



# **Cheshire West and Chester Parking Strategy**

Action Plan and Impact Assessment - Northwich

August 2018

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Council

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Document Context

Mott MacDonald has been commissioned by Cheshire West & Chester Council (CWaC) to undertake the Cheshire West & Chester Parking Study. The primary aim of this study is to:

Carry out a review of all parking-related matters in Cheshire West and Chester to identify options and recommend future actions that are consistent with the corporate and sub-regional strategies and policies alongside future development and regeneration proposals.

Based on an extensive data collection and stakeholder consultation exercise, a Strategy Report was produced in 2016 which contained time-bound strategy recommendations for the following centres:

- Chester
- Ellesmere Port
- Northwich
- Winsford
- Neston and Parkgate
- Helsby
- Frodsham
- Rural areas (including Tarporley and Malpas etc).

The strategy was then subject to widespread public consultation, after which the recommendations were adopted by the Council, subject to pre-implementation Action Plans being prepared for each centre. These include Impact Assessments for any notable parking measures being proposed. The purpose of the Impact Assessments is to assess the potential economic, social, environmental and equality impacts of these measures, and to identify suitable mitigation where appropriate.

This document presents the Impact Assessment for Northwich.

## 1.2 Document Structure

This Impact Assessment document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 defines the specific measures proposed for Northwich in terms of on-street and off-street car parking tariff changes, potential maximum length of stay limits, and quality improvements at car parks
- Section 3 then describes the likely impact that these measures will have based on our analysis. This is separated into three sections:
  - Economic Impacts – mainly associated with tariff changes
  - Social and Environmental Impacts – mainly associated with potential displacement of car parking together with mitigating measures and the impact on air quality
  - Equality Analysis – mainly associated with varying impacts on protected user groups within the town
- Section 4 then provides a summary of the findings and recommendations from the Action Plan and presents a commentary on next step to implementation

## 2 Definition of Proposed Parking Measures

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide some definition to the parking measures proposed for Northwich by the Parking Strategy.

### 2.2 Impact Assessment Scope

The scope of the Impact Assessment for Northwich is to assess the impacts and any potential mitigation required for the following measures proposed by the Parking Strategy:

1. Revision of control methods for off-street and on-street parking tariffs to designate short and long stay parking provision to support the local economy and cater for retail, rail and leisure users
2. Implementation of a programme of car park quality review/improvement, including better compliance with standards associated with the provision of disabled bays

Further definition for each of these measures is provided in the following subsections.

It should be noted that the impact assessment does not take account of proposed special parking offers that may be introduced in addition to the core offer described here.

### 2.3 Parking Control Measures

#### 2.3.1 Scope of Parking Provision

The following table lists the publicly available car parks in Northwich which are covered by this Action Plan.

**Table 1: Publicly available car parking covered by Northwich Action Plan**

Ref	Name	Current Control	Capacity
PU45	Market	Free (4 hour max stay)	32
PU53	Victoria Club	Free (3 hour max stay)	98
PU52	Watermans	Free (14 hour max stay)	71
PU38	Barons Quay	Free (4 hour max stay)	423
PU46	Memorial Court	Free (4 hour max stay)	212
PU51	Verdin	Free (14 hour max stay)	26
PU54	Zion Street	Free (14 hour max stay)	17
PU49	Park St	Free (14 hour max stay)	28
PU48	Old Depot Site Leicester St	Free	195
PU40	Cumberland St	Free (14 hour max stay)	126

Source: MM

#### 2.3.2 Current Parking Usage

Length of stay surveys were carried out at all of these car parks except for Cumberland St (which was closed for resurfacing) between 8am and 6pm on a school term-time weekday and Saturday in September and October 2016.

Based on this data where available, the following tables show for a weekday and Saturday:

- The average car park occupancy across each survey period (where measured or calculated)

- The maximum car park occupancy achieved during the survey period
- The average length-of-stay per vehicle (where measured or calculated)
- Parking control recommendations

For Cumberland St, only the spot-check occupancy level is shown.

**Table 2: Existing parking usage and control recommendations – Weekday**

Ref	Name	Car Park Occupancy		Avg Length of Stay (hrs)	Parking Control Recommendation
		Avg	Max		
PU45	Market	99%	100%	4.3	Central car park requires control to prioritise short stay use and to deter, though not prevent, long stay use
PU53	Victoria Club	80%	92%	1.4	Central car park requires control to prioritise short stay use and to deter, though not prevent, long stay use
PU52	Watermans	89%	96%	5.2	Central car park requires control to prioritise short stay use and to deter, though not prevent, long stay use
PU38	Barons Quay	65%	79%	3.1	Edge-of-centre dedicated retail car park requires control to attract short stay and prevent long stay
PU46	Memorial Court	87%	94%	3.3	Edge-of-centre car park requires control to prioritise short stay but allowing some provision for long stay
PU51	Verdin	83%	92%	5.7	Edge-of-centre car park requires control to prioritise short stay but allowing some provision for long stay
PU40	Cumberland St	82%*	100%*	3.1	Cheap flat-rate tariff recommended to prioritise long-stay parking in this high-quality outer car park
PU48	Old Depot Site	36%	45%	6.9	Free parking controls recommended to be retained to attract more long-stay demand to this outer car park
PU54	Zion Street	60%	64%	5.1	Current controls appropriate for multi-purpose use serving Chester Road local centre
PU49	Park St	99%	100%	4.3	Current controls appropriate for multi-purpose use serving Chester Road local centre

Source: Survey 2016 \*Occupancies calculated from spot check survey

**Table 3: Existing parking usage and control recommendations – Saturday**

Ref	Name	Car Park Occupancy		Avg Length of Stay (hrs)	Parking Control Recommendation
		Avg	Max		
PU45	Market	67%	71%	4.0	As for weekday
PU53	Victoria Club	87%	93%	1.6	As for weekday
PU52	Watermans	88%	97%	3.5	As for weekday
PU38	Barons Quay	64%	74%	3.2	As for weekday
PU46	Memorial Court	69%	78%	3.2	As for weekday
PU51	Verdin	80%	92%	4.5	As for weekday
PU40	Cumberland St	86%*	100%*	3.2	As for weekday
PU48	Old Depot Site	6%	12%	3.2	As for weekday
PU54	Zion Street	23%	35%	2.2	As for weekday
PU49	Park St	56%	64%	4.9	As for weekday

Source: Survey 2016 \*Occupancies calculated from spot check survey

This data shows that all central car parks, and most edge-of-centre car parks, are used to capacity at some point on a weekday and to near effective capacity during a Saturday. This level of use will be suppressing demand for these car parks and resulting in increased parking search traffic within the town centre. At the same time, the average stay length in most of these central car parks suggests that part of the reason for the parking congestion is a higher than desirable level of long stay parking, while separate data shows that more long-stay-suitable outlying car parks like the Old Depot Site were under-utilised at the time of the survey.

Controls are therefore required at the central and edge-of-centre car parks to release more capacity for short-stay retail-oriented use by displacing some of the long-stay commuter-oriented users to more outlying car parks. This could be achieved by the introduction of new, or greater, enforcement of existing length-of-stay restrictions, but it is not considered desirable to displace all long-stay parking from the centre as there is insufficient outlying car park capacity to accommodate it, and so could result in unwanted and disproportionate displacement effects on residential streets. It is therefore recommended instead that tariffs are introduced in most cases, which prioritise short-stay parking and which discourage, but not prevent, long-stay parking. Such measures should result in a manageable displacement of long-stay parking to outlying car parks and a commensurate increase in central short-stay parking availability.

However, it is noted that there will be exceptions to this approach at some car parks for the following reasons:

- The Market car park will be free and restricted to the use of permit and disabled badge holders only between 8am to 5pm on market days, i.e. on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays<sup>1</sup>
- A four hour length of stay limit will continue to apply at Barons Quay car park and no charges will apply. This takes account of the current lease arrangements and will attract short-stay parking and prevent long stay parking at this dedicated retail-related facility
- Memorial Court car park serves the Brio leisure facility in addition to town centre uses, so three hours of free parking will be granted for members and appropriate concessions made available for other users

The above recommendations can therefore be summarised as the following aims to be met by the proposed parking control changes:

- To create greater user differentiation between car park types on a weekday and Saturday
- To better manage demand at limited car parking facilities and allocate the most appropriate parking locations to the most appropriate user groups.

### 2.3.3 Proposed Parking Controls and Usage

In order to address the above recommendations and aims, the following chart shows the tariffs proposed for the above car parks, where they are considered necessary. The same tariffs are proposed to suit the needs of both a weekday and a Saturday, and to aid user clarity.

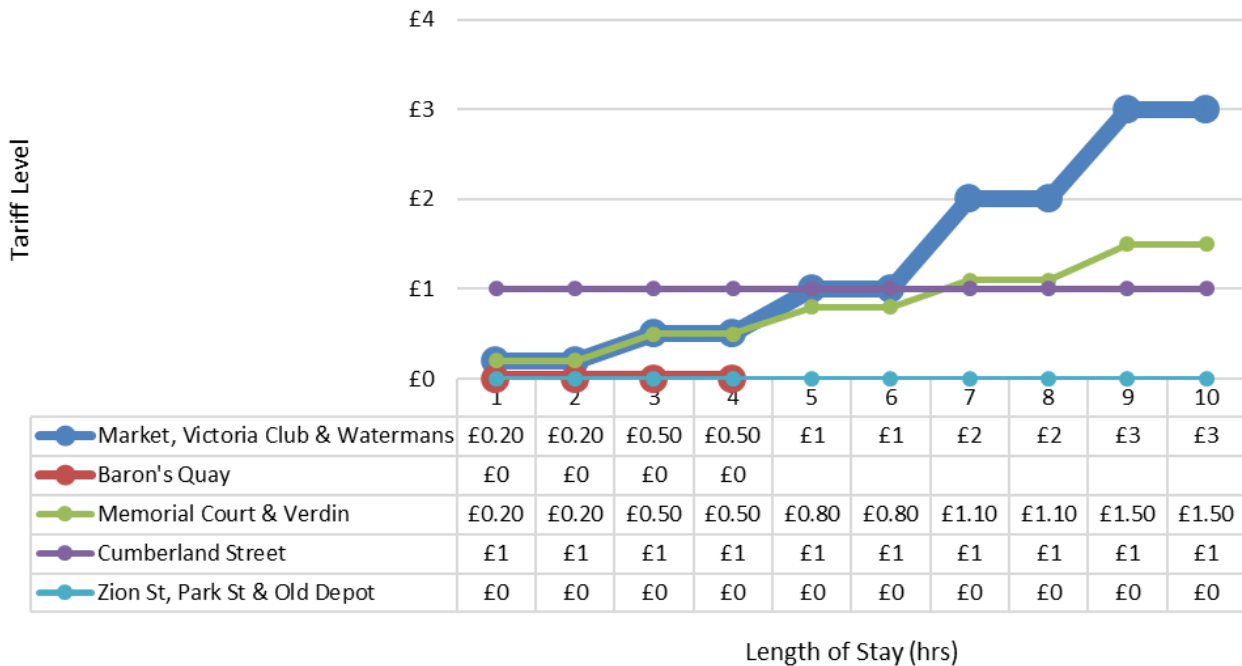
All of the proposed tariffs should be kept under continuous review to ensure that they deliver (and continue to deliver) the required strategy objectives. Discussions will also need to be had with third party owners/operators, where relevant, in order to implement new controls.

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<sup>1</sup> A possible adjustment to this arrangement could be considered so that, on market days, exclusive parking for permit holders and blue badge holders would be available up to 10am, after which general public parking would be permitted. This would, however, require further consultation before forming part of the Action Plan.



**Figure 1: Proposed tariff structures – Weekdays and Saturday**



Source: MM

The rationale for each proposed parking control method is as described in the following table.

**Table 4: Proposed parking control rationale**

Car Park	Control Type	Rationale
Market, Victoria Club and Watermans	Short-stay tariff (with permit exemptions for Market)	To prioritise short-stay and deter long-stay in these central retail car parks
Barons Quay	Free with 4-hour max stay restriction	To encourage short-stay demand at this dedicated retail-related car park and to prevent long-stay
Memorial Court and Verdin	Short-to-medium stay tariff (with concessions for Memorial Court)	To prioritise short-stay and deter long-stay in these edge-of-centre retail car parks
Cumberland St	Long-stay flat-rate tariff	To encourage long-stay parking in this outlying car park
Old Depot Site	Free	To attract long-stay parking to this outer car park
Zion St and Park St	Free	To continue serving the multi-purpose needs of this local retail area

Source: MM

These proposed parking controls will help to release more short-stay capacity in central car parks while encouraging long-stay parking in more outlying car parks. Blue badge holders can park for free for up to four hours in Pay and Display car parks providing they are displaying a valid blue badge. In larger Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) controlled car parks, Cheshire West and Chester residents who register for a micro-chipped blue badge will be entitled to four hours of free parking, in line with procedures already in place in Chester.

The predicted effect of these proposed parking controls on the usage of each parking area in Northwich is summarised for a weekday and Saturday in the following two tables. A description of the methodology applied to derive these results is attached in Appendix A.

**Table 5: Predicted Northwich parking usage and change from existing – Weekday**

Ref	Name	Avg Occupancy		Max Occupancy		Avg Length of Stay (hrs)	
		Predicted	Abs Change	Predicted	Abs Change	Predicted	% Change
PU45	Market*	65%	-34%	66%	-34%	3.5	-20%
PU53	Victoria Club	76%	-3%	88%	-4%	1.4	0%
PU52	Watermans	56%	-33%	60%	-35%	4.3	-17%
PU38	Barons Quay	31%	-34%	44%	-35%	1.8	-41%
PU46	Memorial Court	70%	-17%	74%	-20%	2.9	-11%
PU51	Verdin	53%	-30%	61%	-31%	4.8	-16%
PU40	Cumberland St	59%	-23%	71%	-29%	3.1	-1%
PU48	Old Depot Site	36%	0%	45%	0%	6.9	0%
PU54	Zion Street	36%	0%	35%	0%	2.8	0%
PU49	Park St	60%	0%	64%	0%	5.1	0%

Source: MM calculation \*Non-market day results shown for Market. Market day results would show no changes as no tariff.

**Table 6: Predicted Northwich parking usage and change from existing – Saturday**

Ref	Name	Avg Occupancy		Max Occupancy		Avg Length of Stay (hrs)	
		Predicted	Abs Change	Predicted	Abs Change	Predicted	% Change
PU45	Market*	67%	0%	71%	0%	4.0	0%
PU53	Victoria Club	83%	-4%	88%	-5%	1.6	-1%
PU52	Watermans	69%	-18%	76%	-21%	3.1	-10%
PU38	Barons Quay	31%	-32%	41%	-33%	1.9	-39%
PU46	Memorial Court	58%	-10%	68%	-10%	3.0	-7%
PU51	Verdin	56%	-24%	68%	-24%	3.9	-13%
PU40	Cumberland St	61%	-25%	70%	-30%	3.2	-1%
PU48	Old Depot Site	6%	0%	12%	0%	3.2	0%
PU54	Zion Street	23%	0%	35%	0%	2.2	0%
PU49	Park St	56%	0%	64%	0%	4.9	0%

Source: MM calculation \*Market day results shown for the Market car park, so no changes as no tariff on this day.

Due to the enhanced level of parking control being put forward by the measures noted above, all car parks show an expected decrease in average and maximum occupancy rates. However, the data also predicts a drop in the average length of stay for each car park, which suggests that the measures would help to reduce the current suppression of short-stay retail-related parking and increase the turnover of parking in the core retail area. It is equally expected that some of the above predicted occupancies would drop less than indicated as short-stay parking which is currently suppressed or displaced by long-stay parking would be released back into these car parks. This is a response that the above analysis is not able to predict (see Appendix A), but is picked up to a degree in the displacement impact analysis presented below in the next section.

However, given that it is likely to take some time for the parking response to these measures to stabilise and settle, the usage of each car park will be monitored in the year after implementation of the changes, so that adjustments can be made to the parking controls if required to achieve the aims of the strategy. In particular, if the above tariffs do not sufficiently reduce long-stay parking in key car parks or, conversely, if remote long-stay parking displacement impacts are too significant, then the long-stay tariff level can be reviewed.

Overall, it is concluded that the proposed parking control changes should achieve the above aims of the Parking Strategy:

1. To create greater user differentiation between car park types on a weekday and Saturday
2. To better manage demand at limited car parking facilities and allocate the most appropriate parking locations to the most appropriate user groups.

The parking controls are proposed to be introduced in the second half of 2018.

The potential economic, social, environmental and equality impacts of these changes are considered in Section 3 of this document.

## 2.4 Car Park Quality Improvements

One element of the Cheshire West and Chester Parking Strategy is to improve the quality of car parks across the borough to improve the experience for users and make them feel safer, and therefore increase usage by appropriate user groups. For non-CWaC owned car parks, discussions will need to be had with owners to negotiate regarding quality improvements, as with the introduction of restrictions and tariffs. This will also improve the perception of the town centres, particularly for visitors and encourage visitors to return. This section sets out the specific improvements which should be undertaken at each relevant car park in Northwich. For each car park, a prioritised list of improvements is provided, with the highest priority improvement listed first. It is proposed that these improvements will start in October 2018, subject to discussions with third-party owners/operators of car parks.

All car parks would benefit from accurate signage on roads into Northwich, displaying capacity of car parks and the intended user (shopper, long stay etc). All car parks will require updated internal signage to communicate information on restrictions and tariffs.

Secondly, it is recommended that upgraded payment infrastructure is installed in all appropriate car parks as part of the programme of car park quality improvements. Some car parks in Chester have already seen the new ANPR-based (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) barriered pay on foot system implemented, and the same infrastructure should be rolled out in Northwich as well.

Finally, the disabled provision in all car parks requires review according to latest guidance on volume and sizes. This will ensure that all disabled bays are fully accessible and compliant with national guidance.

Next to each car park is a score to indicate the priority of carrying out quality improvements at car parks. Poor quality car parks are given a high score and should be improved sooner than better quality car parks.

It should be noted that the surveys on which the following recommendations are based were undertaken in Spring 2016.

### 2.4.1 Old Depot Site, Leicester St – High (Red)

Old Depot Site is currently a very low quality car park. To raise it to a high standard, it urgently requires the following improvements:

1. Surfacing, bay markings and layout
2. Internal signage
3. CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)

### 2.4.2 Zion Street – Medium (Amber)

Zion Street is an average quality car park. To raise it to a high standard, the following improvements are recommended:

1. Lighting
2. CCTV (Closed Circuit Television)

3. Internal signage
4. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.3 Central Palace Drive – Medium (Amber)**

Central Palace Drive is a good quality car park. However, there is scope for improvements in the following aspects:

1. Lighting
2. CCTV
3. Internal signage
4. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.4 Park Street – Medium (Amber)**

Park Street car park is of average quality. The following improvements, in prioritised order, are recommended:

1. Lighting
2. CCTV
3. Internal signage
4. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.5 Verdin – Medium (Amber)**

Verdin car park is of average quality. The following improvements, in prioritised order, are recommended:

1. Lighting
2. Internal signage
3. CCTV
4. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.6 Watermans – Medium (Amber)**

Watermans car park is of average quality. The following improvements, in prioritised order, are recommended:

1. Lighting
2. Internal signage
3. CCTV
4. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.7 Market – Low (Green)**

The following improvements have been identified as priorities at Market car park:

1. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.8 Memorial Hall – Low (Green)**

The following improvements have been identified as priorities at Health Centre:

1. Surfacing, bay markings and layout

#### **2.4.9 Cumberland Street – None**

Cumberland Street car park has recently been refurbished to a high standard, therefore no improvements are currently required for it, aside from the inclusion of payment machines and infrastructure associated with the proposed new charging regime.

### **2.5 Future Aspirations**

Cheshire West and Chester Council is mindful of the need to provide sufficient long and short stay parking in Northwich town centre to meet the needs of workers, retail and leisure users. A large proportion of car parking in Northwich town centre is privately owned and operated, generally by retail units, usage of which is restricted to customers. The Council has increased its control and ownership of public parking stock in Northwich through the opening of Barons Quay, but more capacity, particularly for long stay parking, may still be required. To cater for this, it may be appropriate to explore the possibility of decking existing long stay car parks in order to increase capacity without acquiring additional land and at a relatively low cost.

The Old Depot Site car park is an informal and temporary car park at present. The good location of this car park close to the Barons Quay development makes it a suitable site for investing in to make into a permanent car park, with higher capacity than at present through decking or the potential future building of a multi storey facility.

## 3 Parking Measures Impact Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to present an assessment of the potential impacts of the parking measures proposed for Northwich and to identify appropriate mitigation where required.

### 3.2 Economic Impact Assessment

It is often a concern of town centre retailers that any perceived increase in town centre parking restrictions will have a negative impact on trade. The purpose of this economic impact assessment section is to identify whether such concerns are valid for the above proposed parking measures and, if so, what mitigation measures are needed.

#### 3.2.1 Rationale for Measures

Firstly, it is important to note that the rationale behind the introduction of the measures proposed by the Parking Strategy for Northwich is to better manage demand to suit the particular demands of the town centre. A brief summary of the rationale behind the measures is as follows:

**Table 7: Summary of parking measure rationale**

Measure	Rationale	Intended Impact on Trade
Off-street car park tariffs	To encourage short-stay shopper-type parking in retail related car parks and longer-stay commuter-type parking in car parks appropriate for this use	Positive
Car park quality improvements	To increase attractiveness of existing car park stock	Positive

Source: MM

When implemented in accordance with the outcome of the assessments in this section, these measures should therefore have a positive impact on the functioning of the town centre, and hence on trade.

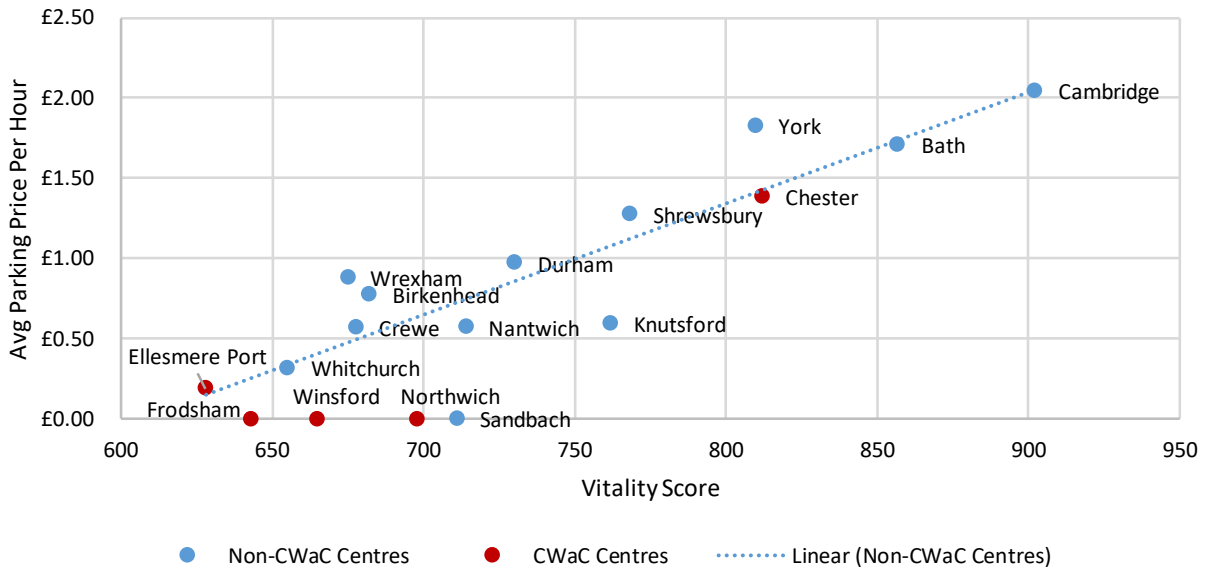
#### 3.2.2 Proportionality of Measures

Current research suggests no evidence of a detailed quantifiable relationship between parking charges and footfall in a retail centre, as footfall is dependent on a much larger range of factors than just parking. It is not therefore possible to directly equate the above tariff change proposals to any potential impact on footfall in Northwich.

However, empirical evidence does suggest that retail centres which are more attractive to shoppers and visitors are more likely to require higher parking charges to manage demand than centres which are less attractive. The following chart confirms this by comparing, for a range of centres comparable to CWaC centres, average parking prices per hour (measured across the first six hours) and retail centre vitality scores. The vitality scores are as issued by Harper Dennis Hobbs – a retail and commercial retail estate consultancy – and apply to 1,000 retail centres in the UK in 2017, taking into account a large range of factors that reflect economic health, including retail spend, population catchment size, retail vacancy rates etc. The average parking prices are calculated from Parkopedia and the CWaC Council websites.

Full data tables for the data presented in Figure 2 and **Error! Reference source not found.** can be found in Appendix **Error! Reference source not found.**

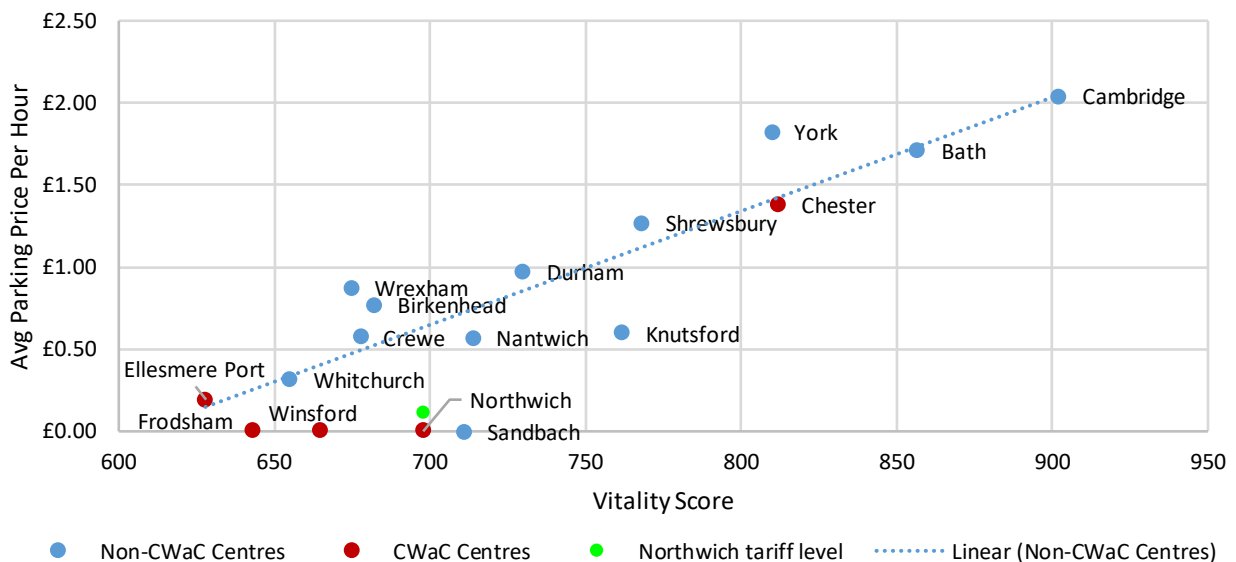
**Figure 2: Average parking price vs retail centre vitality score**



Source: Data from Parkopedia and Harper Dennis Hobbs - See Appendix C for the data table on which the latter is based

Following the above proposed off-street car park tariff changes, the average price per hour (measured across the first six hours) for all car parks in Northwich is predicted to be £0.12. The following chart shows the vitality score (in green) which this tariff rate would correspond to according to the average trendline.

**Figure 3: Average parking price vs retail centre vitality score – Northwich revised tariff**



Source: Data from Parkopedia and Harper Dennis Hobbs - See Appendix C for the data table on which the latter is based

This chart shows that the proposed tariff levels will move Northwich a little closer to the charging level which its vitality score could support, but still well below it. For clarity, the average hourly rate measured across the charged car parks only (i.e. excluding those that are proposed to be free-of-charge) would be £0.20, which is still well below the average charge that might be expected given the town's estimated vitality.

### 3.2.3 Assessment Conclusion

Based on a review of the rationale behind the measures proposed by the Parking Strategy for Northwich, which is to positively impact the economy of the town, and a favourable comparison of the proposed average parking tariff level against the town's level of economic vitality, it is concluded that the proposed parking measures should not have a negative economic impact on the town, and should instead generate positive effects.

## 3.3 Social and Environmental Impact Assessment

The primary social and environmental impacts associated with the changes proposed for parking in Northwich are related to any displacement effects as a result of changes, particularly in relation to tariffs. The following sub-sections take each car park in turn and note the potential impacts of any traffic displaced on adjacent streets and car parks. It assesses, in each case, the severity of any impact and also notes any potential mitigation measures that may help to reduce the severity of this. It should be noted that the analysis does not take into account the impact of specifically targeted parking offers and promotions to be rolled out in the near future.

### 3.3.1 Market

On non-market weekdays (i.e. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday), displacement is forecast to be up to 12 vehicles at any one time of the day, with these predominantly being long stay. These users can displace to the long stay car parks on the periphery of the town centre, such as Cumberland Street and Old Depot Site, while modest additional parking capacity also exists a little further out at Leicester Street and Hadfield Street car parks.

On market days, including Saturday, there should be no displacement as conditions will remain as existing.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to 12 vehicles at any one time

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Can be absorbed into other car parks; none required

### 3.3.2 Victoria Club

The existing three hour maximum stay period at Victoria Club means that most vehicles do not currently stay beyond three hours. Therefore, displacement of long stay users is not an issue. The implementation of charges leads to a forecast displacement of up to four vehicles at any one time on a weekday and up to five on a Saturday. This level of displacement is negligible and can easily be absorbed by other car parks.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to five vehicles at any one time

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Can be absorbed into other car parks; none required

### 3.3.3 Watermans

Displacement at Watermans will predominantly be of long stay users following the implementation of tariffs. The number of displaced vehicles is forecast to be 25 on a weekday and 15 on a Saturday. On a weekday, these are likely to be commuters who arrive before 10am, while displacement on a Saturday is spread evenly across the day. Some of these displaced long stay users will be able to move to peripheral long stay car parks such as Cumberland St and Old Depot site, while modest additional parking capacity also exists a little further out at Leicester Street and Hadfield Street car parks. However, these car parks have limited capacity and Cumberland Street already experiences high demand. There is some risk that vehicles will displace on to roads such as Church Road, which is residential and largely unrestricted, or Old Warrington Road, which has yellow lines and grass verges which are sometimes used for parking. These roads should be monitored for problems generated by displaced vehicles.



**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to 25 vehicles at any one time

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Can largely be absorbed into other car parks. Nearby residential and unrestricted streets should be monitored to assess whether further restrictions are required on these and/or additional long-stay off-street capacity introduced

### 3.3.4 Barons Quay

Barons Quay will prioritise short-stay retail and leisure-related parking by limiting stays to a maximum of four hours. Because longer stay parking was permitted when the surveys were undertaken, it is predicted that the length of stay restriction will result in the displacement of up to 158 vehicles at any one time on a weekday and 150 vehicles on a Saturday. As these vehicles will not be displaced by price but by restriction, it is expected that a number of them will be absorbed into nearby car parks where paid long-stay capacity is available, while the remainder can potentially be accommodated in cheaper or free outlying long-stay car parks, such as Cumberland Street and the Old Depot Site, as well as parking further afield at Leicester Street and Hadfield Street. However, there is also a risk that some of this parking will displace onto residential streets, so it will be necessary to monitor how users respond to the changes to determine whether other car parking capacity needs to be found and/or whether new on-street restrictions are needed.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to 158 vehicles at any one time

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Can largely be absorbed into other car parks. Nearby residential and unrestricted streets should be monitored to assess whether further restrictions are required on these and/or additional long-stay off-street capacity introduced

### 3.3.5 Memorial Court

Memorial Court will be a short to medium stay car park, with concessions to be made for users of the leisure centre. On a weekday, displacement is forecast to be up to 43 vehicles at any one time of the day, and up to 24 vehicles on a Saturday. For both days, a mixture of short, medium and long stay users are forecast to be displaced. Short-medium stay users can displace to Barons Quay which will have sufficient spare capacity available and is free for four hours.

There is potential for some of the displaced parking from Memorial Court to park on-street on nearby Percy Street. This location is already under consideration for a Residents Parking Zone and further consideration is recommended in light of the proposed changes recommended here.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to 43 vehicles at any one time

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Can largely be absorbed into other car parks. Residential Parking Zone to be considered in Percy Street to accompany the changes. Other nearby residential and unrestricted streets should be monitored to assess whether further restrictions are required on these

### 3.3.6 Verdin

Verdin will be designated as a short-medium stay car park. The number of vehicles forecast to be displaced from the car park is up to eight at any one time on a weekday, and up to 7 on a Saturday. These are predominantly long stay users due to higher tariffs to discourage long stay, but this level of displacement is negligible and can easily be absorbed by other car parks.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to eight vehicles

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Minimal impact, none required

### 3.3.7 Cumberland Street

Cumberland Street will continue to be a long stay car park, but with a cheap flat-rate tariff to prioritise this type of parking. The analysis predicts a displacement of up to 40 vehicles at any one time on a weekday, and 43 on a Saturday, with about half of these being short-stay. It is expected that many of these can be accommodated within the Barons Quay car park which will be free for up to 4 hours, but there is also a risk that some of this parking will displace onto residential streets. It will therefore be necessary to monitor how users respond to the changes to determine whether other car parking capacity needs to be found and/or whether new on-street restrictions are needed.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** Up to 43 vehicles at any one time

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Can largely be absorbed into other car parks. Nearby residential and unrestricted streets should be monitored to assess whether further restrictions are required on these and/or additional long-stay off-street capacity introduced

### 3.3.8 Old Depot Site

Old Depot Site will continue to be a free car park, serving the long stay market. Currently it has a maximum occupancy rate of 45 per cent on a weekday and 12 per cent on a Saturday, meaning a minimum of 105 spaces are available throughout the day. Consequently, it is expected to absorb much of the long stay demand displaced from central car parks.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** None

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Not applicable

### 3.3.9 Zion Street and Park Street

These car parks will not have any restrictions or charges implemented, therefore no displacement is expected to arise as a result.

**Potential Daytime Displacement:** None

**Potential Mitigation Measure:** Not applicable

### 3.3.10 Summary

**Table 8: Summary of Impacts**

Car Park	Summary
Market	Low level of displacement, can be absorbed into other car parks
Victoria Club	Negligible level of displacement
Watermans	Low level of displacement, can be absorbed into other car parks
Barons Quay	High level of displacement, impacts will require monitoring
Memorial Court	Moderate displacement, impacts will require monitoring
Verdin	Low level of displacement, can be absorbed into other car parks
Cumberland St	Moderate displacement, impacts will require monitoring
Old Depot Site	No displacement
Zion St and Park St	No displacement

The implementation of tariffs and maximum stay restrictions in Northwich will likely lead to some displacement, due to all car parks having new maximum stay and/or tariff controls implemented. Long stay users may displace on to surrounding residential streets to avoid tariffs. The impact on residential streets should therefore be monitored over time to ascertain whether restrictions such as resident permit schemes are required to manage parking demand. Existing parking restrictions should be enforced fully to ensure the

desired outcomes of implementing charges and maximum stay restrictions are realised and to prevent vehicles from parking in dangerous places.

### 3.4 Equality Analysis

The third and final set of potential impacts that will be reviewed in light of the proposed changes associated with the Cheshire West and Chester Parking Strategy are those linked to equality and diversity. As a local authority and public organisation, Cheshire West and Chester Council has a duty to evaluate the impact of each of its schemes on protected groups. It does this by completing an Equality Analysis to capture the level of impact under a number of strategic headings.

This assessment has been completed for the Northwich components of the Parking Strategy and is appended to this document as Appendix B. The following sub-sections summarise each of the main findings in cases where there is considered to be a non-neutral impact on equality and diversity.

#### 3.4.1 Race and Ethnicity

There is a potential barrier to using parking services for those whose first language is not English. The strategy will need to consider prioritised options for communication to contain this impact.

**Impact:** Low Negative

#### 3.4.2 People with Disabilities

The parking action plan includes a programme of car park quality improvements, including ensuring compliance with standards for the number and size of disabled parking bays. Parking in Pay and Display car parks will remain free for blue badge holders, and free for Cheshire West and Chester residents who register for a micro-chipped blue badge in ANPR-controlled car parks.

**Impact:** Medium Positive

#### 3.4.3 Carers

The parking action plan includes a programme of car park quality improvements, including ensuring compliance with standards for the number and size of disabled parking bays. This could potentially benefit the carers of disabled people.

**Impact:** Low positive

#### 3.4.4 Summary

To summarise, the equality analysis has awarded the scheme a '**Low Impact**' score and recommends a process of continuous monitoring with outcomes to be reviewed in three years.

## 4 Findings, Recommendations and Next Steps

### 4.1 Findings

From the analysis undertaken in this Action Plan for Northwich with respect to the Cheshire West and Chester Parking Strategy, it is concluded that the predicted impacts of the strategy will be mainly positive for the town centre and that, where potentially negative, can be resolved through appropriate monitoring and mitigation. The impact assessment results are summarised as follows:

#### 4.1.1 Economic Impacts

Based on a review of the rationale behind the measures proposed by the Parking Strategy for Northwich, which is to positively impact the economy of Northwich, and a favourable comparison of the proposed average parking tariff level against the town's level of economic vitality, it is concluded that the proposed parking measures will not have a negative economic impact on the town, and should instead generate positive effects.

#### 4.1.2 Social and Environmental Impacts

The primary impacts are due to the potential for displaced demand from existing off and on-street parking locations as a result of the changes to tariffs. Because car parking provision in Northwich is to change from having some maximum stay restrictions to a mixture of maximum stay restrictions and/or charges, it is inevitable that there will be some displacement of parking from one location to another.

In most cases this will serve to redistribute parking to ensure that it occurs in the most appropriate locations for the specific user groups. However, monitoring of surrounding residential streets will be needed to determine whether further restrictions, such as the introduction of residential parking zones, are required to address parking displacement impacts.

#### 4.1.3 Equality Analysis

The equality analysis has awarded the scheme a 'Low Impact' score and recommends a process of continuous monitoring with outcomes to be reviewed in three years.

### 4.2 Recommendations

Based on an extensive data collection and stakeholder consultation exercise, a Strategy Report was produced in 2016 which contained time-bound strategy recommendations for Northwich. These include:

- Designate and enforce short and long stay parking zones, using maximum stay restrictions and charges
- Implement new unified pricing strategy and restrictions for short and long stay parking to improve management – generated revenue could be used for quality enhancement and enforcement
- Clarify restrictions at Market car park and re-locate market traders' vehicles

These are proposed in order to meet the following aims:

1. To create greater user differentiation between car park types on a weekday and Saturday
2. To better manage demand at limited car parking facilities and allocate the most appropriate parking locations to the most appropriate user groups.

It is considered that the recommendations on tariffs and quality will achieve these aims without significant negative impact under the headings described above. As such the recommendations are upheld following this analysis.

### 4.3 Next Steps

Following the publication of this Action Plan for Northwich, the following programme of measures is recommended:

- Commencement of implementation of Car Park Improvement Programme: start in October 2018
- TRO process for changes to tariffs/introduction of tariffs/length of stay restrictions: August – October 2018
- Introduction of changes to tariffs/introduction of tariffs/length of stay restrictions: October 2018

# Appendices

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# A. Tariff Change Impact Prediction Methodology

## A.1 Introduction

The purpose of this appendix section is to summarise how the demand response to tariff changes in off-street car parks has been calculated.

## A.2 Demand Elasticities

Following the principle of supply and demand in a competitive environment, parking demand is generally inversely related to parking price. So if price goes up, demand is likely to go down, and vice versa.

The scale of this response, however, depends on the 'elasticity' level of the demand. If demand is highly elastic to change, then large responses can be seen from small changes in price. But if it is relatively inelastic, then lower response levels would be expected.

The degree of elasticity of the parking market for any particular car park depends on a range of factors, including the location and appeal of the car park, and the degree of competition, but researchers have derived average values based on empirical evidence. The average values employed for this analysis are taken from the 2010 Transport Research Laboratory document, 'Parking Measures and Policies Research Review', and are as follows:

**Table 9: Parking demand elasticities employed**

Parking Duration	Elasticity Value
0-2 hours:	-0.1
2-4 hours:	-0.3
4-7 hours:	-0.5
7+ hours:	-0.9

Source: Parking Measures and Policies Research Review, TRL, 2010

In practice, what these elasticities mean is that, for users who park for up to two hours, a 10 per cent parking charge increase would result in a one per cent drop in demand, while the same increase for users who park over seven hours would result in a 9 drop in demand. 10 per cent decreases in the price would yield the opposite result.

## A.3 Application to Charged Car Parks

For car parks where there is already charging, the application of the above elasticities is straightforward. So, for example, if the price for parking up to two hours increases by 10 per cent, demand for this duration would fall by one per cent, while if it increased by the same amount for stays of over seven hours, demand for this duration would fall by 9 per cent. 10 per cent decreases in the price would yield the opposite result.

## A.4 Application to Non-Charged Car Parks

For car parks where there is currently no charge, the application of the above elasticities is less straightforward, as the introduction of a charge cannot be represented as a percentage change of the existing situation. Instead, a market-value parking-charge-per-hour is estimated for the car park from which a drop to zero would represent a 100 per cent price drop and a demand increase as per the above elasticity values. The demand response for the reverse situation of increasing the tariff *from* zero is then calculated pro-rata according to what proportion of the estimated market-value price the increase represents.

For example, if a car park which is currently free is estimated to have a potential market value of 50p per hour, then the introduction of a 50p per hour charge would equate to a 100 per cent price increase and therefore a decrease in demand according to the above elasticities as follows:

- 0-2 hours: -10%
- 2-4 hours: -30%
- 4-7 hours: -50%
- 7+ hours: -90%

The introduction of tariffs which are lower or higher than the estimated market value would then generate a pro-rata demand response. For example, the introduction of a 25p per hour charge would generate half the response level, as follows:

- 0-2 hours: -5%
- 2-4 hours: -15%
- 4-7 hours: -25%
- 7+ hours: -45%

## A.5 Limitations

It should be noted that this is a simplified method of predicting demand responses to tariff changes in individual car parks, in the absence of any current evidence that would allow more sophisticated modelling. Such a method, however, inevitably comes with limitations which should be noted in the interpretation of the results. Particular limitations are:

- The elasticities are drawn from research, but represent an average response for all car parks in all situations. In reality, actual elasticities would likely vary per town and car park, and by time of year, day of week, time of day and user type. In the absence of more bespoke data, however, and in the interests of consistency, these averaged elasticities are the best data available for the purposes of this exercise.
- The elasticity approach indicates how demand may increase or decrease in a particular car park, but it cannot identify where affected demand would displace to or from. Judgment is required to assess this.
- Because the demand response is proportional to existing demand levels, even large price changes will only generate small responses if the existing demand level is low. This means that the response to measures aimed to stimulate new market sectors for a car park are likely to be underestimated.
- On a similar basis, the method is not able to take account of constrained demand. For example, if a tariff is introduced to a free car park to displace long stay parking so that short-stay shopper parking has priority, this method will show an overall drop in demand. In reality, however, the capacity released by displaced long-stay parking could be directly replaced by short-stay demand which is currently being suppressed. Judgment is therefore required to recognise where demand constraints may be in effect.
- Lastly, it is noted above that the method requires an estimate of a car park's potential market-value tariff in the case where a tariff is introduced to a car park where there is currently no charge. Though a reasonable estimate of market-value can be made through appropriate comparison, this additional user input to the process renders the outcome more subject to uncertainty.



## **B. Completed Equality and Diversity Proforma**

## Northwich Parking Action Plan

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

In 2016 a borough wide parking strategy was developed with recommendations to provide a consistency of quality and management of local authority parking stock. Following a period of public consultation this was approved by full council in June 2017. Parking Action Plans have now been produced for key local centres to progress the implementation of the strategy.

Lead officer: Mike Lester (Project Manager and Advisor, Parking Services)

Stakeholders: Residents and representative groups, businesses, and Town and Parish Councils

Equality analysis is a valuable tool to help embed equality into everything we do  
 While process is important, equality analysis is essentially about outcomes  
 Lack of evidence of discrimination is not evidence of a lack of discrimination

It is not acceptable to say that a policy is applied uniformly to all groups and is therefore fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups.

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a **positive, negative or neutral impact**, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a **high, medium or low assessment**. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

**High impact** – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

**Medium impact** – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

**Low impact** – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			

<p><b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.)</p>			<p>Barrier to using services for those whose first language is not English. – Will need to consider prioritised options for communication to contain this impact. <b>LOW IMPACT</b></p>
<p><b>Disability</b> (as defined by the Equality Act - a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>		<p>The parking action plan includes a programme of car park quality improvements, including ensuring compliance with standards for the number and size of disabled parking bays. <b>MEDIUM IMPACT</b></p>	
<p><b>Gender</b></p>	<p>Identified no aspects of this work that will have any disproportional impact on this group.</p>		
<p><b>Gender identity</b> (gender reassignment)</p>	<p>Identified no aspects of this work that will have any disproportional impact on this group.</p>		
<p><b>Religion and belief</b></p>	<p>Identified no aspects of this work that will have any disproportional impact on this group.</p>		
<p><b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual)</p>	<p>Identified no aspects of this work that will have any disproportional impact on this group.</p>		
<p><b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults aged 25 – 50,</p>	<p>Some concerns have been raised regarding the</p>		

<p>younger older people aged 51 – 75/80; older people 81+. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs)</p>	<p>introduction of charging and maximum stay lengths, which could have a negative impact on age categories with traditionally lower levels of income such as school leavers, students, and senior citizens. The introduction of tariffs will raise the price of parking; however, the prices are low and on-street parking bays will remain free. The designation of different car parking locations for different user groups will enable older people, who are likely to be short stay users and less mobile, to park closer to the core retail area.</p>		
<p><b>Carers</b></p>		<p>The parking action plan includes a programme of car park quality improvements, including ensuring compliance with standards for the number and size of disabled parking bays. This could potentially benefit the carers of disability groups.</p> <p><b>LOW IMPACT</b></p>	
<p><b>Rural communities</b></p>	<p>Some concerns have been raised regarding the introduction of tariffs, that</p>		

	<p>these proposals could have a negative impact on car reliant individuals. Length of stay surveys and economic analysis undertaken as part of strategy development indicate that revised proposals will not increase the average tariff paid and an increased number of tariff options will increase flexibility and choice.</p>		
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<p>Concerns have been raised about the negative impact on car users generated by the implementation of tariffs. However the tariffs, when compared to the cost of running a vehicle in general, are low meaning that disproportionate impacts will be minimal. The maximum stay restrictions will help generate turnover of spaces in the retail areas, thus supporting economic vitality of retail provision.</p>		
<b>Human rights</b>	<p>Identified no aspects of this work that will have any disproportional impact on Human Rights.</p>		
<b>Health and wellbeing</b> (consider both the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime		<p>The proposals to provide improved car park quality, and increased choice in respect of tariff options</p>	

<p>and transport, as well as the possible impacts on lifestyles and the effect there may be on health and care services)</p>		<p>and spreading parking demand. This is likely to have a beneficial effect on the mental health and wellbeing of residents and visitors to Northwich. There will be a positive impact on health through a reduction in congestion/pollution as the increased tariff choice will spread parking demand across the day.</p> <p><b>LOW IMPACT</b></p>	
<p><b>Procurement/partnership</b> (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)</p>	<p>Equality compliance is embedded within the council's policy and procedure with regards to infrastructure works undertaken by the council's term contractor and with regard to procurement of car park payment and management technology.</p>		

**Evidence (see guidance note for details of what to include here):**

A 12-week public consultation was undertaken as part of the development of the borough wide parking strategy. The consultation was widely publicised including media releases, publication on the Council website and through the Council's social media channels and public events.

The consultation documents were made available on the Council's website were provided on request in hard copy format. Consultation documents were available in a variety of formats (including audio, Braille, large print, and other languages) and consultation surveys could be completed on-line or by completing a printed copy.

The feedback received has influenced the development of the strategy. Proposals to introduce charging for disabled parking has not been progressed following concerns received that in some cases individuals with a disability may have a lower income and introducing charges would have a negative impact on this group.

At the request of the councils Scrutiny Panel an economic analysis of impact of introducing the Northwich Car Parking Action Plan on the economic performance of Northwich and modelling of the demand response to the changing tariff has been undertaken. In addition, a social/environmental analysis of impact of introducing measures has been undertaken (e.g. displacement), triggering the need for any mitigating measures such as additional restrictions or RPZs; or air quality benefits or disbenefits.

It is considered that the measures proposed will achieve the objectives below without significant negative impact.

- To create greater user differentiation between car park types on a weekday
- To better manage demand at limited car parking facilities and allocate the most appropriate parking locations to the most appropriate user groups.

<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Key activity</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcomes required</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Review impact of Parking Action Plans	Monitor for adverse trends	Medium	Trends adversely affecting residents and visitors are identified at an early stage	Manager, Parking Services	June 2020

<b>Sign off</b>	
Lead officer:	Mike Lester – Manager, Parking Services
Approved by Tier 4 Manager:	Vanessa Griffiths - Manager, Regulatory Services
<b>Moderation and/or Scrutiny</b>	
Date:	
<b>Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating</b> (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low	Low impact - 2021

impact in three years)	
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**Please forward the completed Equality Analysis to the Equality and Diversity Managers for publishing on the Council's website**



## C. Supplementary Data Tables for Figures

### C.1 Data Supporting Figures 2 and 3

**Table 10: Average parking price vs retail centre vitality score**

Town	Population	Vitality Score	Avg Parking Price per hour
Wrexham	61,603	675	£0.88
Shrewsbury	71,715	768	£1.27
Nantwich	17,424	714	£0.57
Whitchurch	9,781	655	£0.32
Middlewich	13,595		£0.00
Birkenhead	88,818	682	£0.77
Sandbach	17,976	711	£0.00
Deeside	53,568		£0.05
Knutsford	13,191	762	£0.60
Crewe	83,650	678	£0.57
Northwich	27,914	698	£0.00
Winsford	29,797	665	£0.00
Neston	14,698		£0.00
Bath	88,859	857	£1.71
Durham	65,549	730	£0.97
York	153,717	810	£1.82
Cambridge	131,800	902	£2.05
Chester	82,459	812	£1.38
Ellesmere Port	60,787	628	£0.19
Frodsham and Helsby	13,988		£0.00
Northwich (current)	27,914	698	£0.00
Northwich (proposed)	27,914	698	£0.09

Source: CWaC population stats taken from 2014 BRES data; Vitality Score from Harper Dennis Hobbs (2017); Frodsham and Helsby estimated vitality score based on parking price and trend line

