years (see Chapter 7 for more information).

[12] https://www.phoneandpay.co.uk/

ENFORCEMENT AND FINES

4.3.10. Through a partnership the Borough Council are responsible for parking enforcement, payments and appeals and the County Council, as Somerset Parking Services, provide the service.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR BLUE BADGE HOLDERS

4.3.11. In December 2015, following the review of Fees and Charges, the Borough Council made the decision to remove the zero tariff for blue badge holders within off-street car parks. Nevertheless, a vehicle displaying a valid blue badge is entitled to one extra hour of free parking in recognition that those who hold blue badges may require additional time due to their mobility issues.

PERMITS

4.3.12. The Borough Council offers three different types of parking permits, all for a six-month period. Permits can be purchased throughout the year, and used across a combination of car parks. Permits offer a saving to regular car park users and the convenience of not having to find change for Pay and Display machines. The permits are described below in Table 10. Less than 60 permits were sold in 2016/17.

Table 10 – Six-month season permits for Borough Council car parks

Permit Type	Price	Applicable Car Parks	
Shopper 1	£990	Belvedere Road Canon Street Castle Street Coal Orchard Duke Street Enfield High Street	Kilkenny Orchard Levels 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 3 and 3A Orchard Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A Tangier Victoria Gate Wood Street
Shopper 2	£770	Belvedere Road Castle Street Duke Street Enfield Kilkenny	Orchard Levels 4, 4A, 5 and 5A Tangier Victoria Gate Wood Street
Commuter	£660	Enfield Kilkenny	Tangier Victoria Gate

Data correct at September 2017

A benchmarking exercise has been carried out to compare permit prices in other towns, the results of which are set out in

4.3.13. Table 11 below. It indicates that in most comparison locations season tickets are available for a range of time periods, typically monthly, quarterly, and annual, as well the six months which Taunton offers. In similarity to Taunton, a range of season ticket price bands are charged in Bristol, Shrewsbury and Truro, depending on the car park. The higher prices are charged for the car parks which are closest to the respective town centres.

4.3.14. Season ticket prices in Taunton are more expensive than in Truro, Exeter and Salisbury and most of the Shrewsbury car park categories. They are less expensive than Bristol and the most expensive Shrewsbury car park category.

Table 11 – Benchmarking of season ticket permit prices in local authority car parks

Town	Location	Month	3 months	6 months	Annual
Bristol	Temple Gate	n/a	n/a	n/a	£1,872.00
	West End	n/a	n/a	n/a	£2,184.00
	Trenchard Street	n/a	n/a	n/a	£2,496.00
Exeter	9 Council run car parks		£300.00	£600.00	£1,200.00
Salisbury	Standard	£86.70	£260.00	£520.00	£1,040.00
Shrewsbury	Abbey Foregate	£41.00	£115.00	£216.00	£405.00
	Frankwell Main / St. Julian's Friars	£60.00	£110.00	£320.00	£600.00
	St. Austin's / Bridge Street	n/a	£456.10	n/a	£1519.30
Truro	Group 1	£33.33	£100.00	£200.00	£400.00
	Group 2	£41.67	£125.00	£250.00	£500.00
Taunton	*Shopper 1*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*£990.00*	*n/a*
	Shopper 2	*n/a*	*n/a*	*£770.00*	*n/a*
	Commuter	*n/a*	*n/a*	*£660.00*	*n/a*

Local authority websites[13], November 2017

PRIVATE CAR PARKS

4.3.15. Tariffs in the privately operated short-stay and long-stay car parks are detailed below in Table 12 and Table 13 respectively. Marks and Spencer is more expensive than Borough Council Shopper 1 tariffs whilst Sainsbury's is in line with Borough Council Shopper 2 tariffs.

Table 12 – Tariffs in privately operated car parks – short stay

Car Park	1 hour	2 hour	3 hours
Lidl	Automatic Number Plate Recognition – maximum stay of 90 minutes, no return within 2 hours		N/A
Marks and Spencer	£1.50	£2.50	£4.50
Morrisons	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sainsbury's	£1.00	£2.00	N/A
Tesco	Controlled by Automatic Number Plate Recognition – maximum of 2 hours, no return within 1 hour		N/A

Data correct at September 2017

Table 13 – Tariffs in privately operated car parks – long stay

Car Park	1 hour	2 hour	3 hours
Cricket Club	Information not available		N/A
Railway Station	£6.40 per day (Mon-Fri), £3.90 per day (Sat-Sun) Weekly ticket rate £32.00		

Data correct at September 2017

[13] Bristol City Council - Annual season tickets and pre-paid tickets; Cornwall Council - Season Ticket Prices, 2017-18; Exeter City Council - About car park season tickets; Shropshire Council – Shrewsbury season tickets; Wiltshire Council - MiPermit Portal

4.3.16. Sainsbury's and Marks and Spencer car park tickets can be refunded when a minimum-spend transaction is made within the store.

FINES

4.3.17. Somerset Parking Services issue penalty charge notices. A charge of £50 applies to the off-street car parking if vehicles have overstayed a time limit, or failed to pay for parking. The charge is reduced to £25 if paid within 14 days of issue.

4.3.18. Separate parking penalty arrangements are applicable to the private car parks if users stay longer than the allocated hours, or fail to pay and display a valid ticket, as detailed below in Table 14.

Table 14 – Private car park fines

Car Park	Parking charge notice
Lidl	£90
Marks and Spencer	£70, however £40 if paid within 14 days of issue
Morrison's	£85, however £50 if paid within 14 days of issue
Sainsbury's	£60
Tesco	£70

4.4 OFF-STREET PARKING DEMAND

METHODOLOGY

4.4.1. The following elements of data collection have been used to understand off-street parking demand:

- Snapshot surveys of 21 town centre car parks to understand car park occupancy and duration of stay; and
- Ticket sales data (for Borough Council owned car parks only) indicating number of car park users and duration of stay.

SURVEYS

4.4.2. 21 town centre car parks were surveyed in June 2017. Each car park was surveyed for a single midweek day (either a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday) for a 12 hour period between 0700 and 1900. These were undertaken in the neutral month of June to avoid any bias from the school summer holiday period. Further details are set out in Appendix B.

4.4.3. The following car parks were not surveyed for the following reasons:

- Railway station – excluded due to its specialised role in providing parking for railway users, with only daily parking tariffs available; and
- County Ground – excluded in consultation with the cricket club due to a large proportion of the spaces being used by television vehicles ahead of an upcoming cricket international.

4.4.4. In consultation with the Borough Council the following car park was not surveyed:

- Ash Meadows: Located 400m from the town centre primary shopping frontage and away from retail premises. It has a 6 hour maximum stay and its primary purpose is to serve leisure uses at Vivary golf course and Vivary Park and Taunton Deane Cricket Club. It is less likely to be used by shoppers and commuters in the town centre.

WEEKDAY DEMAND AND CAR PARK OCCUPANCY

4.4.5. The June 2017 surveys recorded 7,844 vehicles parked in 21 town centre car parks on a weekday. The maximum occupancy during the day by car park category is shown in Table 15. The headlines from the table are as follows:

- Taking all car parks together, peak occupancy occurs at 11:44 when there is 22% spare capacity. At that time:
  - Borough Council car parks as a whole have 25% spare capacity;
  - Borough Council Commuter car parks have 14% spare capacity. However they reach peak occupancy at 11:10 with 13% spare capacity;
  - Borough Council Shopper car parks have 28% spare capacity; and
  - Private retail car parks have 17% spare capacity.

Table 15 – Peak weekday car park occupancy by car park category

	Total Available Spaces	Peak Number of Spaces Occupied on Survey Day		Remaining Available Spaces at Maximum Occupancy	
		spaces occupied	% of total	spaces available	% of total
Borough Council Shopper + Whirligig	2,097	1,509	72%	588	28%
Borough Council Commuter	664	574	86%	90	14%
Borough Council totals	**2,761**	**2,083**	**75%**	**678**	**25%**
Private Retail	1,190	991	83%	199	17%
Combined totals	**3,951**	**3,074**	**78%**	**877**	**22%**

Source: June 2017 surveys. Total surveyed spaces: 3,951

4.4.6. The information in the above table indicates basis that 28% of all vehicles parked in the Borough Council town centre car parks on a weekday are parked at the time of peak occupancy, in the late morning (2,083 of the 7,574 vehicles recorded). The remaining 72% of parking occurs across the rest of the day when there are greater levels of spare capacity.

4.4.7. Table 16 shows the maximum weekday car park occupancy for each surveyed Borough Council car park. It should be noted that not all car parks reach maximum occupancy at the same time.

Table 16 – Maximum car park occupancy by individual Borough Council car park

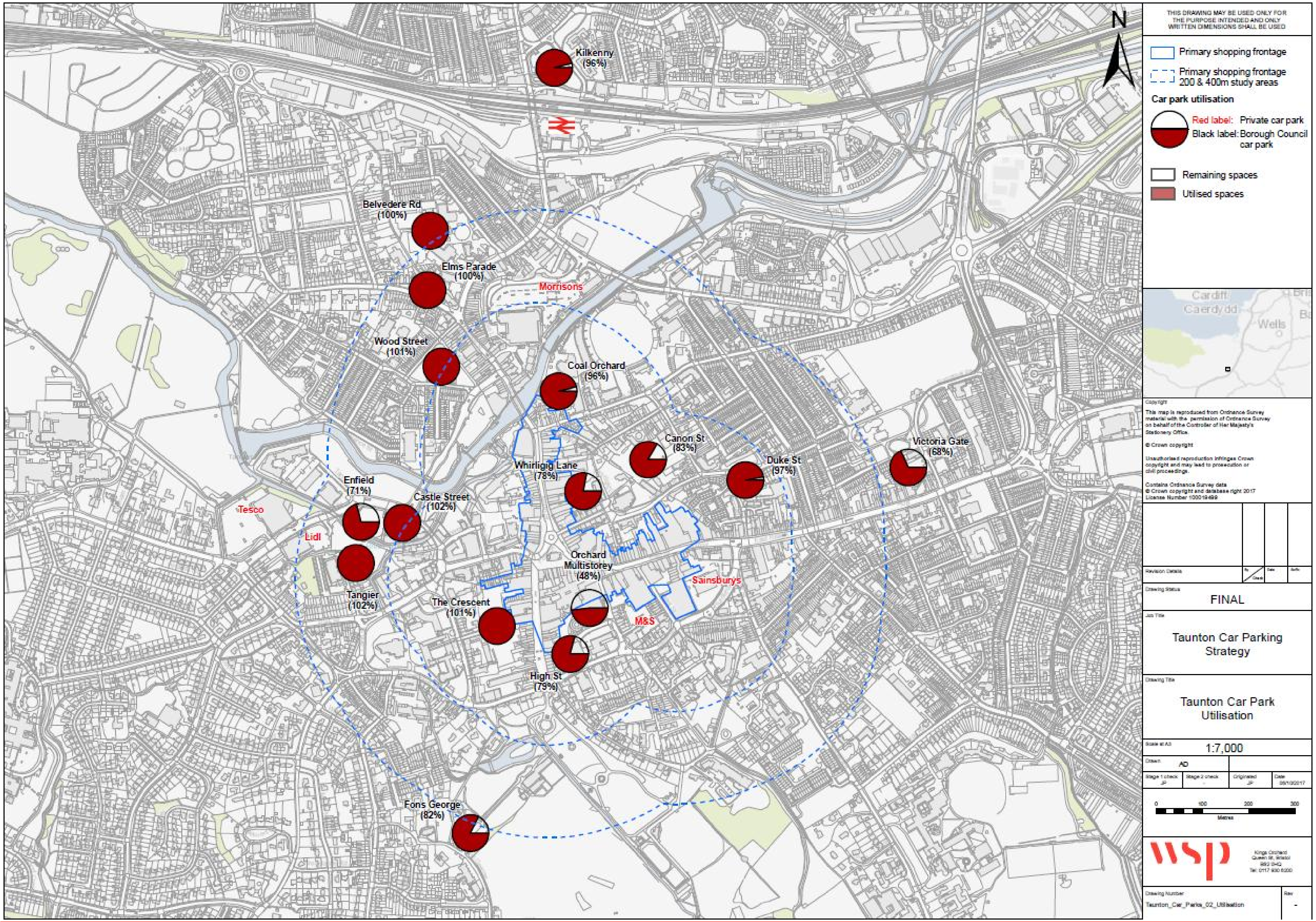
Car Park			Maximum Spaces Occupied on Survey Day		Remaining Available Spaces at Maximum Occupancy	
		total spaces	spaces occupied	% of total spaces	spaces available	% of total
Belvedere Road	Shopper	117	117	100%	0	0%
Canon Street	Shopper	306	254	83%	52	17%
Castle Street	Shopper	51	52	102%	-1	-2%
Coal Orchard	Shopper	118	113	96%	5	4%
The Crescent	Shopper	232	234	101%	-2	-1%
Duke Street	Shopper	58	56	97%	2	3%
Elms Parade	Shopper	28	28	100%	0	0%
Enfield	Commuter	149	106	71%	43	29%
Fons George	Shopper	79	65	82%	14	18%
High Street	Shopper	269	212	79%	57	21%
Kilkenny	Commuter	234	225	96%	9	4%
Orchard Multistorey	Shopper	605	289	48%	316	52%
Tangier	Commuter	219	223	102%	-4	-2%
Victoria Gate	Commuter	82	56	68%	26	32%
Whirligig	Shopper	37	29	78%	8	22%
Wood Street	Shopper	197	199	101%	-2	-1%
Totals			**3,977**			

Total surveyed Borough Council spaces: 3,977

4.4.8. In some cases, the maximum number of vehicles surveyed at any one point exceeds the capacity of a car park. This is due to vehicles entering the car park once capacity has been reached and waiting (or circling) the car parks until a space became available. Of particular note is the relatively low occupancy levels of the Orchard multi-storey, with more than 45% spare capacity when surveyed (316 free spaces).

4.4.9. Figure 6 shows the maximum occupancy of each car park.

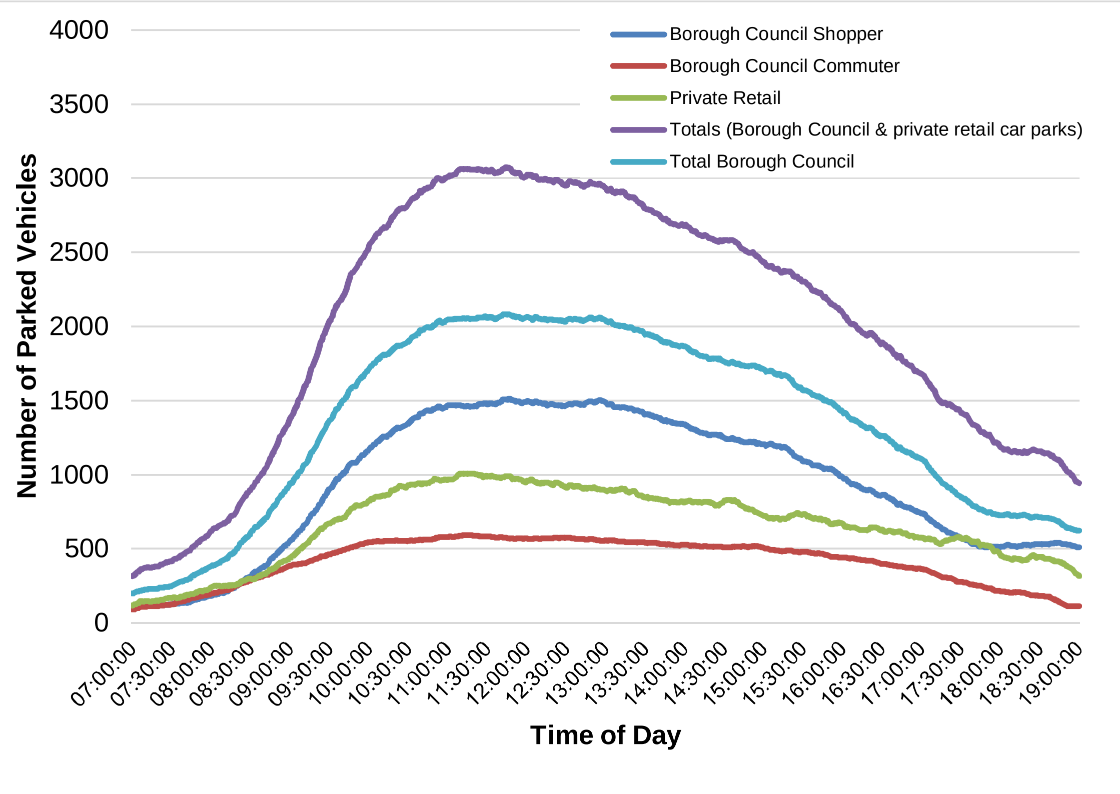
Figure 6 – Maximum surveyed car park utilisation - weekdays



WEEKDAY CAR PARK OCCUPANCY – CHANGE THROUGH THE DAY

4.4.10. Figure 7 below shows how weekday car park occupancy, disaggregated by car park category, varies through the day. It highlights that demand rises until the late morning before peaking and then decreasing through the afternoon. As indicated earlier, the surveys indicated that overall there is 23% spare capacity across the town centre (Borough Council and private car parks) at the time of peak occupancy; therefore the shoulder periods in the earlier morning and later afternoon have greater levels of available spaces than this figure. For example at 10:00 the surveys recorded 2,538 vehicles being parked, giving 36% spare capacity, and at 14:00 2,677 parked vehicles were recorded (32% spare capacity).

Figure 7 – Weekday car park occupancy



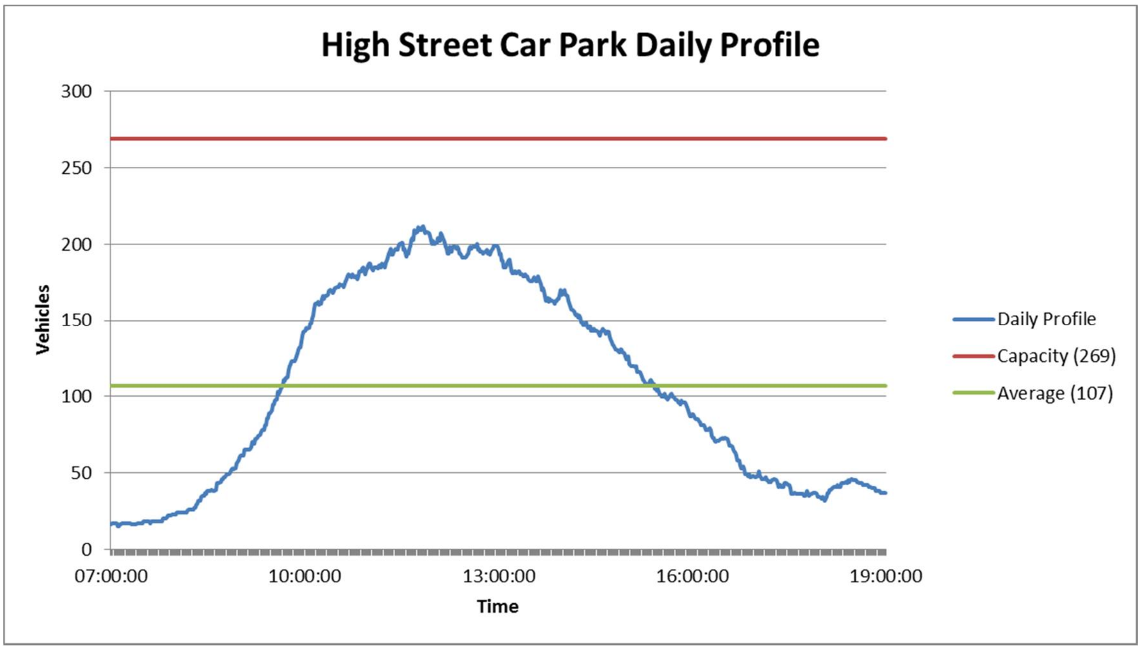
Source: June 2017 surveys. Based on 3951 spaces

4.4.11. Occupancy profiles for each surveyed Borough Council car park, showing how the total number of vehicles parked changes through the day from 07:00 to 19:00, are included in Appendix B.

The majority of car parks reach peak occupancy levels during the late morning, between 11:00 and 12:00, with occupancy tailing off in the afternoon. The example of High Street is shown below in

Figure 8. The exceptions to these characteristics this are Tangier and The Crescent, where peak occupancy was recorded earlier in the morning, around or before 10:00, and Fons George, where occupancy peaked at or after 19:00.

Figure 8 – Car occupancy profile – High Street car park



Source: June 2017 car park surveys

4.4.12. Several car parks show a single peak car park occupancy period, after which demand decreases, the implication being that a greater number of unoccupied spaces are available in the afternoon and earlier morning than the lunchtime peak. However, some car parks exhibit different profiles, as follows:

- Belvedere Road, Coal Orchard, Kilkenny – reach a peak occupancy level and remain at or near to this level for several hours; and
- Castle Street, The Crescent, Elms Parade, Whirligig – have more than one peak occupancy period, as demand fluctuates through the day.

WEEKEND DEMAND

4.4.13. The snapshot surveys of car park occupancy and duration of stay were carried out on weekdays. However, use of car parks at the weekend differs from weekdays, with particular demand generated by visitors to large events, such as cricket matches or performances at the Brewhouse, alongside that from Saturday shoppers. The Borough Council's car parking ticket sales data for the last full financial year has been used to give insights on the variance between Saturday and weekday demand and is set out in Table 17. Transactions for December have been excluded as parking demand in that month tends not to share the same characteristics as the rest of the year.

Table 17 – Comparison of ticket machine sales on weekdays and Saturdays in Borough Council car parks, 2016/17

Car park category	Car park name	Average number of tickets sold on weekdays	Average number of tickets sold on Saturdays	% difference
Short stay	Whirligig	147	147	0%
Shopper 1	Canon Street	745	965	30%
	Crescent	794	896	13%
	Coal Orchard	381	403	6%
	High Street	421	571	36%
	Orchard 1-3a	490	776	58%
Shopper 2	Ash Meadows	23	37	62%
	Belvedere Road	163	138	-17%
	Castle Street	120	155	32%
	Duke Street	131	184	44%
	Elms Parade	67	58	-12%
	Fons George	85	110	28%
	Orchard Multi-Storey 4-5a	92	245	167%
	Wood Street	234	276	18%
Commuter	Enfield	128	185	45%
	Kilkenny	87	90	4%
	Tangier	184	301	64%
	Victoria Gate	88	67	-24%
Totals		4,370	5,601	28%

Source: TDBC Ticket machine data. Notes: Does not include Phone and Pay transactions or season tickets. Assumes proportion of car park users using Phone and Pay and season tickets remains the same on Saturdays as on weekdays. Excludes December Data.

4.4.14. The data above indicates that numbers of parked vehicles is 28% higher on Saturdays than on weekdays. The highest proportional increase was reported for the upper floors (4-5a) of Orchard multi-storey, with a 167% increase in transactions on Saturdays compared to weekdays. The lower floors (1-3a) had 58% more transactions on Saturdays and High Street shows a 36% increase. This appears to indicate that, whilst these car parks have spare capacity on weekdays, these locations are more heavily used on Saturdays when demand for spaces across the town as a whole is higher.

4.4.15. Two of the four commuter car parks – Enfield and Tangier - record significant increases in transactions on Saturdays. Analysis of the ticket price paid indicates that average Saturday users pay for shorter time periods than weekdays in these two car parks, suggesting that weekday commuters are replaced with shorter-stay Saturday shoppers.

4.4.16. Three car parks recorded lower numbers of transactions on Saturdays than weekdays – Belvedere Road, Fons George and Victoria Gate.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SATURDAY MAXIMUM CAR PARK OCCUPANCY

4.4.17. To understand the implications of Saturday demand on car park capacity, a 28% uplift was applied to the weekday survey figures. This indicates that around 9,700 vehicles may park in town centre Borough Council car parks on an average Saturday.

4.4.18. Applying the weekday pattern of vehicle arrivals and departures to Saturday ticket figures would suggest that the surveyed Borough Council car parks have around 2,715 parked vehicles in late morning / early afternoon, compared to 2,909 Borough Council parking spaces (including Saturday spaces at Belvedere Road). This would equate to approximately 7% spare capacity at the most popular times.

4.4.19. However, it is possible that parking on Saturdays may exhibit a lower, later, peak than weekdays, with parking demand spread over a longer time period, reflecting the different nature of weekend travel patterns and activities. If this were the case then the number of available spaces at the time of maximum occupancy would be greater.

4.5 TRENDS IN OVERALL CAR PARK USE

4.5.1. Table 18 below summarises the trends in numbers of car park users over the four-year period from 2013/14 to 2016/17.

Table 18 – Summary of car park ticket transactions, 2013/14 to 2016/17

	2013/14	2016/17	Change over 4 year period (2013/14 to 2016/17)	
	Parking transactions	Parking transactions	Parking transactions	% change
Shopper 1	1,056,426	1,142,200	85,774	8.1
Shopper 2	346,341	358,014	11,673	3.4
Whirligig	43,433	52,474	9,041	20.8
Commuter	220,400	244,442	24,042	10.9
Totals	**1,666,600**	**1,797,130**	**130,530**	**7.8**

Source: TDBC ticket sales data. Data includes Phone & Pay sales as well as from ticket machines

4.5.2. Total numbers of car park ticket transactions have increased over the last four years by 130,530 (7.8% increase), with strongest growth in commuter tariff locations (10.9% increase in transactions) and shopper 1 tariff locations (8.1% growth in transactions over 4 years). In 2016/17 the proportional split of transactions was as follows:

- 64% in shopper 1 tariff locations;
- 20% in shopper 2 tariff locations;
- 14% in commuter tariff locations; and
- 3% in Whirligig (short stay).

These proportional splits have remained stable for the four year period from 2013/14.

4.5.3. Table 19 below describes ticket transactions for each individual financial year. Total numbers of car park transactions fell back slightly in 2015/16 relative to 2014/15, due to fewer transactions in shopper 2 and commuter tariff car parks in that year.

Table 19 –Car park transactions by year and car park tariff, 2013/14 to 2016/17

	2013/14	2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
	Parking transactions	Parking transactions	% change from previous year	Parking transactions	% change from previous year	Parking transactions	% change from previous year
Shopper 1	1,056,426	1,058,210	0.2	1,094,124	3.4	1,142,200	4.4
Shopper 2	346,341	367,327	6.1	322,076	-12.3	358,014	11.2
Whirligig	43,433	42,543	-2.0	46,186	8.6	52,474	13.6
Commuter	220,400	245,256	11.3	239,478	-2.4	244,442	2.1
Totals	**1,666,600**	**1,713,336**	**2.8**	**1,701,864**	**-0.7**	**1,797,130**	**5.6**

Source: TDBC ticket sales data. Data includes Phone & Pay sales as well as from ticket machines

4.5.4. Key statistics on a location-by-location basis are as follows:

- The greatest proportional increase in transactions has been recorded at Castle Street (24%), Duke Street (21%), Victoria Gate (20%) and Canon Street (12%), covering car parks of all tariffs;
- The greatest absolute increases in transactions has been recorded at Canon Street (31,090) and The Crescent (28,398), both of which are shopper 1 tariff locations; and
- A decrease in transactions occurred at three shopper 2 tariff locations,–
  - Wood Street: -19,347 (-17%);
  - Elms Parade: -883 (-4%); and
  - Belvedere Road: - 1,591 (-3%).

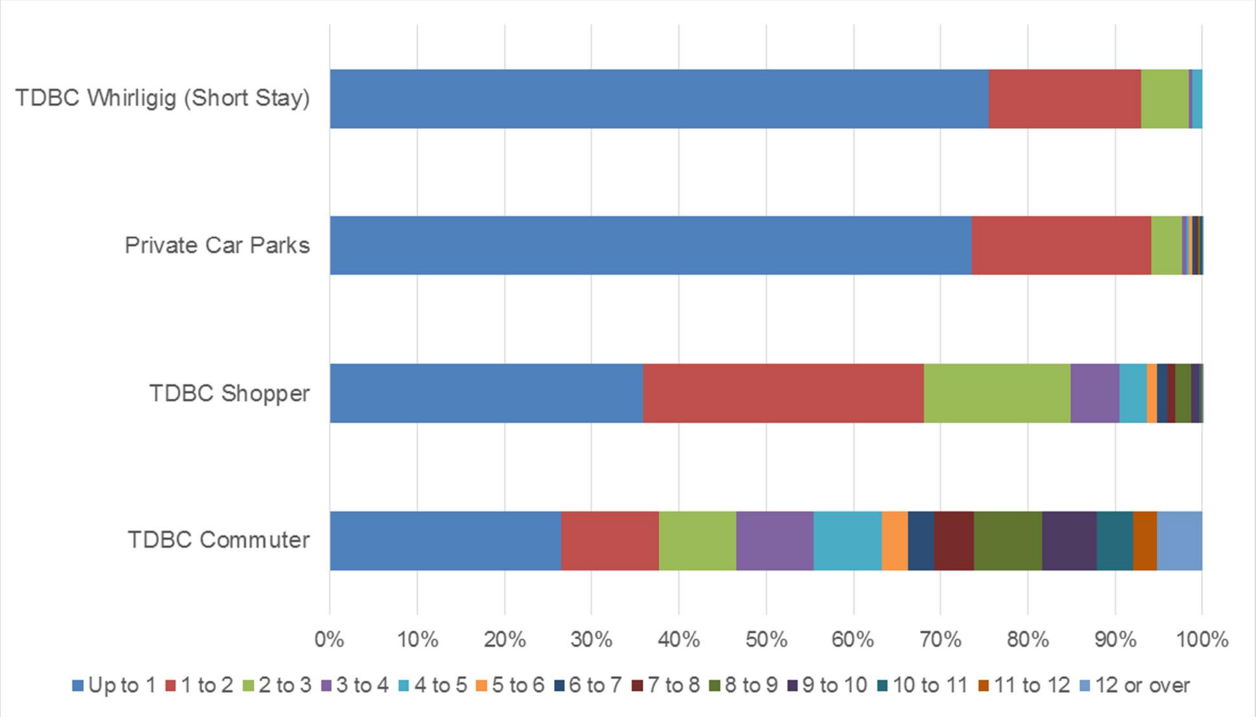
These car parks are all situated to the north-west of the town centre and the decrease in ticket sales may in part be attributable to the change in parking tariffs at Morrison's, whereby the first two hours is now free.

4.6 DURATION OF STAY

4.6.1. Length of stay in car parks has been calculated from the car park surveys and the analysis is shown below in Figure 9. Data is presented for the following car park categories:

- Borough Council Shopper Car Parks;
- Borough Council Commuter car parks;
- Borough Council Whirligig car park (short stay tariff); and
- Private retail car parks.

Figure 9 – Duration of stay by car park category and/or tariff



Source: June 2017 car park surveys

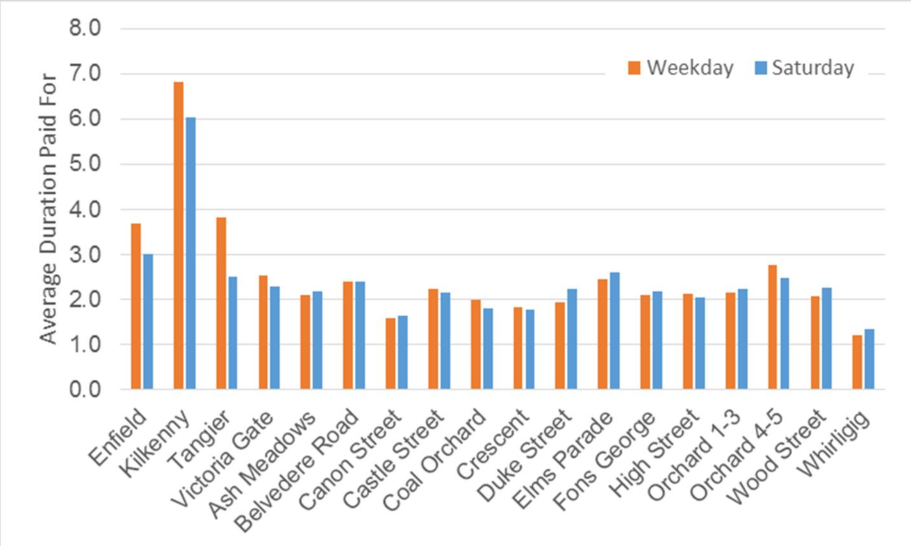
4.6.2. Figure 9 shows that 75% of those using private retail car parks and the Borough Council's Whirligig car park (short stay) were recorded staying less than one hour. Shopper tariff car park users broadly divide into thirds – 36% stay less than 1 hour, 32% stay between 1-2 hours, and 32% stay more than 2 hours. Less than 10% stay longer than 4 hours.

4.6.3. Commuter tariff car parks users tend to stay longer, with 56% of users staying more than 4 hours. However, in terms of the remainder, 25% stay less than 1 hour and another 25% stay less than 4 hours.

Ticket machine data for 2016/17 was also analysed to calculate average duration of stay which customers pay for in Borough Council car parks on weekdays and Saturdays. This is set out in

4.6.4. Figure 10 overleaf.

Figure 10 – Duration of stay, Borough Council car parks, 2016/17



TDBC Ticket machine data. Note: Based on price paid, rather than actual duration of stay

4.6.5. The chart shows that, in most car parks, the average duration of stay paid for is between 2-3 hours. Average stay is longer (3-4 hours) in the Enfield and Tangier commuter car parks and in Kilkenny it is nearly 7 hours. Victoria Gate exhibits more similar characteristics to shopper car parks than with the other commuter car parks.

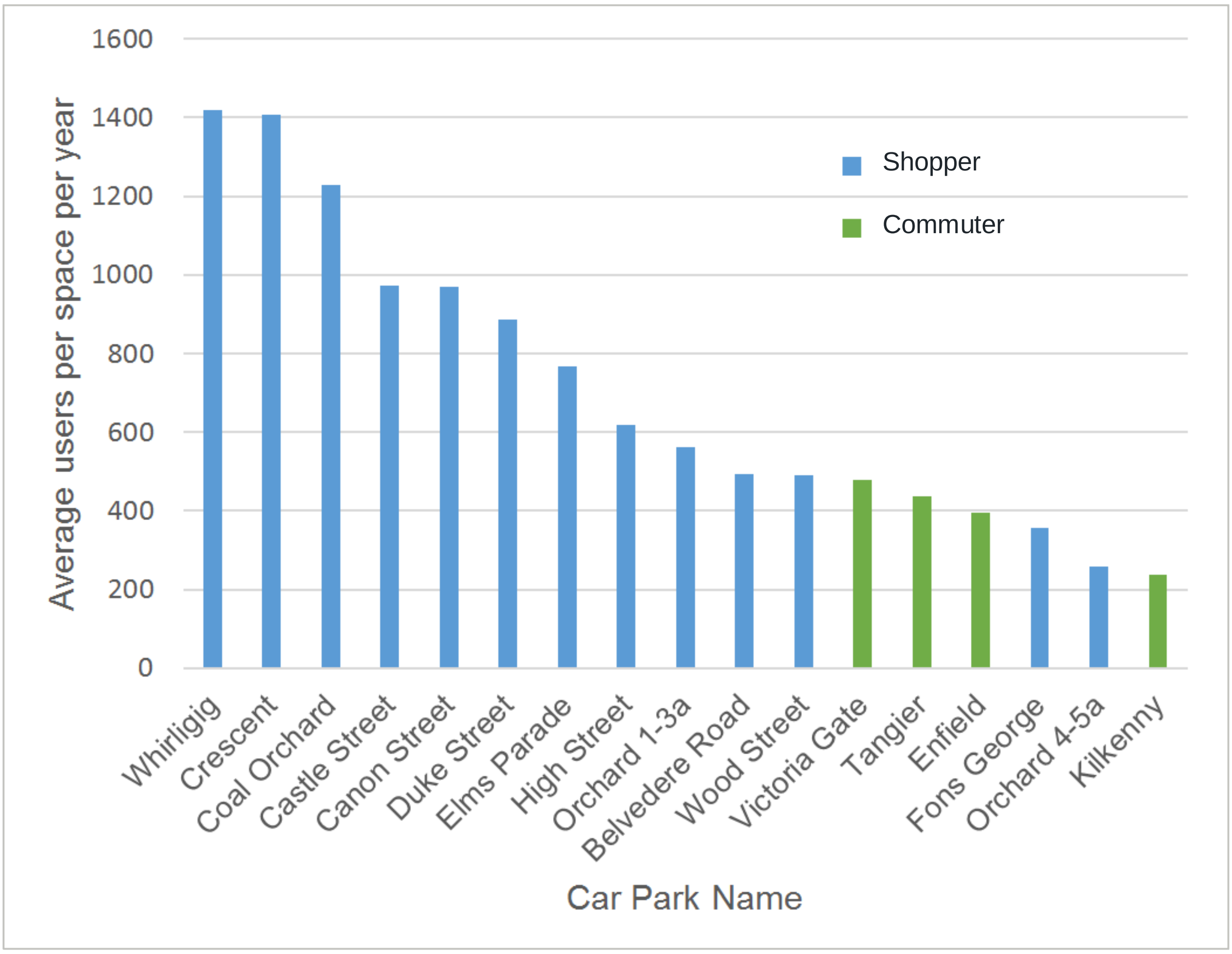
4.6.6. In most car parks there is little difference in average length of stay between weekdays and Saturdays. The exceptions to this are three commuter car parks (Enfield, Kilkenny and Tangier), where duration of stay is lower on Saturdays than on weekdays.

INTENSITY OF USE

4.6.7. Figure 11 details how intensively each car park is used, based on number of tickets sold for the 2016/17 financial year. Intensity of use is a ratio of the number of vehicles parked to the number of spaces; the higher the ratio, the more intensively the use of the car park. Note however that:

- this analysis does not take into account season tickets which may comprise a proportion of regular users in some commuter tariff car parks; nor that
- long stay users will by their very nature limit the turnover of spaces in some car parks.

Figure 11 – Intensity of use of car parks, 2016/2017



Source: TDBC Ticket sales data, 2016/17

4.6.8. The chart indicates that there are substantial variations in how intensively each car park is used:

- Whirligig, The Crescent and Coal Orchard are the most intensively used – with the use of each of them equating to an average of nearly 4 users per space per day;
- All four commuter tariff car parks (Enfield, Kilkenny, Tangier and Victoria Gate) are amongst the six least intensively used car parks, in line with their intended long-stay role. Kilkenny appears much less intensively used than the other three but may have higher numbers of season ticket holders, not captured in the data;
- Four Shopper 2 tariff car parks have an average of less than 1 user per space per day (High Street, Orchard 1-3a, Belvedere Road and Wood Street); and
- A further 2 Shopper tariffs car parks have on average less than 2 users per space per day (Fons George and Orchard 4-5a).

4.6.9. Table 20 below outlines the proportion of Borough Council car park spaces by tariff category and the proportion of ticket sales. This underlines the fact that 65% of tickets were sold for shopper 1 tariff locations, despite comprising 47% of the spaces. Conversely 14% of tickets sold were for commuter tariff locations, despite representing nearly a quarter of all the spaces. As highlighted earlier, a higher proportion of commuter tariff car park users stay for longer time periods, in line with their intended role, which limits the turnover of spaces, and consequently impacts on the number of tickets sold.

Table 20 – Comparison of car park spaces to number of transactions

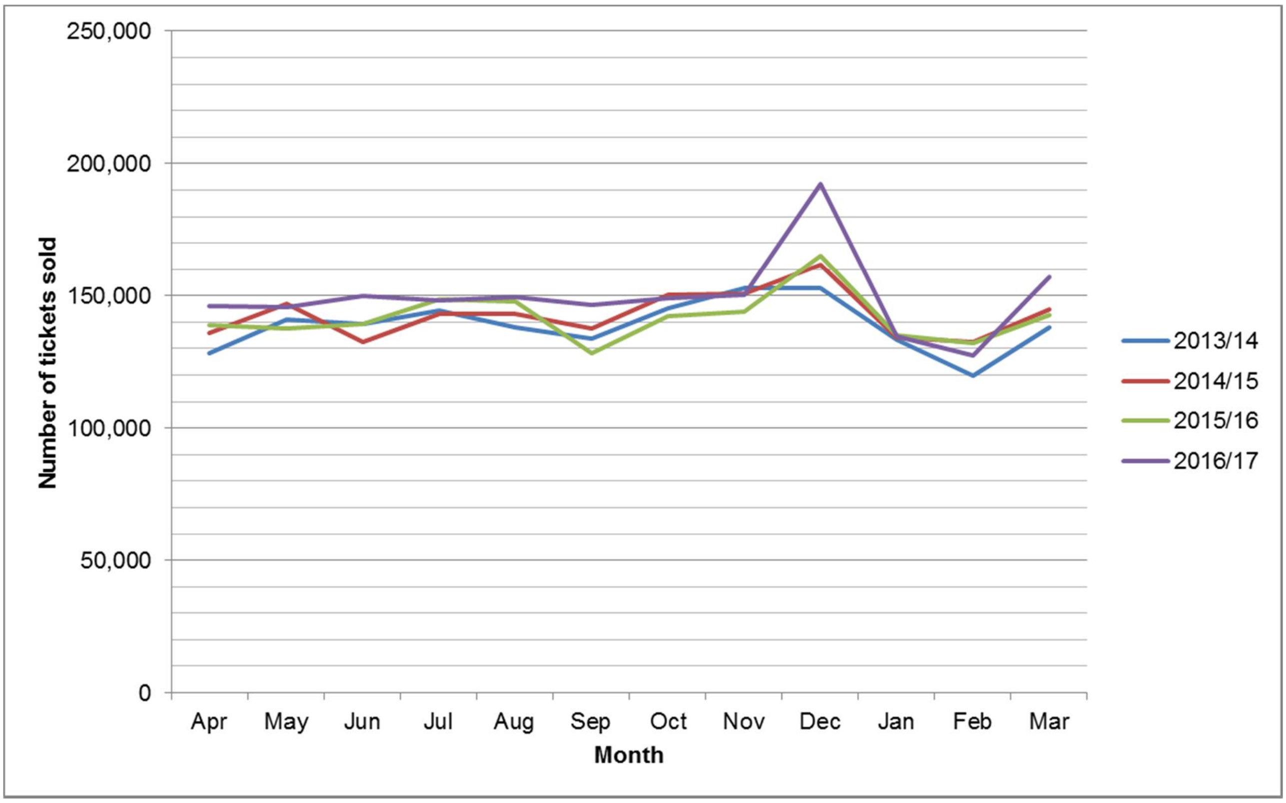
	Shopper 1	Shopper 2	Commuter	Whirligig (short stay)
% of all Borough Council spaces	47%	27%	24%	1%
% of ticket sales	65%	20%	14%	3%

Source: TDBC car park ticket sales 2013/14 to 2016/17

SEASONAL VARIATION

4.6.10. Monthly total ticket sales for 2013/14 to 2016/17 were analysed to understand how car park demand varies through the year and the results are shown in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12 – Total tickets sold for Borough Council car parks, 203/14 to 2016/17, disaggregated by month



Source: TDBC Ticket sales data, 2016/17

4.6.11. The chart above indicates that December has the greatest number of tickets sold and the fewest are sold in February, with other fluctuations through other parts of the year. The most recent financial year has shown a particularly prominent spike in ticket sales during December 2016, with the preceding months exhibiting relatively little variation. 34% fewer tickets were sold in February 2017 than December 2016.

5 ANALYSIS – ON-STREET PARKING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1. The availability, location and price of on-street parking can be a key influence on demand for off-street car parking. On-street parking in the town is regulated by the County Council and a traffic regulation order covers Taunton town centre streets[14]. Table 21 outlines the town centre streets with parking bays and the charges to use them. In addition the town centre has several loading and limited / no waiting bays around Taunton town centre and dedicated blue badge holder parking bays.

Table 21 – Selected Taunton on-street parking charges

Location	Total Number of Spaces	30 mins	1 hour	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	Notes
Billet Street	13	£1.00	£2.00				1 hour no return within 1 hour
Church Square (including Magdalene Street)	13	£1.00					(30 mins no return within 30 mins)
Corporation Street	7	£1.00	£2.00				1 Hour No Return Within 1 Hour
The Crescent	14		£1.50	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00	4 Hours No Return Within 1 Hour
Duke Street	6	£1.00	£2.00				1 hour no return within 1 hour
East Street	18	£1.00					30 mins no return within 30 mins
St James Street	8	£1.00	£2.00				1 Hour No Return Within 1 Hour
The Mount	7	£1.00	£2.00				1 Hour No Return Within 1 Hour
Victoria Gate	33	£4.50 for any length of stay (maximum stay 10 hours)					
Wilton Orchard	15	£4.50 for any length of stay (maximum stay 10 hours)					
Total	145						

5.1.2. Days and hours of operation tend to be force Monday and Saturday from 8am to 6pm[15], but there are some variants of this. In addition there are a range of tariffs and variations of maximum permitted lengths of stay, depending on the location. This appears to create a more complex tariff system than the off-street car parks. On-street parking charges are more expensive than off-street car parks in Taunton.

[14] The County of Somerset Prohibition and Restriction of Stopping, Waiting, Loading and Unloading and On-street Parking Taunton Deane Order 2012 (Amendment No.8) Order 2015

[15] An exception to these hours is The Mount where hours of operation are Monday to Friday 0800 – 0900, 0930 – 1200, 1230 – 1800 and Saturdays 0800 – 1800

5.2 ON-STREET PARKING SURROUNDING THE TOWN CENTRE

RESIDENTS' PARKING

5.2.1. Parking on many residential streets surrounding Taunton town centre is restricted to permit holders during certain hours on weekdays and Saturdays, with 11 zones around the town[16]. A revised Resident Parking Policy was approved in 2017[17].

5.2.2. Residents can apply for parking permits to the County Council, subject to demonstrating resident status. The first Resident's Permit costs £60, the second costs £100. Motorcycle permits are available at the reduced rate of £17.50.

5.2.3. The following specialist categories of permits are also available by application to County Council:

- Annual Visitor's Permit;
- Visitor Scratch cards;
- Care Worker Parking Permits;
- Non-residential Landlords' Parking Permits;
- Loading Permits; and
- Business Parking Permits.

The process for applying for residential parking permits is currently under review by the County Council.

ENFORCEMENT

5.2.4. Somerset County Council is responsible for all parking Penalty Charge Notices served on highways in Somerset, in the County Hall and Shire Hall car parks. It is also responsible for the enforcement of parking restrictions in resident permit zones, at bus stops, in taxi ranks, on-street disabled parking areas and limited waiting areas.

COMMENTARY

5.2.5. The parking restrictions in force on streets surrounding the town centre limit the availability of free, all-day, on-street parking spaces which might otherwise be used by commuters and other long-stay visitors. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that long-stay weekday parking continues to take place on roads beyond the existing outer edge of the permit parking areas.

[16] http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s4901/Notification%20of%20Updated%20Policy%20on%20the%20Introduction%20of%20Residents%20Parking%20Schemes.pdf

[17] ibid

6 ANALYSIS – PARK AND RIDE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1. Taunton has two P&R sites, Taunton Gateway and Silk Mills, situated to the east and west of the town respectively. Parking at the sites is free of charge and there are staffed information centres and waiting facilities. Bus services are operated by Buses of Somerset (First Group) on contract to the County Council. County Council Cabinet Member approval was given on 24 November 2016 for a new contract to be awarded to the incumbent operator for a period of 1 year with an option to extend for a further 12 months[18].

6.1.2. The P&R sites are open Monday – Friday 0630 – 2000, with bus services operating on a 12-minute peak time frequency (from 0730-0930 and (1530-1800) and 15-minute off-peak frequency (0630-0730, 0930-1530 and 1800-1930).

6.1.3. The County Council made the decision in October 2017 to withdraw funding for Saturday P&R bus operations due to the relatively low usage compared with weekdays (see Table 24 below). The sites will close on Saturdays to general traffic from January 2018[19]. However, the current bus operator may be receptive to discussions regarding the potential to run services for large events occurring at the weekend. Similarly there may be potential for commercial bus services to call at the P&R sites on a Saturday; however, early discussions are still being made.

6.1.4. The P&R sites are not open for general use on Sundays or public holidays.

6.1.5. A range of tickets are available for bus passengers, detailed below in Table 22.

Table 22 – P&R bus service fares

Type of ticket	Fare	Validity
Adult return	£2.40	
Child day return	£1.40	(5 to 15 years old inclusive)
Weekly ticket	£10.00	
Monthly ticket	£33.00	Based on calendar months
Annual	£330.00	Requires application
Shopper special	£1.70	Valid for up to 5 people travelling in the same vehicle, who must travel together on the outward and return bus journey/ Available between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday
Group ticket	£6.00	Up to 5 people travelling together, valid on day of purchase only. Aimed at incentivising groups of people who lift share to the sites.
Flexirider	£12.00	12 single journeys valid within 1 calendar month of issue

6.1.6. Non P&R users can use the bus services as a town service. The two P&R facilities operate to provide a complete cross town service through Taunton; however for those doing this, town service fares apply, (£2.20 single or £3.30 return).

[18] http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=179
[19] At present the sites operate on Saturdays between 0700-1900, opening half an hour before/after the first / last bus service.

6.2 BENCHMARKING PARK AND RIDE

6.2.1. A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to compare P&R prices in Taunton and a selection of comparator towns. The outcome of this analysis is shown in Table 23 below. Taunton's P&R bus fares are at the lower end of the range charged in selected comparator locations, second only to Shrewsbury. In similarity to Taunton, none of the comparator locations charge for parking in P&R sites. Weekday frequencies are similar to other comparator locations, with some peak time services in Bristol and Truro operating at slightly higher frequencies (1 every 10 minutes). Sunday services do not operate in the comparator locations which are smaller than Taunton (Truro and Salisbury) nor in the larger settlement of Shrewsbury. Sunday services do operate in the larger comparator locations – Bath, Bristol and Exeter – although only from selected sites in Exeter & Bristol.

Table 23 – Park and rides in selected comparator locations

P&R Location	Bus day return	Weekday frequency	Sunday service?	Car park charges
Bath	£3.30	12-15 mins	Yes	No
Bristol	£4.00	10, 12 or 15 mins	Yes (2 of 3)	No
Exeter	£2.70	12 or 15 mins (depending on site)	Honiton Road service only	No
Salisbury	£3.00	12 mins peak time, 15 mins off-peak	No	No
Shrewsbury	£1.60	20 mins	No	
Taunton	**£2.40**	12 mins peak time, 15 mins off-peak	**No**	**No**
Truro	£2.00	10min peak time, 15 min off-peak	No	No

Note: Details correct at September 2017

6.3 PARK AND RIDE DEMAND

6.3.1. Table 16 below shows the average numbers of vehicles using each P&R on weekdays and Saturdays over the last 3 years. Silk Mills is the more popular site, accounting for 55% of weekday P&R use and 58% of Saturday use. There have been small increases in vehicles using Silk Mills on weekdays and Saturdays; in similarity, there has been a slight rise in average weekday use at Gateway but average weekend use has remained almost constant.

6.3.2. In terms of average occupancy, Silk Mills is 75% full on weekdays, falling to 32% on Saturdays. With its larger car park Gateway is 37% occupied on weekdays, reducing to 15% on Saturdays.

Table 24 – Total vehicles entering P&R sites, 2015, 2016 and 2017

	Silk Mills (600 spaces)			Gateway (1000 spaces)			Both sites		
	Vehicles			Passengers			Passengers		
	Weekday average	Saturday average	Daily average	Weekday average	Saturday average	Daily average	Weekday average	Saturday average	Daily average
2015	442	169	397	368	148	331	810	317	728
2016	449	173	403	371	145	333	820	318	736
2017	459	195	414	380	145	340	839	339	755

Source: County Council data. Excludes Bank Holidays

6.3.3. Table 25 details the number of passengers using the bus services from the P&R sites for 2015, 2016 and 2017. It indicates a steady rise in passengers over the last three years. This either indicates that average car occupancy has risen (from 1.4 people per vehicle to 1.7 people per vehicle) or that there has been a rise in numbers of passengers using the service but who do not park / board the bus at the sites.

Table 25 – Total daily average bus passengers from the P&R sites, 2015, 2016 and 2017

	Silk Mills (600 spaces)	Gateway (1000 spaces)	Both sites
	Passengers	Passengers	Passengers
2015[20]	-	-	1,042
2016	558	543	1,101
2017[21]	648	643	1,291

Source: County Council data. Average takes account of the fact that the number of operational days varies by month

6.3.4. Little information is known about users' end destinations or the motivations for using the sites and therefore it cannot be assumed that P&R users would automatically park in the town centre if the P&R did not exist. It is for example known that some people park and share or park and cycle from the two sites. For the purposes of this strategy it has been assumed that 75% of P&R users contribute to the overall demand for car parking in Taunton town centre.

[20] November 2014 to October 2015
[21] January 2017 to August 2017 inclusive

7 ANALYSIS – FUTURE CONTEXT AND KEY ISSUES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The strategy has considered the following issues which may have a bearing on car park supply, demand and customer experience of parking:

- Town growth and Garden Town status;
- Town centre developments;
- Major events;
- Future supply of town centre parking;
- Future supply of peripheral town parking;
- Planning changes to Borough Council car parks, in terms of the introduction of variable message signs (VMS) and pay on foot payment systems;
- Consideration of car park decking in Borough car parks; and
- Factors influencing parking demand.

7.2 TOWN GROWTH AND GARDEN TOWN STATUS

7.2.1. Taunton is expected to continue growing rapidly over the next 20 years. The adopted Core Strategy[22] makes provision for around 13,000 additional dwellings to be constructed in the town between 2011 and 2028, of which 1700-2000 are likely to be built in the town centre. Growth will continue after 2028, with further potential for 4,000-6,000 dwellings in the south west sector of Taunton, subject to further work to consider the physical infrastructure constraints and solutions[23]. This increase in residents and workforce will bring additional travel demands and place additional pressure on the transport network. Whilst the Councils can work in partnership with developers to provide new or improved transport infrastructure, or in technology and innovative solutions, there will also be a need to change the culture of travel in the town, and move away from a reliance on using the car for short-distance trips.

7.2.2. Taunton's Garden town status was announced by government in January 2017. Much of Taunton's growth will occur in three garden communities – Monkton Heathfield to the north-east, Comeytrowe to the south-west and Staplegrove to the north. The new garden communities are viewed to be a key means of achieving transformational growth and vision for Taunton. They are intended to be *'unique settings, coordinating landscape, wildlife, and leisure in a person friendly environment. Sustainable public transport links and improved footpaths and cycleways, will reduce car dependence and deliver wider physical and mental health benefits for residents.'*[24]

7.2.3. Regeneration of the town centre will support the Garden Town vision, providing a stronger and more vibrant core with a dynamic and diversified economy. The town centre is recognised as already having many positive attributes – compact, flat, riverside frontage and high quality green spaces, good retail offer, with a significant number of high quality independent shops and a farmers' market. However, at present the River Tone is underutilised; vehicles dominate key shopping streets; the cultural and leisure offer must be enhanced to attract more people into the town and support wider investment in Taunton.

7.3 TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS

7.3.1. As highlighted earlier, the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan, adopted in 2008, identified several sites for redevelopment, and outlined the anticipated requirements for car parking (a combination of reductions in some places and additional spaces in others) across the town centre sites. Changing circumstances since that time mean that some of these have not come forward for development. However, two major town centre developments in particular are in progress and which have implications for transport and parking. They are outlined below.

[22] https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/1745/adopted-core-strategy-2011-2028.pdf
[23] https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/1678/taunton-garden-town.pdf
[24] ibid

FIREPOOL

7.3.2. Development of the Firepool site, south of the rail station and north of Priory Bridge Road, is currently the subject of a planning application (reference 38/17/0150) for a substantial mixed-use development. The proposal includes convenience and non-food retail uses, food and drink establishments, office or hotel uses, assembly/leisure and non-residential institutions (D1) uses and up to 200 homes. The submitted proposals will provide up to 425 car parking spaces, excluding those reserved for occupiers and visitors of the new homes.

COAL ORCHARD

7.3.3. A mixed use development of retail, commercial, restaurant, residential uses and public realm works is proposed for the Coal Orchard site, between St. James' Street and the River Tone, with a planning application[25] currently being determined. The proposed development will result in 70 fewer parking spaces (reduced from 120 at present to approximately 49 post-construction). The construction is programmed to be completed by 2021.

7.4 TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

7.4.1. Following the summer consultation, the 18-month trial of the public space improvement project to make town centre streets more people-friendly will commence in early 2018. It includes the following key components:

- A section of East Street will be closed to all traffic except buses and cycles;
- Hammet Street will be closed to vehicles during the day; and
- St. James Street will be pedestrianised between North Street and Lower Middle Street.

The trial will amend routes available for drivers reaching certain car parks, such as Canon Street and Whirligig.

7.5 MAJOR EVENTS

7.5.1. Major events taking place in the town centre often generate significant numbers of vehicle journeys and lead to spikes in demand for parking above levels normally associated with a usual weekday. Examples of this include recent international matches held at the Somerset County Cricket Club, on the northern side of the town centre. Managing parking for events is usually best addressed as a part of a wider visitor and traffic management strategy prepared by event organisers in liaison with partners, implementing a range of measures to effectively deal with travel demand.

7.6 FUTURE SUPPLY OF TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING

7.6.1. The following changes in parking supply are envisaged in or adjacent to the town centre during the strategy period:

- A decrease in public spaces by 70 (Coal Orchard Redevelopment); and
- An increase in private retail spaces by 425 (Firepool).

In addition the Taunton Rail Station Upgrade major transport scheme includes a proposal to consolidate and increase the capacity of long-stay station parking into a multi-storey car park between the Northern Inner Distributor Road and the station buildings. The likely change in the quantity of spaces is not known at this stage.

7.7 FUTURE SUPPLY OF PARKING SPACES OUTSIDE THE TOWN CENTRE

7.7.1. Two additional locations are identified for parking to be provided on the edge of the town with journeys being completed by bus, as follows:

- Monkton Heathfield, on the A38 corridor from Bridgwater; and
- Comeytrowe, on the A38 corridor from Wellington.

[25] http://www2.tauntondeane.gov.uk/asp/webpages/plan/PlAppDets.asp?casefullref=38/16/0357

7.7.2. The Monkton Heathfield site is identified in Core Strategy Policies SP2 and SS1. Policy SS1 states that P&R will be delivered south of the A38, west of Walford Cross as part of the new sustainable neighbourhood. At Comeytrowe a submitted planning application[26] includes proposals for a 300-space park and bus facility adjacent to A38 Wellington Road.

7.7.3. Taken together these two additional sites are likely to substantially increase the available parking on the edge of the town.

7.8 PLANNED BOROUGH COUNCIL CAR PARK INVESTMENT

VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS (VMS)

7.8.1. Variable Message Signs (VMS) are digital signs which can display different messages to road users as need dictates. They can be helpful tools to enable drivers to find a car parking space and reduce traffic circulating as drivers look for a parking space. WSP has been assisting the Borough and County Councils to implement a strategy for VMS, to provide parking space availability information at key points around the town.

7.8.2. Nine car parks – seven town centre car parks, and the two P&R sites – will be included in the VMS scheme to provide information on the number of spaces available. As a result 10 VMS signs will be installed as follows:

- an outer ring on the approach roads from Minehead (A358), Wellington (A38), Ilminster (A358) and on the M5 J25 southbound and northbound slip roads; and
- an inner ring on East Reach, Priorswood Rod, Staplegrove Road and Wellington Road.

7.8.3. The investment is planned for spring 2018. Alongside the VMS signs there will also be an ancillary package of investment in static signs.

7.8.4. Real time counts of available spaces will be displayed on VMS from data obtained using car park counters from participating car parks, controlled by SCC's Urban Traffic Management and Control system. When operational the technology is anticipated to give much improved and continuous data insights into the use of these nine car parks.

PAY ON FOOT

7.8.5. The Borough Council are introducing pay on foot payment system at seven car parks:

- 5 of the Shopper tariff car parks – Canon Street, Castle Street, High Street, Wood Street and Orchard multi-storey; and
- 2 of the 4 commuter tariff car parks – Enfield and Tangier.

7.8.6. The investment comprises pay-on-foot payment machines, entry and exit barriers, vehicle detection technology (not automatic number plate recognition), ticket dispensers/readers deployed at the car parks, supported by a back office Parking Management System.

7.8.7. Some other physical works will be also be required to all car parks, in terms of renewing the white line delineation of spaces, kerbing and / or entrance and exit re-alignments to provide space for the barriers, and resurfacing as a result of any pay on foot works.

7.8.8. Car park occupancy counts for the seven car parks will be able to be displayed on the VMS, via an adaptor within the County Council's existing Urban Traffic Management and Control system. The investment is planned for spring 2018, along with the VMS.

7.9 CONSIDERATION OF CAR PARK DECKING

7.9.1. The Borough Council has identified four car parks – Canon Street, Enfield, Tangier and Wood Street – which may have the potential to have their capacity increased through the construction of a temporary car park deck. WSP carried out a feasibility study in March 2017 to understand the key constraints and issues with constructing a single car park deck. It has been provided in Appendix D.

7.9.2. Pedestrian access and impact on nearby buildings were the common identified issues. Form of structure, design life and durability were some of the design considerations that formed the

[26] Application reference 42/14/0069

recommendations of decking. Table 26 sets out the estimated additional spaces if a single deck was constructed.

Table 26 – Estimated potential car parking spaces from car deck

Car Park	Existing spaces	Estimated additional spaces	Estimated spaces lost	Estimated net total spaces	Estimated net increase in spaces	% increase
Canon Street	306	118	25	399	93	30%
Enfield	149	102	20	231	82	55%
Tangier	219	44	10	253	34	16%
Wood Street	197	80	20	257	60	30%

7.9.3. Detailed cost estimates have been set out in Appendix D, but it is estimated, that construction per single car park deck will be between £1million and £1.5million, depending on the form of construction.

7.10 FACTORS INFLUENCING FUTURE DEMAND FOR OFF-STREET CAR PARKING

7.10.1. Future demand for car parking – in the town centre, on-street outside the town centre and at the P&R sites – are influenced by a range of interdependent factors, a selection of which are outlined in Table 27.

Table 27 – Selected factors influencing parking demand

¡ Town centre economic performance and changing retail patterns ¡ Popularity of public transport and active travel relative to vehicle journeys ¡ Levels of traffic congestion ¡ Cost of parking (relative to other car parks, or other modes) ¡ Emerging technology, such as uber ¡ Availability and proximity of free on-street spaces	¡ Government and local policy, strategy and investment priorities ¡ Distance from key town centre destinations ¡ Extra travel demand generated by residents and workers of the new garden communities ¡ The potential longer-term implications arising from connected and autonomous vehicles

7.10.2. The Taunton Strategic Traffic Model (known as TSTM4) future year model (2031) has been used to understand how traffic volumes may change on different parts of the highway network under different scenarios. The 2031 future year model includes all the development envisaged by the Core Strategy. Analysis of the model indicates that traffic growth in town centre is forecast to increase by 10% between 2017 and 2031. Following this logic, if we were to increase the parking demand by 10%, then this would show that, based on existing surveys of spare capacity, there would is sufficient weekday parking supply across the town centre to meet demand in 2031. Demand on Saturdays in 2031 is forecast to exceed town centre supply (excluding the capacity which is available at P&R) during the late morning and early afternoon.

7.10.3. The IHT guidance document '*Parking Strategies and Management'* suggests that for retail parking, a degree of capacity should always be retained to allow for people circulating car parks looking for a space. It is suggested that this figure is somewhere between 10% and 15%. For the purposes of this strategy, this figure has been set at 10% as the VMS, guiding drivers to available spaces, are anticipated to reduce drivers circulating looking for spaces.

7.11 EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

7.11.1. Future changes in technology and mobility may radically change how and where parking is provided. There will be an acceleration towards cleaner, less-polluting types of vehicle (including electric vehicles) in the next few years, aided by national government support and manufacturer innovation. Government outlined a target to end the sale of conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040[27]. The Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill[28] currently includes provisions requiring motorway services and large petrol retailers to install charge points for electric cars. Government also wishes to make it easier for drivers to run electric vehicles by allowing them to locate charging facilities using satnavs and mobile apps. Parliament is currently discussing amendments to the Bill, with suggestions being made that electric vehicle charging points should be provided in all publicly-owned car parks, for example[29].

7.11.2. The *UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Emissions*[30] highlighted the role of existing actions for electric vehicle charging, including:

- Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme to help with installation costs for residential off-street charging;
- On-Street Residential Charging Scheme, giving access to grant funding and guidance on installation of charging infrastructure where there is no off-street parking available; and
- Workplace Charging Scheme for eligible businesses, charities and public sector organisations.

7.11.3. Advances are likely to continue in fields including connected vehicles (which communicate with their surroundings, such as via smartphones or the internet) and autonomous vehicles (which use technology to require less driver input for some or all of the journey) but their impacts on parking provision in the short term is less clear.

7.11.4. Further technology solutions are underway to help connect drivers with free spaces. As an example, Cardiff[31] is pioneering the introduction of sensors underneath each parking space to identify when and where parking spaces are available. This information is publicised via an app.

[27] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/633270/air-quality-plan-detail.pdf
[28] https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2017-2019/0112/18112.pdf
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