Working Together

2020
HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS




Parking Strategy
2022 - 2042

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

Contents

1.0 PREPARING THE PARKING STRATEGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

1.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARKING AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.0 CAR PARK STRATEGY OPTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Table 1 – parking strategy recommendation themes

2.2 PARKING STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

2.3 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING CAPACITY

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

2.3.1 INCREASE PARKING PROVISION IN SPECIFIC TOWNS AND VILLAGES

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

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

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

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

2.3.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.3.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

2.3.5 SAFEGUARD PARKING PROVISON FOR DEVELOPMENT SITES

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

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

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

2.3.51 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

This is a recommendation that has no associated costs

2.4 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: QUALITY OF CAR PARKS

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

2.4.1 CAR PARK IMPROVEMENT REGIME

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

2.4.2 CAR PARK SIGNAGE STRATEGY

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

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

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

2.4.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.3 INCREASE SAFETY PROVISION IN CAR PARKS

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.31 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

2.4.4 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS IN CAR PARKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

Advantages

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

Disadvantages

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

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

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

Advantages

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

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

Disadvantages

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

User's Value for Money

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

Enforcement

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

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

Revenue

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

2.4.51 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

Table 2 – Typical costs for a pay on exit system

2.5 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING CHARGES

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

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

2.5.1 ADJUSTING THE PARKING TARIFF

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

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

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

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

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

Table 3 - Altering Parking Tariffs Key Advantages / Disadvantages

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

Operational Impacts of Different Tariffs

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Adjusting Hours of Charging

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

More Flexible Parking Tariffs

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

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

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

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

2.5.2 BENCHMARKING WITH NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

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

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

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

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

Recommendations – Parking Charges

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.7 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

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

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

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

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

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

2.7.1 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.7.2 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

2.7.3 INTEGRATING CAR PARKS AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

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

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

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

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

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

2.7.31 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

2.7.4 PROMOTING ACTIVE TRAVEL TO REDUCE DEMAND ON PARKING

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

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

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

Babergh

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

Mid Suffolk

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

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

The benefit of these schemes would be:

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

2.7.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

2.7.5 CAR SHARING CLUB SCHEME

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

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

Babergh

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

Mid Suffolk

- Iliffe Way, Stowmarket
- Milton Road, Stowmarket

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

Recommendations – Sustainable Transport

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

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

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

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

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

2.8 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: LAND USE DEVELOPMENT

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

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

2.8.1 IDENTIFICATION OF NEW CAR PARK SITES IN KEY AREAS

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

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

Figure 7 – Example of new parking site

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

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

2.8.2 PROVISION OF COACH PARKING WITHIN CAR PARKS

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

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

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

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

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

The most suitable car parks for consideration include:

Babergh

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

Mid Suffolk

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

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

2.8.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

2.8.22 OVERNIGHT MOTORHOME PARKING

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

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

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

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

Babergh

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

Mid Suffolk

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

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

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

Figure 9 – Example of motorhome parking

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

Recommendations – Land use development

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

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

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

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

2.9 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARK TECHNOLOGY

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

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

2.9.1 TECHNOLOGY TO MANAGE DEMAND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.9.2 VEHICLE PROPULSION TECHNOLOGY

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

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

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

2.9.3 OPERATIONAL IMPACTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

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

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

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

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

Recommendations – Car park technology

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

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

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

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

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

2.10 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: CAR PARKING ENFORCEMENT

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

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

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

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

2.11 RECOMMENDATION COST AND TIMESCALE SUMMARY – OFF STREET PARKING

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

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

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

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

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

Table 4 – Recommendation costs and timescales

3.0 ON-STREET PARKING PROVISON IN BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK

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

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

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

Figure 10 – Example of on-street parking

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 11 – Example of on-street parking

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

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

4.0 ON-STREET PARKING STRATEGY OPTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Table 5 –On-street parking strategy themes

4.2 PARKING RECOMMENDATION: PARKING POLICY

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

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

4.2.1 INTRODUCTION OF RESIDENT PARKING SCHEMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Figure 12 – Example of on-street parking restriction signage

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

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

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

Babergh

- Sudbury
- Hadleigh
- Lavenham

Mid Suffolk

- Needham Market
- Stowmarket
- Eye

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

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

4.2.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

4.2.3 UNDERTAKE PARKING BEAT SURVEYS WITHIN VICINITY OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITES

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

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

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

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

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

4.3 PARKING INTEVENTION: PARKING IMPROVEMENT

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

There are two noticeable opportunities for improvement:

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

4.3.1 PREVENTING VERGE AND OPEN SPACE PARKING

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

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

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

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

Figure 14 – example of damage to grass verges

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

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

4.3.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

4.3.2 ON STREET WAITING RESTRICTION REVIEW PROGRAMME

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

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

4.3.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

4.4 PARKING INTEVENTION: SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION

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

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

4.4.1 INTRODUCTION OF CAR SHARING CLUB SCHEMES

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

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

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

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

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

4.4.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

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

4.4.2 UNDERTAKE UNMET TAXI DEMAND

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

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

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

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

4.4.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

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

4.4.3 INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL FOR ON-STREET EV CHARGING POINTS

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

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

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

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

4.4.31 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.5 PARKING INTEVENTION: PARKING OPERATIONS

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

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

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

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

4.5.1 RELOCATE DISABLED BAYS FROM ON-STREET TO OFF STREET

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

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

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

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

4.5.11 COSTS INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.5.21 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

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

4.5.3 ON-STREET PARKING SIGNAGE AND ROAD MARKING IMPROVEMENT REGIME

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

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

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

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

4.5.31 COST INVOLVED IN RECOMMENDATION

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

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

4.5.4 RESIDENTIAL CONCESSIONS FOR DROPPED KERBS AND DRIVEWAYS

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

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

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

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

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

4.5.41 COSTS INVOLVED IN THE RECOMMENDATION

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

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

4.6 RECOMMENDATION COST AND TIMESCALE SUMMARY – ON STREET PARKING

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

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

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

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

Table 6 – Recommendation costs and timescales

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