APPENDIX A

DISTRICT OF HARBOROUGH

PARKING STRATEGY

2016

I. Contents

1. Introduction

Harborough District Council has commissioned a new parking strategy to cover the period 2015 – 2031 to reflect both recent changes to the economic climate and the projected growth within the district. The strategy will help the Council to plan its current and future parking provision and service management requirements.

Although there has been a reduction in traffic and parking demand in general since the economic downturn, numbers in Harborough are again increasing. However, this strategy will aim to provide a platform for determining future parking demand and potential supply of car parking provision without detriment to the economic vitality and viability of the district.

Research undertaken to help inform this parking strategy provides indications that private car use is continuing to increase and will do so for the foreseeable future, especially with regard to the demand for access to town centres and visitor attractions. Parking availability of any type of vehicle is an important factor in determining how people travel. It also influences the vitality and viability of town centres. However, the capacity of the roads and the provision of car parking space to meet this demand are neither practical nor sustainable. Notwithstanding that, accessibility to town centres must be maintained to assist in maintaining economic prosperity. Only towns with good alternative forms of accessibility could afford to restrict access by private car. That said, cars should not be seen as the only means of transport and there is a balance to be struck between providing and restricting car parking, in turn balancing environmental protection, economic growth, accessibility, health improvement and social inclusion.

In more rural areas it must be accepted that effective alternative transport methods are unlikely to be ever possible (e.g. bus services which face constant threat in rural areas). Private cars will, therefore, remain the only travel option for many people.

The development of a parking strategy needs to take into account a number of factors:

- consideration of all users e.g. residents, shoppers, visitors, local businesses, and workers
- Contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre by providing more short stay than long stay parking
- Regulations to be implemented and enforced effectively
- A revenue surplus required to allow for re-investment
- Appropriate charging that meets with the Council's overall aims for finance, and quality of provision

This strategy will consider each of the following facets:

- Designated off-street car parks
- Designated on-street parking
- Disabled parking provision
- Coach parking provision

In considering the above, the effects and impacts of a number of variables will be considered, in both the short and longer-term, as follows:

- Capacity, location and need of off-street parking provision
- Capacity, location and need of on-street parking provision
- Car parking tariffs
- Public transport availability, cost and proximity
- Demand for car parking, both current and future

2. Background

2.1 Population

The population of Harborough at the 2011 census was 85,500, with Market Harborough town centre comprising 23,000 and the population of Lutterworth town centre comprised 10,000. The 2011 population is expected to increase by some 17% by 2031. The 2011 population breakdown is shown below. The population structure is focused more toward middle aged and older people with an above average proportion aged between 45 and 74 (compared to Leicestershire and the East Midlands).

Table 2.1 Harborough District Population (census 2011)

Harborough District Census Data 2011

Harborough District Population – 85382 residents

Age

Census Question: What is your date of birth?	Number of residents	% of Harborough District population
0-4 years	4665	5.46%
5-9 years	5015	5.87%
10-17 years	8969	10.50%
18-24 years	5415	6.34%
25-29 years	3700	4.33%
30-44 years	16827	19.71%
45-59 years	19139	22.42%
60-64 years	6061	7.10%
65+ years	15591	18.26%

The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should assess the quantitative and qualitative needs for land or floor space for retail development and housing over the period up to 2031.

2.2 Meeting Shopping Needs in Harborough District

The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should assess the quantitative and qualitative needs for land or floor space for retail development over the period up to 2031.

When planning for growth in their town centres, local planning authorities should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail development needed. It is important that the needs for retail and other main town centre uses are met in full and not compromised by limited site availability.

Long term forecasts up to and beyond 2026 may be more susceptible to change, due to unforeseen circumstances. Long term projections should be monitored and kept under review. The implications of major retail development within and surrounding the District should be monitored along with the effect proposals may have on the demand for additional development in Harborough District.

Shopper usage surveys

The Harborough Retail Study (Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners) study (2013) undertook a review of householder opinions to understand what might encourage them to use the shopping facilities in Harborough District more often.

Market Harborough

- 52% stated that nothing would make them visit more often
- 12% indicated that free parking would make a difference
- 10% indicated that a better choice of shops would encourage visits
- 8% indicated that a better selection of clothing shops would make a difference.

Lutterworth

- 65% stated that nothing would make them visit more often
- 14% indicated that a better choice of shops would encourage visits
- 5.5% indicated that a better selection of clothing shops would make a difference.
- 1% indicated that free parking would make a difference

2.3 Market Harborough Town Centre - Additional capacity projections

The comparison goods projections, based on constant market shares, suggests that new floor space could be distributed as follows:

Table 2.2: Comparison Goods Retail Floor space Projections (Gross)

Table 6.3: Comparison Goods Retail Floorspace Projections (Gross)

Location	Additional Retail Sales Floorspace sq.m Gross			
	2013 - 2021	2021 - 2026	2026 - 2031	Total 2013 - 2031
Market Harborough	1,900	2,200	2,200	**6,300**
Lutterworth	300	300	300	**900**
Broughton Astley	-	50	0	**50**
Other Harborough	100	50	100	**250**
Total	**2,300**	**2,600**	**2,600**	**7,500**

The retail floor space capacity projection indicates that some 11,400 m2 gross of additional floor space would be required in Market Harborough up to 2031. Vacant shop units can only accommodate a small element of this floor space projection. The short to medium term priority should be to explore the redevelopment of potential locations in Market Harborough help the Council meet the floor space projection required for up to 2031. Further investigation would be required in the longer term (after 2021) to identify additional locations.

2.4 Potential development sites – Market Harborough

The potential development opportunities (identified in Harborough Retail Study, Harborough District Council December 2013) within the town centre in Market Harborough were limited to three potential sites. These were the Commons car park, Springfield Retail Park car park and an area of land off School Lane (currently used for private non residential parking).

- The Commons car park could provide an opportunity to extend/expand the existing food stores (Co-op and Tesco Metro), to provide up to an additional 1,500 m2 of floor space (about 1,000 m2 net), which would achieve a third of the projection of the plan period as a whole.
- The east side of the Springfield Retail Park surface car park could accommodate large format retail units of at least 2,000 m2 gross if decked car parking where to be provided to replace lost spaces.
- The land between School Lane and the High Street could be developed to provide about 2,000 m2 of retail in the form of an arcade of small units, which could be directly linked to the High Street.

These three opportunities could provide some 5,500 m2 gross of retail floor space. If added to the vacant shop units this could accommodate over half (54%) of the Market Harborough floor space projection required by 2031.

The study indicated that other development opportunities within the town centre were likely to be small scale (less than 500m2).

Longer term growth could be accommodated adjacent to the town centre in the area along St. Mary's Road towards the railway station.

2.5 Lutterworth Town Centre - Additional capacity projections

A retail floor space capacity projection of some 2,800 m2 additional floor space would be required in Lutterworth up to 2031. This projection reduces to 2,100 m2 gross if a food store is developed in Broughton Astley.

Vacant shop units in Lutterworth can only accommodate a small element of this projection. The short to medium term priority should be to explore the redevelopment potential of land within the town centre.

Potential development sites - Lutterworth

Two potential development sites were identified within Lutterworth town centre, i.e. back land to the west of Bank Street and land adjacent to the Waitrose store.

- The site to the west of Bank Street comprises private car parks and service areas to the rear of the High Street, which has a potential to provide 4-5 retail units (1,000 m2) fronting onto Bank Street.
- There is potential to extend the existing Waitrose store by around 500 m2.

These locations could accommodate about 64% of the Lutterworth floor space projection up to 2031.

2.6 Housing requirements

Harborough District Council commissioned a study into housing requirements in 2013 (Harborough Housing Requirements Study, G L Hearn, March 2013), and later undertook an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) across the Housing Market Area together with all Leicestershire Local Planning Authorities. The SHMA (G L Hearn, June 2014) concluded Harborough Districts objectively assessed housing need to be a range of 415 – 475 dwellings to be built per annum. Harborough District Council has since adopted the higher range figure of 475 dwellings per annum from 2011 – 2031. The council's 2015 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identified sites which could provide some 12,629residential units across the Local Plan period. There are however some constraints which could inhibit growth within the district, including the transport network in Market Harborough, and the potential provision of local services in Lutterworth and Broughton Astley.

2.7 Transport Infrastructure

2.7.1 Market Harborough

The existing public transport options within Market Harborough are regular bus services and rail services. The rail service operates regular (every 30 minutes) direct services to London (via Bedford) and Nottingham (via Leicester). There are 33 regular bus routes operating through Market Harborough. The routes include journeys to Leicester, Lutterworth, Milton Keynes, Northampton and local routes.

An assessment of Harborough's highway and transportation infrastructure (undertaken by Arup 2009) was undertaken to support the emerging Core Strategy.

The transportation study indicated that development outside the existing settlement boundary would be considered in terms of transport impact be best accommodated to the south or west of the town. Two potential areas were identified, both with the potential to help address existing highway issues. However, both would require significant enabling transport works to connect radial approaches to the town.

Additional forms of transport mitigation would also be required including changes to a local bus service, improvements to the walking and cycling networks, a reduction in the number of long-stay parking spaces within Market Harborough, and an increase in the frequency of the bus service between Market Harborough and Leicester.

Further transport work is ongoing in Market Harborough through a Market Harborough Transport Study (2016) to support the Harborough District Local Plan, has been undertaken jointly by Harborough District Council and Leicestershire County Council. The Study makes recommendations for the promotion of transport improvements for the medium to long term (to 2031), which will support economic and population growth in the context of future development, ensuring the town is not adversely impacted by traffic growth, and form a foundation on which long term improvements can be based.

The Study has used transport modelling to assess both the existing road network of the Town, together with potential mitigation measures to accommodate both planned and future growth. The outcome of the Study predicted that the demands on the road networks in and around Market Harborough are forecast to increase by 24% between 2011 and 2031. Journeys into and out of Market Harborough are the dominant type and are expected to increase over time. The study does predict that whilst the number of journeys within the town will decrease as a proportion of the total journeys made, the number will still be high particularly during peak hours. These types of journeys are more likely to be influenced by behaviour change and support the need to explore alternative travel means such as walking, cycling and public transport. The Study makes a range of recommendations for highway improvement schemes and public realm improvement schemes, including potential costs, which will be supported through future developer funding as housing schemes in the town progress. These recommendations include the re-designation of existing routes, the rerouting of HGV traffic, public transport improvements, and improvements to encourage walking and cycling in the town.

2.7.2 Lutterworth

There are seven bus routes operating from Lutterworth town centre. The services operate to Leicester, Rugby, Hinckley and Market Harborough.

Lutterworth is subject to transport generated air quality issues and has a declared Air Quality Management Area. Nevertheless, some adverse impacts in terms of highway congestion and air quality are likely to remain an issue in Lutterworth.

2.8 Transport Trends in Leicestershire (2014)

In 2014 the Department for Transport (DfT) calculate that the national change in traffic showed an increase of 2.4% from 2013. Leicestershire between 2011 and 2014 also demonstrated an increase in flows higher than the national average.

In Leicestershire between 2011 and 2014 the traffic trends have shown a 4.74% increase over a typical 24 hour period. Market Harborough shows the highest 24 hour increase over the time period of 9.34% with Lutterworth showing a minor increase in flows of 2.02%.

It should be noted that the number of the number of car borne journeys in Leicestershire increased during the AM peak (by 4.09%) and the PM peak (a 4.88% increase). Over the same time periods the number of vehicles recorded during the AM and PM peaks in Market Harborough demonstrated an increase, with 5.77% during the AM peak and of 7.46% during the PM peak. For Lutterworth, the data shows and increase of 2.02% AM peak and 6.18% PM peak.

It could therefore be summarised that the towns is becoming more reliant upon daily commuters (workers) entering and leaving during the peak hours of traffic (namely 8am to 9am and 5pm to 6pm during the week) and this is backed up by the findings on the Market Harborough Transport Strategy 2017-2031.

3. Policy framework

3.1 Introduction

On parking space numbers and impact on the local economy of parking charges it should be noted that the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) identified a common misconception that providing as many parking spaces as possible is the best way to manage parking so as to maximise access.

Rather, the key is to ensure that the parking stock is used efficiently so that the availability of space matches demand wherever possible. The effective management of parking provision is therefore as important as the absolute number of parking spaces provided.

There is a potential conflict between using parking as a means of facilitating car use, and as a means of selectively controlling car accessibility (and thereby car use). A balanced approach is required to meet the needs of different communities.

Many people fear that making changes to the way that parking is managed, including new parking charges, will adversely affect an area's economy. However, the limited evidence which does exist suggests it is the broader retail, commercial leisure or tourism offer which is the primary factor affecting a town's competitiveness, not the provision of parking. There is no evidence that visitors use alternative destinations more based upon parking supply.

3.2 Policy Context

There is a range of national, regional and local policy that is relevant to parking, promoting the vitality and viability of town centres, assisting residents and businesses.

In 2012 the Government published its new National Planning Policy Framework.

Section 3 of the Framework entitled Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy which refers to parking provision for both new building developments and town centre parking as follows:

"39. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the accessibility of the development;
- the type, mix and use of development;
- the availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- local car ownership levels; and
- an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

40. Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate."

3.3 National Planning Policy Framework

Further to the National Planning Policy Framework new planning guidance was published in March 2014 which provides further detail in terms of town centre parking provision stating that councils should understand the important role appropriate parking facilities can play in rejuvenating shops, high streets and town centres:

"The quality of parking in town centres is important; it should be convenient, safe and secure. Parking charges should be appropriate and not undermine the vitality of town centres and local shops, and parking enforcement should be proportionate."

"This positive approach should include seeking to improve the quality of parking in town centres (in line with the National Planning Policy Framework) and, where it is necessary to ensure the vitality of town centres, the quantity too. Local authorities should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres and parking enforcement should be proportionate, avoiding unfairly penalising drivers."

National Planning Guidance 2014

3.4 Harborough District Core Strategy 2011

The Harborough District Core Strategy Policy CS5: Providing Sustainable Transport states:

'The type of transport enabling and mitigation works provided by each development should be geared to transport improvements which are also strategically beneficial to the wider area and which can complement works likely to be delivered by other developments. Proposals for assessing traffic impact, highway design and parking provision associated with new development should accord with the guidance contained in "Highways Transportation and Development" published by Leicestershire County Council.'

These documents are the starting point for detailed agreement on proposals which affect transport in Harborough District and includes car parking standards to be applied in new developments. These standards are for guidance and are set out as a range of maximum and operational minimum requirements for different types of development. It is however accepted that due to the character of many of the town and village centres, it may not always be environmentally desirable to provide the specified parking for new development on-site. These standards are flexible to ensure that the character of such areas is maintained. Localised parking provision may be accepted if local parking difficulties exist, such as narrow roads or insufficient parking space.

3.5 Harborough District emerging Local Plan 2011 – 2031

The emerging Harborough District Local Plan will outline the development strategy for the district to 2031, replacing the existing Core Strategy. The Local Plan is due to be adopted in late 2017 and will set out a range of residential, employment and other land use designations in order to meet identified needs across the district. The pre-submission Local Plan will be consulted upon in late 2016, with an Examination in Public expected in mid 2017. In addition to the development strategy for the district, the Local Plan will also outline parking requirements for future developments, and promote sustainable transport.

4. Study objectives

4.1 Car Park Strategy Aims

1. Provide good quality public car parking facilities appropriate to the needs of the main town centres across the District.

2. Recognise the different characteristics of the main town centres and liaise with key partners in providing car-parking services appropriate to local circumstances.

3. Seek to support the vitality of town centres and local businesses through the provision and management of appropriate car parking, while recognising that car parking provision can be an important tool to help manage traffic.

4. Reduce the burden on the taxpayer and shift the cost of car parking provision towards the users (motorists) and manage the Council's car parking assets in a cost effective manner.

5. Develop effective communication with customers in order to promote the service and to gather information to inform the development of the service.

4.2 Car Park Strategy Objectives

Objective 1 – Ensure that the car park service is developed and delivered on the basis of good information on car park usage and customer needs.

Objective 2 - Ensure that car park services are being carried out to a high standard in terms of economy, efficiency, safety and effectiveness.

Objective 3 – Maintain a charging structure that maximises the use of existing car parks, whilst managing a balance between economic, environmental and traffic management objectives.

Objective 4 – Ensure adequate provision for those with particular requirements.

Objective 5 – Improve information for customers.

Objective 6 – Provide a cost effective enforcement service

Objective 7 – Continue to audit and review the level of parking availability and plan accordingly.

Objective 8 – Ensure a cost effective and efficient car park management regime

5. Benchmarking

5.1 Neighbouring competitor towns

The following towns have been identified as competitor towns for Market Harborough and Lutterworth; Corby, Daventry, Hinckley, Kettering, Melton Mowbray, Northampton and Rugby.

The numbers of car park spaces for each town are shown in Table 5.1. Proportionately Market Harborough has a greater number of public car park spaces per population than the comparator towns with only Kettering, Rugby and Northampton having more car park spaces and only Northampton has more Council owned parking spaces.

Table 5.1 : Off-street parking spaces in neighbouring competitor towns

Town centre	Pop	All car parks		Council car parks			Other car parks		
		Number of car parks	No. spaces	Number of car parks	Number of spaces	% disabled spaces	Number of car parks	Number of spaces	% disabled spaces
Market Harborough	23k	15	1780	13	1500	3%	2	280	4%
Lutterworth	10k	5	370	4	180	6%	1	190	6%
Daventry	25k	15	1600	12	910	4%	3	690	3%
Melton Mowbray	27k	7	1150	6	838	3%	1	312	6%
Hinckley	45k	15	1020	13	710	6%	2	320	3%
Corby	61k	3	1278	1	198	2%	2	1080	2%
Kettering	67k	9	1900	6	700	6%	3	1200	5%
Rugby	70k	11	2300	9	1250	4%	2	1050	3%
Northampton	212k	15	3600	15	3600	2%	0	0	0%

The long stay off-street parking charges in Market Harborough and Lutterworth are less than those charged in the neighbouring comparator towns (shown in table 3.2 below) with the exception of Daventry where parking is free.

Table 5.2 – Off-street comparative long-stay parking charges in neighbouring towns

Town centre	Pop	Council car parks			Private car parks	
		All day	5 hours	4 hours	All day	5 hours
Market Harborough	23k	£2.20		£1.20		
Lutterworth (7) (8)	9k	£2.20		£1.20		
Daventry	25k	free			free	
Melton Mowbray (9)	27k	£3.30	£2.20		free	
Hinckley (3)	45k	£2.40	£1.30		£4.00	
Corby	61k	£10.00	£4.00		£10.00	£2.50
Kettering (6)	67k	£6.00			£5.00	
Rugby (1) (2)	70k	£10.00	£4.00		£3.50	£2.20

Northampton (4)	212k	£7.00	£4.00			
Northampton (5)		£7.00	£4.00			

Note (1) Sunday council car parks free or £1.00 all day
(2) Clock Tower shopping centre car park. ASDA car park £2 for 3 hours
(3) Britannia shopping centre
(4) surface car parks
(5) multi-storey car parks
(6) Newlands shopping centre. ASDA free.
(7) Morrisons car park (private)
(8) Three of the seven car parks charge
(9) Saisnsbury car park (private)

The short stay off-street parking charges in Market Harborough and Lutterworth are also less than those charged in the neighbouring comparator towns (shown in table 3.3 below) with the exception of Daventry where parking is free and Corby.

The majority of competitor towns operate a one hour stay charge rate in their short-stay car parks.

Table 5.3 – Off-street short-stay parking charges in neighbouring comparator towns

Town centre	**Pop**	**Council car parks**				**Private car parks**			
		4 hour	**3 hour**	**2 hour**	**1 hour**	**4 hour**	**3 hour**	**2 hour**	**1 hour**
Market Harborough	23k	£1.70	£1.20	70p				free	free
Lutterworth (7) (8)	9k	£1.70	£1.20	70p				free	free
Daventry	25k		free	free	free		free	free	free
Melton Mowbray (9)	27k		£2.00	£1.10	70p	free	free	free	free
Hinckley (3)	45k	£2.60	£1.50	£1.00	50p	£2.50	£1.50	£1.00	50p
Corby	61k	£2.00	£1.00	60p		£1.50	80p	60p	
Kettering (6)	67k		£3.00	£2.00	£1.00	£2.00		£1.50	
Rugby (1) (2)	70k		£1.30	£1.00			£1.20	80p	50p
Northampton (4)	212k	£3.20	£2.40	£1.20	60p				
Northampton (5)		£3.20	£2.40	free	free				

Note (1) Sunday council car parks free or £1.00 all day
(2) Clock Tower shopping centre car park. ASDA car park £2 for 3 hours
(3) Britannia shopping centre
(4) surface car parks
(5) multi-storey car parks
(6) Newlands shopping centre. ASDA free.
(7) Morrisons car park (private)
(8) Three of the seven car parks charge
(9) Saisnsbury car park (private)

5.2 English market town competitor towns

In addition to comparing the off-street parking charges in neighbouring centres a comparison with other English market towns has also been undertaken. The off-street parking charges available in a number of competitor market towns are shown in Table 3.4. It is again illustrated that the short-stay parking charges levied in Harborough district are lower than those in comparative market towns. Different parking periods are available and classed as short-stay and medium stay in other locations. All of the market towns reviewed

(7) offer a one hour parking tariff. Three towns offer car parks with a two hour maximum stay, one offers a three hour maximum stay period, with two of the towns offering two hour maximum stay car parks offer a medium stay period (up to four hours) at different car parks.

Long-stay parking tariffs (shown in Table 5.4) are again lower in Market Harborough and Lutterworth than in the majority of other market towns. Only two offer charges lower than Harborough, of these Ludlow offers a single all-day rate (single charge) of £2.00 per day.

Table 5.4 – Off-street comparative short-stay parking charges in English market towns

	Population	Long stay - Council			Medium stay - Council				short stay - Council			
		All day	5 hours	4 hours	4 hour	3 hour	2 hour	1 hour	4 hour	3 hour	2 hour	1 hour
Market Harborough	**23k**	£2.20		£1.20					£1.70	£1.20	70p	
Lutterworth	**9k**	£2.20		£1.20					£1.70	£1.20	70p	
Newark on Trent	**26k**	£3.00	£2.50	£2.00					£4.50	£2.50	£1.50	£1.00
Nantwich	**18k**	£2.90		£2.10	£2.10		£1.00	60p			£1.10	70p
Lewes	**16k**	£3.70		£2.60	£3.10	£2.30	£1.50	70p			£1.60	70p
Skipton	**15k**	£4.50		£3.90							£2.30	£1.20
Leominster	**12k**	£1.50		£1.00					£2.10	£1.60	£1.10	60p
Ludlow	**11k**	£2.00							£2.40		£1.10	50p
Ross on Wye	**10k**	£3.10		£2.10						£1.60	£1.10	60p

5.3 Coach parking at comparator towns

Towns which experience a regular influx of coach visits do provide some coach parking facilities. Examples of neighbouring and market towns which provide coach parking are, Ashby de la Zouch, Lichfield, Settle and Skipton. The comparator towns have been identified as market towns which have also been recommended by the CPT as having an exemplar offer.

Table 5.5 – Coach parking facilities

Town	Drop-off facility	No. of spaces	Public car park	Other location	Charges	Permission required
Lichfield (1) *	x	2		X (5)		
Lichfield (2) *	x	5	x		X	
Melton Mowbray	x	5 (+3 extra)	x		x	
Settle	x	(6)	x		X	
Skipton	x	(6)	x		X (3)	
Ashby de la Zouch	x	(6)		X (5)		X
Hinckley		(6)		X (4)		

*Notes: * CPT coach friendly city 2015*

(1) Coach parking location one
(2) Coach parking location two
(3) Coach tariff twice standard rates
(4) Tesco car park
(5) Bus station coach parking spaces
(6) Number of spaces not specified

6. Harborough District Council Parking Services

6.1 On-street parking assets

6.1.1 Market Harborough

There is a mix of parking provision within Market Harborough, which includes council provided and managed on-street parking, council provided and managed off-street parking and private off-street parking. The privately available parking (for specific customers, private non-residential users, for example) has not been included within the study.

On-street the council provides 108 short-stay parking places in the core town centre to facilitate short shopping trips. There are a number (27) of longer-stay (2 hours maximum stay) in St Mary Road. Outside of these locations on-street parking in uncontrolled (i.e. there are no restrictions on the period of stay).

Table 6.1 – On-street parking spaces Market Harborough

Road name	**control**	**spaces**
Adam & Eve Street	40 mins	7
Bowden Lane	40 mins	11
Church Square	40 mins	12
Coventry Road	40 mins	4
High Street	40 mins	67
Kings Head Place	40 mins	7
Sub-Total		***108***
Roman Way	2 hours	27
TOTAL		**135**

6.1.2 Lutterworth

In Lutterworth on-street parking in the town centre is limited. The majority of parking is provided in car parks. There are some 32 controlled on-street spaces available, as shown in Table 2.4. It should be noted that the parking in Market Square is not available during market days.

Table 6.2 – On-street parking spaces Lutterworth

Road name	**control**	**spaces**
Church Road	30 mins	14
Market Square	30 mins	18
Station Road	uncontrolled	49

6.1.3 Duration of stay – controlled on-street parking

The duration of stay on-street at short-stay parking places is controlled by Traffic Regulation Orders issued by Leicestershire County Council (the Highway Authority).

6.2 Off-Street car park assets

The council has a number of public car parks within its remit. There are also other council owned car parks which provide a dedicated local service, such as at a sports facility, residential facility or leisure facility.

The public car parks are indicated below.

Market Harborough, has a number of car parks in the town centre available for shoppers, visitors and workers. The car parks are divided between long stay and short-stay. The car parks are controlled by means of pay and display equipment. The tariffs allow vehicles to park for a minimum of two hours

Lutterworth, has four paid for car parks. The three town centre car parks offer short-stay parking and one car park (Church Close) offers long-stay parking. Church Close was not surveyed for usage.

Broughton Astley offers a town centre car park for shoppers adjacent to the Co-Op in the town centre.

Kibworth Beauchamp, offers two car parks. One large car park (School Road) and one adjacent to the library (Paget Street).

Other smaller towns; Fleckney (High Street car park) and Great Glen (Ruperts Way adjacent to the library).

6.3 Parking charges

A stay exceeding four hours would cost £3.20 in a short-stay car park and £2.20 at a long-stay car park. The minimum charge in a short-stay car park would be 70p for a two hour stay, whereas the minimum charge in a long-stay car park would be £1.20 for four hours. Charges operate Monday to Saturday including Public Holidays, between the hours of 7am to 6pm.

The current Harborough car park charges are shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 – Car park charges (Harborough District Council)

Car park	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Short-stay	70p	£1.20	£1.70	£3.20
Long-stay	£1.20			£2.20

6.4 Car park Condition

The condition of the council car parks varies depending on usage and whether they are pay & display or free car parks. In order for the Council to provide a good quality parking provision across its entire stock, investment should be considered for all car parks on the same merit. However, by the same token, all parking stock should generate an income to cover the costs of their repair and maintenance. It would be too simplistic to consider past costs in isolation as the true amount of investment required has not been spent and therefore not reflective of true cost for the Council to operate. A charge for car parking is not only the best way to manage parking turnover, but also the best way to maintain good quality parking stock.

6.5 P&D machines

Many of the pay and display machines are aged and develop faults (as evidenced by the questionnaire returns and during parking surveys). It was also noted during the parking surveys that P&D machines were labelled as out of order.

The council has a programme of replacement for the parking equipment.

6.6 Signage

The location and wording of signage in car parks is essential to ensuring effective car parking management and enforcement. It is recommended that a comprehensive review of all car parking signage is undertaken as an early action followed by period programmed signage reviews.

It should be noted that the current parking directional signage in all towns is patchy. The provision of parking directional signage is important to the visitor who is looking for a convenient place to park.

6.7 Off-Street car parking

Car parks are divided between short-stay and long-stay parking provision. It should be noted that the maximum period of stay permitted within a short-stay car park is not, in fact, restricted, but costs more than a similar stay in a long-stay car park.

6.7.1 Market Harborough

The Council controlled car parks, parking spaces and designation in Market Harborough are shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 – Off-street parking spaces Market Harborough

Car park	**control**	**spaces**
The Commons	short stay	341
Springfield Street (Sainsbury)	short stay	630
Dodridge Road (1)	short stay	76
Kings Head Place	short stay	26
Symington Way	short stay	98
Market Hall	short stay	75
St Mary's Road West	short stay	30
Sub-Total		***1276***
Angel Street	long stay	94
Dodridge Road	long stay	57
St Mary's Road East	long stay	54
Springfield Street	long stay	40
Stamford Close	long stay	35
Sub-Total		***280***
TOTAL		**1,556**

Notes: (1) excludes private spaces

6.7.2 Lutterworth

The Council controlled car parks, parking spaces and designation in Lutterworth are shown in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5 – Off-street parking spaces Lutterworth

Car park	control	spaces
Chapel Street	short stay	45
George Street	short stay	44
Station Road	short stay	98
Sub-Total		***187***
Church Close	long stay	18
Sub-Total		***18***
TOTAL		**205**

6.8 Off-Street car park transactions

The transaction data (paid parking acts) for car parking indicates in the pay and display car parks there were over 900,000 transactions during the last full year (2015). Comparison of the data collected for 2016 indicates that income is following the same pattern. Table 6.6 below illustrates the monthly trends for the council car parks. This shows that December generates the highest number of transactions (as would be expected for a retail based economy).

It is also interesting to note that the number of parking tickets issued at car parks during 2014 and those issued during 2006 has reduced significantly. The number of parking tickets issued has reduced because of the removal of the one hour parking tariff. It does indicate that should a one hour parking tariff exist the number of parking acts could increase by some 500,000 over a year. It is interesting to note that ticket sales during December 2006 were not at a peak, this could be due to visitors staying longer than one hour, reducing turnover of spaces and therefore reducing the opportunity for other visitors to park (and buy a ticket).

Table 6.6 – Parking ticket issue and income per month (HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL)

	Tickets issued 2006	% per month	Tickets issued 2014	% per month	diff	% diff
January	123000	8.6%	75500	8.1%	-47500	-39%
February	110000	7.7%	69000	7.4%	-41000	-37%
March	130000	9.1%	76000	8.1%	-54000	-42%
April	118000	8.2%	80000	8.6%	-38000	-32%

May	112000	7.8%	81500	8.7%	-30500	-27%
June	128000	8.9%	74000	7.9%	-54000	-42%
July	125000	8.7%	78000	8.4%	-47000	-38%
August	122000	8.5%	79000	8.5%	-43000	-35%
September	115000	8.0%	75500	8.1%	-39500	-34%
October	115000	8.0%	81000	8.7%	-34000	-30%
November	120000	8.4%	80000	8.6%	-40000	-33%
December	117000	8.2%	83500	8.9%	-33500	-29%
	1,435,000		933,000		-502,000	-35%

6.9 Coach Parking

Currently Harborough District receives an estimated 50,000 visitors a week (2.5 million a year) across the district. The vast majority (90%) of these visitors are day-trippers (Harborough District Blueprint for Tourism 2013-2018). Visitors to the district are looking for quintessential England and is based on the towns (and surrounding countryside) of Market Harborough and Lutterworth. Coach parking is considered to be a significant aspect of the tourism and parking offer within the district.

There are no dedicated facilities in the town centre allowing visitors to board or alight the coach. It was noted that no coaches were observed parking in either Market Harborough, or Lutterworth, during the weekday or Saturday parking occupancy surveys.

It should also be noted that only two comments in the questionnaire indicated that coach parking was a problem.

7. Parking survey results

7.1 On-street parking occupancy rates

The weekday parking demand on-street is very popular for short-stay visits (currently 40 minutes maximum stay, although with the recommended government 10 minute period of grace allows motorists to park for up to 50 minutes free of charge). In the majority of town centre locations all the spaces are occupied during the peak period of the day. The two hour maximum stay bays are also in significant demand, being fully occupied most of the day.

Table 7.1 – On-street weekday parking occupancy rates in Market Harborough

Road	control	spaces	occupancy 10am/11am number	10am/11am % occ	12pm/1pm number	12pm/1pm % occ	2pm/3pm number	2pm/3pm % occ	4pm/5pm number	4pm/5pm % occ
Abbey Street	40 mins	12	7	58%	12	100%	12	100%	6	50%
Adam & Eve Street	40 mins	7	6	86%	7	100%	6	86%	5	71%
Bowden Lane	40 mins	11	5	45%	9	82%	6	55%	3	27%
Church Square	40 mins	12	10	83%	12	100%	11	92%	9	75%
Coventry Road	40 mins	7	4	57%	8	114%	6	86%	3	43%
High Street	40 mins	67	61	91%	63	94%	60	90%	46	69%
Kings Head Place	40 mins	7	2	29%	4	57%	4	57%	2	29%
St Marys Road	40 mins	30	17	57%	21	70%	19	63%	14	47%
Kings Road	uncont	11	11	100%	11	100%	11	100%	10	91%
Roman Way	2 hours	27	25	93%	26	96%	24	89%	22	81%
Overall		191	148	77%	173	91%	159	83%	120	63%

2020 consultants

On-street parking demand in Lutterworth town centre exceeds the generally accepted 85% rate. Parking demand is exacerbated by the impact of the street market, which removes a number of prime on-street parking spaces.

Table 7.2 – On-street weekday parking occupancy rates in Lutterworth

Road	control	spaces	occupancy 10am/11am number	10am/11am % occ	12pm/1pm number	12pm/1pm % occ	2pm/3pm number	2pm/3pm % occ	4pm/5pm number	4pm/5pm % occ
Church Road	30 mins	14	12	86%	14	100%	14	100%	12	86%
Station Road	uncontrolled	49	37	76%	43	88%	39	80%	23	47%
Market Square (1)	30 mins	18	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	5	28%
Overall		81	49	78%	57	90%	53	84%	40	49%

2020 consultants. *Notes: (1) Market Square used by market stalls*.

The town centre on-street parking demand in Market Harborough is again popular on Saturday, although occupancy rates are lower than during the week. The parking demand on the uncontrolled sections of road in reduced, indicating that all-day (commuter) parking demand is reduced.

Table 7.3 – On-street Saturday parking occupancy rates in Market Harborough

Road	control	spaces	occupancy							
			10am/11am		12pm/1pm		2pm/3pm		4pm/5pm	
			number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ
Abbey Street	40 mins	12	6	50%	12	100%	12	100%	5	42%
Adam & Eve Street	40 mins	7	6	86%	7	100%	6	86%	4	57%
Bowden Lane	40 mins	11	2	18%	4	36%	4	36%	2	18%
Church Square	40 mins	12	9	75%	11	92%	8	67%	6	50%
Coventry Road	40 mins	7	5	71%	6	86%	3	43%	4	57%
High Street	40 mins	67	45	67%	53	79%	49	73%	43	64%
Kings Head Place	40 mins	7	2	29%	2	29%	3	43%	2	29%
St Marys Road	40 mins	30	18	60%	18	60%	17	57%	12	40%
Kings Road	uncontrolled	11	3	27%	4	36%	4	36%	3	27%
Roman Way	2 hours	27	21	78%	26	96%	23	85%	18	67%
Overall		191	117	61%	143	75%	129	68%	99	52%

2020 consultants.

The on-street parking demand is reduced, primarily due to the availability of the Market Place and a reduced demand in Station Road (abutting Market Place).

Table 7.4 – On-street Saturday parking occupancy in Lutterworth

Road	control	spaces	occupancy							
			10am/11am		12pm/1pm		2pm/3pm		4pm/5pm	
			number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ
Church Road	30 mins	14	12	86%	8	57%	9	64%	6	43%
Station Road	uncontrolled	49	21	43%	26	53%	27	55%	23	47%
Market Square	30 mins	18	16	89%	17	94%	17	94%	14	78%

2020 consultants.

7.2 Off-street parking occupancy rates

At the short stay car parks weekday parking demand in Market Harborough is less than that experienced on Saturday, as would be expected in a retail environment. The weekday parking survey data is shown in Table 7.5. It is interesting to note that the 2015 parking demand (64% of spaces occupied) has reduced compared to that recorded in 2007 (77% occupied).

The most significant reductions were recorded at the Sainsbury car park, Dodridge Road short-stay car park (although it should be noted that the car park configuration has changed since 2007) and at the Kings Head

Place car park. A significant increase in occupancy was recorded at the Symington Way car park. The long stay car parking demand recorded is within acceptable levels, being between 65% and 85%. These car parks are showing an increase in demand since the 2007 surveys, with Springfield car park showing a 300% increase in usage.

Table 7.5 – Off-street weekday parking occupancy rates in Market Harborough

			occupancy							
			10am/11am		12pm/1pm		2pm/3pm		4pm/5pm	
	control	spaces	number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ
The Commons	short stay	341	140	41%	252	74%	121	35%	116	34%
Springfield Street (Sainsbury)	short stay	630	310	49%	321	51%	354	56%	258	41%
Dodridge Road (1)	short stay	76	30	39%	38	50%	34	45%	8	11%
Kings Head Place	short stay	26	17	65%	17	65%	14	54%	14	54%
Symington Way	short stay	98	88	90%	92	94%	83	85%	35	36%
Market Hall	short stay	75	64	85%	74	99%	68	91%	52	69%
St Mary's Road West	short stay	30	26	87%	29	97%	27	90%	17	57%
Overall		1276	675	53%	823	64%	701	55%	500	39%
Angel Street	long stay	94	76	81%	82	87%	77	82%	60	64%
Dodridge Road	long stay	57	47	82%	51	89%	48	84%	13	23%
St Mary's Road East	long stay	54	36	67%	35	65%	36	67%	29	54%
Springfield Street	long stay	26	17	65%	18	69%	14	54%	11	42%
Stamford Close	long stay	35	13	37%	13	37%	13	37%	12	34%
Overall		266	189	71%	199	75%	188	71%	125	47%

2020 consultants. *Note (1) – excludes private parking places*

In Lutterworth off-street parking demand, shown in Table 7.6, illustrates that during the day is at, or close to full occupancy. A spot count was also undertaken at the Church Close car park in Lutterworth which recorded an occupancy rate of 88%.

Table 7.6 – Off-street weekday parking occupancy rates in Lutterworth

Car park	**control**	**spaces**	**Occupancy**							
			10am/11am		**12pm/1pm**		**2pm/3pm**		**4pm/5pm**	
			No.	**% occ**	**No.**	**% occ**	**No.**	**% occ**	**No.**	**% occ**
Chapel Street	short stay	38	14	37%	38	100%	38	100%	23	61%
George Street	short stay	41	38	93%	40	98%	39	95%	37	90%
Station Road	short stay	74	67	91%	74	100%	74	100%	42	57%

Overall		**153**	**119**	**78%**	**152**	**99%**	**151**	**99%**	**102**	**67%**

2020 consultants.

On Saturday in Market Harborough parking demand is typically at 90% of the available space, during the peak period, shown in Table 7.7. The prime shopper car parks exceed 95% occupancy rate. Long-stay parking demand is comparable with the recorded weekday occupancy rates.

Table 7.7 – Off-street Saturday parking occupancy rates in Market Harborough

			occupancy							
			10am/11am		12pm/1pm		2pm/3pm		4pm/5pm	
Road	control	spaces	number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ	number	% occ
The Commons	short stay	341	329	96%	332	97%	320	94%	223	65%
Springfield Street (Sainsbury)	short stay	630	593	94%	598	95%	549	87%	396	63%
Dodridge Road	short stay	76	69	91%	71	93%	59	78%	37	49%
Kings Head Place	short stay	26	18	69%	21	81%	22	85%	13	50%
Symington Way	short stay	98	83	85%	81	83%	75	77%	59	60%
Market Hall	short stay	75	75	100%	75	100%	72	96%	48	64%
St Mary's Road West	short stay	30	29	97%	29	97%	30	100%	23	77%
Mill Hill (Saturdays)	short stay	91	21	23%	23	25%	16	18%	9	10%
Overall		1367	1196	87%	1230	90%	1127	82%	808	59%
Angel Street	long stay	94	90	96%	87	93%	88	94%	47	50%
Dodridge Road	long stay	57	52	91%	51	89%	45	79%	36	63%
St Mary's Road East	long stay	54	38	70%	42	78%	33	61%	21	39%
Springfield Street	long stay	26	18	69%	18	69%	10	38%	7	27%
Stamford Close	long stay	35	9	26%	10	29%	9	26%	11	31%
Overall		**266**	**207**	**78%**	**208**	**78%**	**185**	**70%**	**122**	**46%**

2020 consultants. *Note (1) – excludes private parking places*

The Saturday parking demand in Lutterworth is shown in Table 7.8. The three town centre car parks show a significant difference in occupancy compared to the week. This may in park be due to a reduced demand from workers (commuters) or people attending the market. A similar, but exaggerated, trend was noted at the Church Close long stay car park, where a spot count recorded 24% of the available space occupied.

Table 7.8 – Off-street Saturday parking occupancy rates in Lutterworth

Car park	control	spaces	Occupancy							
			10am/11am		12pm/1pm		2pm/3pm		4pm/5pm	
			No.	% occ	No.	% occ	No.	% occ	No.	% occ
Chapel Street	short stay	38	31	82%	27	71%	29	76%	21	55%
George Street	short stay	41	17	41%	35	85%	33	80%	29	71%
Station Road	short stay	74	31	42%	37	50%	38	51%	29	39%
Overall		**153**	**79**	**52%**	**99**	**65%**	**100**	**65%**	**79**	**52%**

2020 consultants.

7.3 Parking permits

The car parks owned and operated by the Council are valuable assets and it is of vital importance that the Council continue to develop and improve services and facilities available from the car parks, maximising usage as far as possible, to help support the maintenance of them into the long term future. To support this, the Council issues a number of parking permits within its car parks.

8. Parking Enforcement

8.1 Management and Resources

The management of parking in the district falls into two broad areas. Firstly enforcement and secondly the back office management.

It is important for the Council to consider and investigate the best and most cost effective way of delivering the service whilst acknowledging that this important, customer facing service does still require dedicated resource.

Enforcement of the short-stay on-street parking bays is undertaken by HBC. The authority manages both on and off-street parking.

Managing the Pay and Display machines, in terms of cash collection, planned and reactive maintenance, as well as monitoring the status of machines also falls within the day to day management function. In addition the Council allocates resources to physical maintenance of car parks, again on a planned and reactive basis.

Given the council has a finite resource available it should be seeking to operate the car park service as efficiently and effectively as possible, including taking advantage of back office software management systems which in essence can provide a system to:

Monitor Pay & Display machines to identify faults, check battery status and ticket stock.

- Provide financial information
- Provide a statistical report on usage and income

8.2 Signing & lining

Good directional signage from the outskirts of the town through the centre to the car parks is essential for visitors to the town. Good directional signage may also help to reduce the number of vehicles parking on street, which can become a source of frustration to local residents.

8.3 PCN issue

PCN issue figures for the last four years are shown in Table 8.1, by selected town centre.

A higher level contravention would result in a £70 PCN (standard rate) and a lower level contravention would result in a £50 PCN (standard rate).

Table 8.1 – PCN issue rates Market Harborough & Lutterworth

town	**Total 2011**	**%**	**Total 2012**	**%**	**Total 2013**	**%**	**Total 2014**	**%**
Market Harborough								
On-street	2100	56%	2135	67%	1540	63%	1850	61%
Off-street	1640	44%	1070	33%	890	37%	1210	39%
Lutterworth								
On-street	120	50%	185	52%	87	47%	67	30%
Off-street	120	50%	170	48%	97	53%	153	70%

The number of PCNs taken to the adjudicator (2012/13 published figures) indicate that very few of Harborough's issues result in a formal appeal compared to the national average and local competitor authorities (excepting Northamptonshire). However, the percentage of these appeals not contested is high (70%) compared to the national average (28%).

Table 8.2 – PCN Appeals

	PCNs Issued	No. Appeals	% of PCNs	% not contested
Harborough	3482	10	0.29%	70%
England & Wales	4314038	16257	0.38%	28%
Hinckley & Bosworth	6066	31	0.51%	40%
Melton Mowbray	2376	12	0.51%	50%
Rugby	6145	25	0.41%	4%
Northamptonshire	38228	76	0.20%	22%

9. Current situation

9.1 Introduction

The parking provision within Harborough District Council and in particular within the centres of Market Harborough and Lutterworth is operating within capacity. The on-street parking, which offers a limited stay (30 or 40 minutes) for no charge is well occupied. Parking demand outside the main centres is well within the available parking space provided.

Demand would exceed supply within the town centres and frequently operates at occupancy rates in excess of 85%. These levels of occupancy are above the optimum rate as it is likely that a motorist will not be able to find a convenient parking place close to where he/she is aiming to park.

9.2 Parking Tariffs

Parking tariffs operate Monday to Saturday, between the hours of 8am to 6pm at car parks within Market Harborough and Lutterworth. The car park tariffs currently offer a minimum stay of two hours in all car parks where charges are applied. The Council operates long and short-stay car parks, which are designated by different tariff rates rather than prescriptive designation. .

The questionnaire of car park users indicates that the majority of respondents consider the current tariffs to be "about right".

The majority of competitor towns offer a one hour minimum stay tariff in order to encourage a quicker turnover of vehicles within the car parks. It is also noted that two hour maximum stay operates at certain car parks (again to encourage turnover at certain prime town centre car parks Harborough District Council offers lower long-stay parking tariffs than in the majority of the comparator towns.

9.3 Car park parking demand

9.3.1 Weekday parking demand

Overall weekday parking demand within short-stay car parks in Market Harborough demonstrates that the parking provision is well used during the day, averaging at about 50% to 60% during the day. There are some 500 to 600 spaces available. Three car parks exceeded the 85% optimal occupancy rate through the day. These were Market Hall, St Mary's West and Symington Way. Other than these three car parks there is adequate parking space within Market Harborough. It is also worth considering that the a number of the vehicles parking at the Sainsbury car park are likely to be permit holders (potentially 150 permit holders could park). It should be noted that if assessed on a weekday when the market is closed there is more parking space available, particularly in the Market Hall car park.

Long-stay car parks in Market Harborough experience higher rates of occupancy, exceeding 75% occupancy during the day. This indicates that longer stay parking is in greater demand during the week. There are some 60 to 70 spaces available during the day.

In Lutterworth weekday parking at both short-stay and long-stay car parks exceeds the 85% optimal rate, with one, or two, parking available.

Parking within the car parks in the rest of the district is well within capacity.

9.3.2 Saturday parking demand

Saturday parking demand at short-stay car parks within Market Harborough is significantly higher than that experienced in the week. All the shopper car parks are operating at demand rates exceeding 80% to 90% throughout the day. The one exception being the Mill Hill Saturday only public car park, where occupancy rates are some 20% of the spaces, which accounts for the majority of the available parking space.

At the long-stay car parks are similar to those recorded during the week.

In Lutterworth car park demand in the short-stay car parks is less than during the week, typically being 65% of spaces. The impact of the market operating during the week can be seen to have a significant impact upon the parking demand in the Station Road area. The long-stay car park also shows a significant decrease in parking demand.

In the remainder of the district Saturday parking demand is low.

9.4 Designation of car park spaces

As indicated the designation between long and short-stay car parks, in the district is managed by differential parking tariffs, rather than imposing a maximum stay period.

In both Lutterworth (90%) and Market Harborough (83%) the majority of car park spaces are designated as short-stay spaces. This designation in a market / retail orientated town centre would be expected to help ensure that shoppers can find a convenient parking place for a shopping visit. The use of the car parks for short stay visits is confirmed by the average rate of pay per ticket of £1 based on the number.

In addition to the provision of long or short stay parking the council provides a number of free 30 minute stay parking bays in prime shopping locations, such as The Commons car park (outside Tesco and Co Op) and Sainsbury (outside Sainsbury's and Homebase). These parking spaces are well occupied (typically 80% to 90%) and experience a rapid turnover of parking acts.

Disabled parking provision is provided in the council car parks (3% of spaces in Market Harborough and 6% of space in Lutterworth). The provision is comparable with the percentage provision in neighbouring urban centres. The disabled spaces are not well occupied, during the week or on Saturday, but will provide for a genuine social need.

9.5 On-street parking provision

On-street parking throughout the district is free of charge. There are some limited on-street parking places provided in Market Harborough and Lutterworth. In Market Harborough the majority of the short-stay bays offer a 40 minute maximum period of stay at the town centre spaces. In Lutterworth the prime on-street parking spaces offer a 30 minute prime space period of stay.

The on-street parking spaces are well used for short stay visits. The occupancy rate exceeds 85% in the vast majority of instances during the week. On Saturday the occupancy rate is reduced, with a greater number of visitors/shoppers using the car parks for anticipated stays of longer than 40 minutes.

9.6 Enforcement

Parking enforcement is undertaken by Harborough District Council for on-street on behalf of Leicestershire County Council and off-street. The Council issues some 3,000 PCNs per annum in Market Harborough, 240

PCNs per annum in Lutterworth and a further 200 elsewhere. These figures have been fairly stable over the four years, 2011 to 2014.

9.7 Parking equipment

All charged car parks within the district are controlled by P&D machines. The P&D machines are old and experience mechanical failures. This was evidenced by the number of machines noted as out of order during the parking demand surveys and substantiated by the responses to the car park user questionnaires.

It should also be noted that the questionnaires highlighted a desire from car park users to be allowed to use different methods of payment, including non-cash alternatives. Motorists would also appreciate the option of making payment on return to their vehicle, rather than when parking, so that the actual time parked could be paid for.

9.8 Car park signing and access

Generally the signing within the paid car parks is considered to be clear and adequate. In a number of instances the directional signing to the car parks could be described as poor. Access to some of the car parks is also difficult to identify for non-regular users.

In Market Harborough the town centre car park directional signing is not clear. There are a number of examples of directional signing issues, such as;

- The signing to the Saturday only car park at Mill Hill
- Signing to Dodridge Road car park(s) does not indicate that long and short-stay parking is available
- Signing appears to indicate that car parking is available at the magistrate's court and in Roman Way. The parking in Roman Way is two hour maximum stay on-street parking
- There are no signs to the Kings Place car park

In Lutterworth the directional signing to the Chapel Street car park is not clear (for visitors). The road layout is difficult at the entry road, but the signing appears inadequate.

9.9 Coach parking

Whilst there was no coach parking demand recorded during the parking user surveys, coach parking is considered to be a significant aspect of the tourism offer for the district. Only two comments were received from car park users concerning coach parking issues.

9.10 Christmas free parking

Car park users were asked for their opinions on the provision of free Saturday parking during the run up to Christmas. Just over half the respondents stated that they made use of the free Christmas parking. However over 75% of the respondents also stated that they found it more difficult than usual to find a parking space as a result of the free Christmas parking. Less than 50% of the respondents stated that the free parking did not encourage them to shop longer in the town centre.

It should also be noted that parking income data indicates that some users continued to pay to park during the Christmas period.

10. Development of car park strategy

The key question when developing a car parking strategy is how can parking be managed to best support both the local economy and the needs of the residents?

Parking is a service, and the service has to be managed properly. A “free for all” i.e. no restrictions, no charge and no enforcement approach is not an option in good management. Many of the implications of taking this approach were recently vividly displayed when Powys Council removed all parking enforcement from Aberystwyth.

A good quality service will meet the needs of its customers, e.g. shoppers, visitors, workers and residents. The parking stock needs to be allocated to meet the differing needs of users. Correct allocation will ensure the stock is used efficiently, both reducing underused locations and reducing the pressure on the most popular sites. Effective enforcement is a key element.

It is important to acknowledge the role parking plays in the economic vitality of a centre. However, it must be acknowledged that parking is one element affecting whether people visit a centre or not. The town’s competitiveness will depend on many factors including quality of shopping experience, the proximity of competing centres and the quality of other attractions within/close to the centre.

Where possible the parking strategy should aim to integrate with wider transportation strategies. By doing this other appropriate measures can be considered to improve access to centres through other modes of transport. This will encourage those that are able to use alternatives to do so, freeing up parking spaces for the many that do not, and may never, have alternative modes of travel available to them.

The operational objectives of a parking service should include:

- providing a high quality service for all its customers
- that key users to have good access to the town centre
- A high quality enforcement regime to control illegal parking
- A revenue income for the council to re-invest into parking projects and maintenance

A clear appreciation of the broad customer expectations needs to be understood. That is;

- A car park available in a convenient location, of good quality and well signposted
- A parking space available to park for as long as required
- A well laid out car park that feels safe e.g. well lit
- Cost is fair, reflecting the quality of the facility, although it is important to note that for many cost is the least important consideration.

This is particularly the case for visitors and to a lesser extent for shoppers. However, workers will usually seek cheaper locations, although these are likely to be more remote.

Meeting the requirements of customers can be broken down as follows:

Residents

- Close to home as possible parking mainly late afternoon, evening / weekends
- Will not want their street full of other peoples vehicles

Shoppers

- Needs will vary depending on shopping experience available within the town centre
- The larger the centre the longer the stay
- The shorter the stay, the closer the shopper will want to park

Visitors

- Day visitors to a tourist destination may require 3-5 hours parking
- Will require clear directional signage to the car parks and then from there to the visitor attractions

Local businesses

- As well as servicing and deliveries, local businesses will often look for parking schemes available for their staff.

Workers

- Full or half day parking provision at as little cost as possible
- Low paid workers may try and find "free" parking away from car parks

To meet all of the aforementioned requirements the parking service should, where possible and practicable, implement a:

- Integrated management of all parking provision including on-street parking
- Well-structured charging regime
- Charging structure that reflects the needs of the individual towns
- Charging structure that reflects the needs of the parking user

Ideally, to achieve the above to its fullest extent, parking services needs to provide:

- Some on-street short stay parking spaces
- Short stay, charged off-street parking closest to the central shopping areas, ideally with maximum stay of, say, 2 hours (or priced to encourage a maximum stay of two hours)
- Short and medium stay parking further from the centre for longer trips and in tourist centres conveniently located for the attractions
- Long stay parking at a greater distance with tariffs set to suit both full and part time workers, including parking schemes for local businesses
- Where circumstances demand, residential permit parking arrangements
- Clear directional signage

In all cases the charges would need to be set at a level that reflects the nature of the town; at a level which will ensure proper management of the parking service whilst not having an adverse effect on the local economy.

11. Future parking requirement

The car parking strategy needs to keep abreast of actual movements for an accurate picture of future demands to be captured in light of evolving trends. It is essential that actual changes are monitored regularly and carefully to ensure that decisions flowing from the strategy are taken using the most up to date data.

- Identified future requirements
- Car park provision
- Christmas parking
- Coach parking

11.1 Supply and Demand

The economic downturn clearly affects town centres and demand for parking. However, there is an opportunity to plan for returning high levels of demand and the Council should use the Car Park Strategy as a catalyst to appraise and plan for the future accordingly.

In the short term, capacity is unlikely to be an issue in any of the Council owned car parks. In fact, there may be a case for rationalisation of some car parks in certain areas. In the medium term, subject to the economic climate and town centre vitality, there is a high probability that the capacity may need to increase along with the population growth.

At present the Council does not collect regular parking usage statistics and has in the past relied on occasional manual parking counts and some basic information collected from the pay & display machines.

An assessment of future parking demand in the district using the forecasts based upon the DfT's Trip End Model Presentation Program (TEMPRO) 6.2 growth figures for Harborough District has been undertaken to project potential parking demand within Market Harborough and Lutterworth for the next 15 years (until 2030)

It is evident from the projected growth rates that weekday parking occupancy at short-stay car parks (assuming no change) in Market Harborough would remain within capacity until 2020. The overall peak occupancy rate would be at 67% of spaces, although there would be localised parking pressure at Market Hall, St Mary's West and Symington Way. At the long-stay car parks there would be adequate capacity to satisfy parking demand within the week, only at Angel Street would capacity exceed 85%.

Parking demand experienced on Saturday in Market Harborough the overall short-stay parking demand can be catered for until 2020, although the car parks would be operating above the optimum 85% occupancy rate. By 2025 the car parks would all be operating at almost 100% (this is only not the case because of the poor usage of the Mill Hill car park. The long-stay facilities do not experience the same amount of pressure, but would be operating at, or above, the 85% occupancy rate.

In Lutterworth demand could not be satisfied during the week. Additional weekday parking is required to accommodate the parking demand experienced, especially on market days.

RECOMMENDATION: Review the options for the existing car parks to ensure maximum availability of spaces to meet future parking demands

11.2 Competitor benchmarking

In order to maintain a record and ensure a competitive edge over the direct competition it is proposed that a series of indicators and a process of benchmarking be formally adopted for parking.

It is proposed that consideration be given to the adoption of a number of the indicators (listed in below) following internal consultation and with other authorities within the area to achieve a coherent approach that will assist in delivering high performance.

Proposed Indicators for the parking service benchmarking exercise;

- Parking tariffs
- Number of spaces including log / short-stay mix
- Availability of disabled parking spaces
- Availability of prime shopper spaces ("pop and shop")
- Location assessment (e.g. quality/number machines/signing/lighting/ambiance)
- Methods of payment available
- Car parks achieving "park mark"
- Crimes per 1000 visits (ticket sales)
- Percentage PCNs paid
- Average income per PCN
- Percentage PCNs taken to adjudication
- Spaces monitored per CEO

RECOMMENDATION: To undertake competitor benchmarking exercises on an annual basis to ensure the Council remains competitive compared to both neighbouring authorities and other English market towns

11.3 Pricing Policy

As a management tool a charging regime is instrumental in encouraging turnover of parking bays, which in managing parking provision, being instrumental in matching supply to demand by controlling durations and turnover, deterring or preventing certain users groups such as commuters or making specific provision for categories such as local workers. Alternatively or in addition, they can be used to re-direct users so that demand on capacity is more evenly distributed.

An appropriate charging regime must be set at a level which will ensure the proper management of the parking service, including effective enforcement and the maintenance of the Council's assets. However the pricing policy should reflect the nature of the town and not be set at such levels to have an adverse effect on the local economy.

Tariff structures and their appropriateness are extremely important in managing parking provision. They can be instrumental in matching supply to demand by controlling durations and turnover, deterring or preventing certain user groups, e.g. Commuters or making specific provisions for categories e.g. local workers. It is generally acknowledged that charging for car parking is accepted by motorists and the charge, to a greater degree, unlikely to affect where users will park. The choice of site is usually determined by convenience rather than cost.

In setting charges the Council should consider how they will:

- support economic vitality
- Make best use of the council assets
- Recover costs, maintain and improve the asset

It is considered necessary that charges to be comparable to similar settlements in order not to encourage excessive out migration to neighbouring authorities.

Harborough operates a “pop and shop” scheme in some of its car parks (Sainsbury and Commons car park) to encourage short shopping trips. These facilities are appreciated by local residents / town centre users as evidenced by the consultation returns.

RECOMMENDATION: Review the feasibility of widening the “pop and shop” scheme to other car park locations in the district

RECOMMENDATION: Review the current tariff structure and pricing policy for pay and display car parks

11.4 Car park layout and signing review

Reviews of the car park layout should be a regularly programmed to determine if there are any opportunities to revise access, circulation or bay layout to increase capacity and/or improve movement around the car parks thus contributing a minimisation of traffic issues on the highways. This can be particularly useful where demand profiles show that an imbalance between demand and supply is small and therefore such a review could meet the increased demand through this action alone.

RECOMMENDATION: Review access, layout and directional signage as part of the Council’s maintenance programme for car parks.

11.5 Coach Parking

It is hoped that coach parties become an increasingly important element of parking demand within Harborough. Although it is estimated that some 50,000 tourists are attracted to Harborough a significant proportion of these will travel by car. There was little, if any, evidence of coach parking demand (away from the leisure centre) in either Market Harborough or Lutterworth. No coaches were recorded parking in the public car parks or on-street during the week or at the weekend. Only two responses to the consultation highlighted coach parking as an issue.

Due to the limited number of coach parking spaces, no designated drop off points and limited staff resource to manage the coach movements, the Council should undertake a holistic assessment of all its parking provision to assess whether improvements could be made to coach parking and management.

Provision of coach parking in Market Harborough

Provision of parking for tourist/day visitor coaches has been highlighted as being a problem in Market Harborough town centre. It is anticipated that coach parking will become a more significant feature in Market Harborough as the council will shortly be launching a programme of events (and facilities) to attract a greater number of tourists and visitors.

To support the growth of tourism within the town and the anticipated increase in coach drop off/pick up demand it is recommended that a dedicated drop-off point and safe parking facility should be provided. The provision of a dedicated location would help to reduce traffic congestion in the town centre and any inappropriate parking by coaches during the day.

It is not however recommended that a new off-street coach parking facility be established (involving the purchase of additional land and facility construction), rather make use of an existing facility which could satisfy the specification below.

The specification for a coach parking facility includes the following preferred requirements:

Market Harborough requires;

• Space for at least two coaches to park;

• Provision for personal safety and security;

• Close to town centre / attractions;

• Close to public conveniences;

• Easily accessible from north and south; and

• The site should not obstruct the highway, access to properties or be close to residential properties.

RECOMMENDATION: Review the availability of town centre locations to provide a coach parking facilities including potential drop off points.

11.6 Disabled Parking

Spaces for disabled motorists are provided in all the council pay and display car parks, where appropriate to do so, with provision being consistent with the Equalities Act requirements.

It is of vital importance that disabled spaces are located with as much convenience as possible to the users destination, payment mechanisms should be accessible and consideration should be given to user friendly methods of payment as well as pay and display machines e.g. pay by phone, wave and pay, pre-paid scratch cards for example.

11.7 Maximising usage

The Council operates a resident parking permit scheme for residents in Market Harborough, using Stamford Close car park.

The car parks owned and operated by the Council are valuable assets and it is of vital importance that the Council continue to develop and improve the services and facilities available from the car parks, maximising usage as far as possible, to help support the maintenance of them into the long term future. For example the Council already facilitates business, residents and non-residents parking permit schemes. The schemes operate in specific car parks and most locations are at, or close to, issuing the maximum number of permits available due to the popularity of the scheme.

RECOMMENDATION: To review the current parking permit schemes in operation across the district

11.8 Payment systems

To date the payment system has only been by coin only pay and display machines on arrival. There are many other payment options that can be considered particularly with the assistance of advancing technology.

Chip and pin has been an option to include on pay & display machines for a number of years. However, more recently there has been the addition of wave & pay, a method of payment made by card but without the need to insert it into the machine and key in a pin.

Other methods that are becoming more widespread are pay by phone, which can also be used as a top up payment method and useful for visitors who find they need/wish to stay longer than originally paid parking for and can therefore top up their parking without having to return to the car park. This can also work with payment schemes through participating retailers.

The consultation returns indicated that alternative payment systems would be appreciated. 99% were in favour of extending the payment options.

RECOMMENDATION: Evaluate the alternative methods of payments for the pay and display car parks

11.9 Safety and security of parking service

The safety and security of any parking service is a crucial factor to consider. If users do not feel safe within the car park or do not feel comfortable leaving their vehicles within the car park, it is unlikely to be used. Methods that are considered to assist safety and security include CCTV, street lighting, and patrols of Civil Enforcement Officers throughout the day. During consultation with users of car parks within the Harborough District, safety and security of car parks was rated the third most significant issue to consider within car parks.

Pay & Display car parks are generally less secure than car parks that have pay on exit systems. This is because vehicles can enter and exit without barrier systems. The more measures in place the more secure a car park will be. To summarise this, the following hierarchy can be used to highlight the safety of car parks:

- Multi story car park with ANPR barrier systems
- Surface car parks with ANPR systems
- Multi story car parks with barrier systems
- Surface car parks with barrier systems
- Car parks with pay & display machines

All car parks within the Harborough District are pay & display. Therefore it is worth considering upgrading the payment options to improve safety and security of visitors and their vehicles. There is sufficient CCTV within the pay & display car parks and there doesn't appear to be an issue with safety and security in any of the car parks.