Off-Street Car Parking Strategy
2018 - 2023

Introduction

We have ambitious plans for Huntingdonshire – *We want to support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth and provide value for money services for the people of Huntingdonshire*. Making sure that it works for our people and continues to develop as an attractive and successful place. Huntingdonshire is set to continue to grow, and it is essential that in planning for this growth we have the infrastructure in place to meet the needs of our residents, economy and visitors. Our parking arrangements are a key element of this.

This Strategy in front of you sets out clear guidance to ensure that Huntingdonshire District Council delivers efficient and effective off-street car parking services between now and 2036 and meets these challenges. This strategy has emerged from a lot of work, engagement and the review of a lot of hard evidence. We now have a clearer view than ever before on the expectations of ours customers, and the future needs of our district, and it is this evidence mixed with best practice from elsewhere under the guidance of your elected representatives that has informed this strategy. A summary of the key evidence we relied upon can be found in the appendices to this strategy.

As a Cabinet we recognised that we needed to review how we manage our car parks, to meet existing and future requirements. Our car parks need to be sustainable and able to support business growth in our District, they must meet residents' expectations and encourage visitors to our Towns – supporting our ambitions for our market Towns, and they must do all of this whilst providing good value for money.

When my predecessor presented a project overview for a 'Strategic Review of Car Parking' to the Huntingdonshire District Council Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth), it was agreed that the initial problem faced was a lack of a clear vision and strategic priorities for the operation and management of our car parks. The solution to this was fairly simple; to undertake a strategic review of off-street car parking that gathered evidence, created a vision and developed a strategy.

I'm pleased to say that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel approved the creation of a "Strategic Review of Car Parking Task and Finish Group", who have, in partnership with Officers, delivered this evidence based Off-Street Car Parking Strategy. I would like to place on record my thanks to all the people who have helped create this Off Street Parking Strategy, and for the hard work and effort that has now achieved what I believe to be a sustainable approach for parking into the future.

This strategy has reviewed how we currently deliver off-street car parking services, reviewed options for change and sets the parameters for Officers to develop and deliver future car parking services. It describes how we approached the project; how we arrived at our conclusions and the next steps we will take.

We have listened, we have taken expert advice and we will continually review our work. The conclusions drawn in this Strategy are forward thinking, realistic and achievable. We believe they meet the tests we have set out for supporting the growth of our district and ensuring we meet the needs and desires of our communities and visitors. If you have any comments you would like to make, I would be delighted to hear from you.

Executive Councillor for Operations

Contents

From Vision to Implementation

Members of Huntingdonshire District Council's Strategic Review of Car Parking Task and Finish Group agreed that the strategy we develop should be structured with 4 clear stages to deliver our Vision, and operate on a cycle across 5 years.

Stage 1 - Concept

As we had agreed with Overview and Scrutiny to deliver an 'evidence based strategy', we needed to ensure that we were in possession of sufficient evidence to begin with. Whilst we are gathering and reviewing the evidence, a Vision was created that Overview and Scrutiny agreed would meet the expectations of our car park users.

Stage 2 - Development

Based on the evidence collected over the past 9 months *(presented within appendcies 1 – 2)*, members of Huntingdonshire District Council's Strategic Review of Car Parking Task and Finish Group developed short-term goals and longer term objectives to deliver the Core Priorities of the Vision.

Stage 3 - Delivery

This strategy document is now the starting point for Huntingdonshire District Council's Parking Service. Officers are able to progress with delivering our short & medium term goals and longer term objectives. Whilst we have adopted a single set of strategic priorities, the short-term goals may require the council to consider the implementation of a variety of town and location based solutions. The Council will support enhancements to car parks where the costs are borne by the users in line with our agreed financial principles of parking.

Stage 4 - Operate

Huntingdonshire District Council's Parking Service can monitor the success of changes made to ensure they have been successfully delivered. The information gathered at this stage will be the basis for our next strategy, with any long-term objectives still ongoing and relevant being carried over, as the service continues to drive towards positive change.

Within the agreed stages of the Strategy's structure, Huntingdonshire District Council Officers will work to monitor and address emergent risks as part of the effective management and delivery of the service and its service plan objectives. Improvements will be measured from a user's perspective through the use of regular customer surveys and satisfaction monitoring.

Our Parking Vision

Recognising the role that parking plays in contributing to our Corporate Plan objectives and our twin priorities of serving Huntingdonshire as a vibrant place and supporting its people to enjoy a fulfilling life. The parking task and finish group worked to develop a Vision aimed to provide the high quality services local people want and deserve and as with our corporate plan this strategy shows how we intend to meet these objectives.

In the development of the strategy, we have worked with and given consideration to:

- Huntingdonshire District Council: Local Plan to 2036
- Huntingdonshire District Council: Car Park user survey
- Huntingdonshire District Council corporate plan
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority: St Neots Masterplan for Growth
- House of Commons Library: Electric Vehicles and Infrastructure

From the core priorities set out in our Parking Vision for Huntingdonshire, both short-term goals and longer term objectives have been developed that work towards a common end state: the promotion & futureproofing of our town centre's viability. With this in mind the O&S task and finish panel agreed a clear vision for parking:

Our Parking Vision

Huntingdonshire District Council will support the sustainability and growth of its towns and villages through the provision of convenient, easily accessible car park locations that focus on achieving our core priorities of

- Providing and delivering safety and security for our users

- Providing and delivering clean and well maintained parking places

- Implementing technology that positively assists our car park users

- Promoting environmental sustainability by supporting alternative fuel and travel methods

Implementing technology that positively assists our car park users

In our ambition to ***Become more efficient and effective in the way we deliver services***, and our commitment to ***Becoming a more Customer Focused Organisation***. We have a clear ambition to make ever greater use of technology to aid our car parks users, meet their expectations and provide us with information that will enable us to become more effective in the delivery of services.

Increasingly customer expectations are set by their interactions in their personal lives. Customers want to have the convenience they have come to expect from the high street and digital providers. Customer feedback from our user survey shows that there is a clear demand for greater convenience within our car parks, including the opportunity for more cashless payment options.

This new technology will enable us to ensure a smoother parking process for customers, and enable us to use the information we gather to better understand and meet customer needs. It will also enable us to move toward a pay for what you use approach to parking, rather than the traditional pay upfront model. With this in mind our strategic goals are:

Short & medium term goals [Years 1 & 2]

- To undertake a feasibility study to asses suitable payment, access and space monitoring technology to enable clear identification and assessment of the benefits, challenges and user feedback.
- To deploy alternative payment technology where there is a business case to do so.
- To deploy suitable access and space monitoring technology where it is technically feasible and there is a business case to do so.

Long-term objectives [Years 3 &4]

- To ease congestion and town centre traffic by working with partners in the implementation and operation of traffic management solutions.

Promoting environmental sustainability by supporting alternative fuel and travel methods

With our Corporate Plan objectives around ensuring we *Support people to improve their health and well-being* and to *Create, protect and enhance our safe and clean built and green environment* parking has a part to play in both. Air quality is a key health issue across the country, and the decisions we make with regard to parking will impact directly on this.

Our working group recognised the importance of delivering as environmentally sustainable a parking service as possible. Ensuring we support the use of new clean technologies that emerge on the market and infrastructure that supports people to walk and cycle facilitating those that wish to make sustainable transport choices, and making use of our car parks as transport hubs.

Keeping abreast of new opportunities will help us to meet our corporate plan objectives, and ensure Huntingdonshire remains a pleasant and dynamic place to live ensuring that our service remains fit for the future. Our goals are:

Short & medium term goals [Years 1 & 2]

- To survey all our car parks to establish technical feasibility for electric vehicle charging.
- To undertake user surveys to assess local demand and best fit options for the operation of electric charging bays.
- To asses demand and incorporate support for alternative sustainable travel methods within our car parks.
- To assess the feasibility of our car parks as sites for the generation of renewable energy for their operation and potential income generation.

Long-term objectives [Years 3 &4]

- To deliver feasible changes which reduce the environmental impact of our car parks.

Providing and delivering safety and security to our users

Ensuring we ***Support people to improve their health and well-being is a key ambition for us***. This is as true in our public spaces, as anywhere else, and we are committed to ensuring our car parks are as safe and secure as they possibly can be.

In our engagement with users, car park security was not rated as highly by our users as we would want. This is an area for focus to raise overall user satisfaction, and meet expectations of our customers.

Work in this area will deliver a safer environment for our customers and their property. Building on the feedback from our users around what they want to see, we aim to:

Short & medium term goals [Years 1 & 2]

- To assess all our car park sites to deliver improvements in security in our car parks where possible. This includes cameras, lighting and barriers with a proposal developed to deliver these changes.
- To undertake a review of the layout of parking sites to understand what pedestrian focussed improvements can be made with regard to the use of pedestrian walkways, drop kerbs and trolley bays with a proposal developed to deliver these changes.

Long-term objectives [Years 3 &4]

- To have delivered changes for improved security & safety that meet local needs.
- To work in partnership with other local authorities and emergency services to address crime and fear of crime in our car parks.

Providing and delivering clean and well maintained parking places

Our car parks play a significant role in our market towns and we are committed to making sure we ***support the development of infrastructure to enable growth***. Car parks are a key element of the infrastructure for growth, and we see them as such. In addition they set the visual tone for the experience of our regular users and those visitors from out of the area. It is therefore important that they are clean, well laid out and convenient.

One of the key requirements highlighted by our users was for "wider bays" to meet the requirements of modern cars, families and lifestyles; this is something we are committed to bringing forward proposals on.

The delivery of the goals beneath will ensure that our car parks remain responsive to customer needs, and support the needs of our communities.

Short & medium term goals [Years 1 & 2]

- To develop design solutions that maximise the available car parking spaces for our users. This includes a review of the surface condition of a site and the furniture & features.
- To implement a customer ratings system on the satisfaction with our car parks and re-evaluate our cleansing schedules.
- To develop town based proposals that delivers the required parking space capacity to meet the anticipated increasing demands.
- To undertake a review the current size of our parking bays with a view to understanding the cost implications associated with increasing bay size.

Long-term objectives [Years 3 &4]

- To have developed a programme of works that delivers the proposed, endorsed changes for site condition, size & cleanliness.
- To work with local partners & stakeholders to reduce littering.

Financial Principles of Parking

We have a duty to ensure we are continuously striving to ***Become more efficient and effective in the way we deliver services***, delivering the best possible value for public money. Whilst at the same time constantly striving to be a ***more Customer Focused Organisation***. As such we recognise the value in providing some clear financial principles that govern the way we charge for parking, whilst seeking to deliver the improvements our users have asked for in this consultation exercise, and which our growth aspirations require.

The financial principles below have been proposed to ensure we are fair, transparent and consistent in our approach to car park charges.

The principles are:

- We will seek to introduce a "pay for what you use" system to ensure that customers only pay for the time they spend in our car parks.

- We will seek to offer customers a choice of standard and premium parking options.

- We will ensure that our car parking fees are lower than the average index of car parking charges of our comparator authorities

- We will continue to offer our regular car park users value for money with the option of discount permit schemes.

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Appendix 1

Huntingdonshire Parking Analysis Report Overview

Extract from the "Huntingdonshire Parking Analysis" report by SDG

Background

Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) was commissioned by **Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)** to undertake analysis of current off-street car park occupancy of HDC-operated car parks and to estimate how the additional housing plans set out in the Local Plan might affect future occupancy patterns.

The work was commissioned by the **HDC Parking Task and Finish Group** which is developing an evidence-based parking strategy for Huntingdonshire.

The **key objectives** were to consider:

- The effect of the proposed residential developments within the district on the current off-street parking provision provided by HDC as outlined in the **Local Housing Plan**:

    - + 6,500 homes by 2022

    - + 5,500 additional homes by 2027

    - + 5,800 additional homes by 2036   Total 17,800 (Cumulative)

- The effect and impact of proposed and ongoing **Highways developments** in and around the towns

- Any **additional off-street car parking** provision required to accommodate any forecast increase in vehicle trips to the town centres

Occupancy surveys were conducted:

- Weekday - 19th & 20th October 2017

- Saturday - 21st October 2017

- Using Automatic Number Plate recognition (ANPR) cameras at entry and exit points

- At 15 minute intervals between 07:00 and 1800

Huntingdon

Key findings

- **Weekday** occupancy for the council operated car park network as a whole in Huntingdon peaked at **75%** of the overall capacity of **1,295 spaces** in Council-operated car parks between **11:00 & 13:00.** Due to its placement, Bridge Place car park is not included within the town centre occupancy calculations.

- **Future** weekday occupancy projections are:

  - **84%** in **2022**   (representing **324 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **89%** in **2027**   (representing **207 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **97%** in **2036**   (representing **142 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

- **Saturday** occupancy for the council operated car park network as a whole peaked at **78%** between **12:00 & 13:00**

- **Future** Saturday occupancy projections are:

  - **91%** in **2022**   (representing **117 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **101%** in **2027** (representing a **shortage of 13 spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **108%** in **2036** (representing a **shortage of 104 spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

- **High** proportion of vehicle staying **less than 10 minutes**:

  - Sainsbury's & MSCP: 17 - 21% vehicles

  - Bridge Place: 31 – 33 % vehicles

- **High** car park occupancy by **Season Tickets**:

  - Great Northern Street: **47%**

  - St Germain Street: 6%

  - Riverside: **25%**

  - Ingram Street: **32%**

  - Mill Common: 2%

  - Bridge Place: 14%

Huntingdon - Future Occupancy Projection (Weekday)
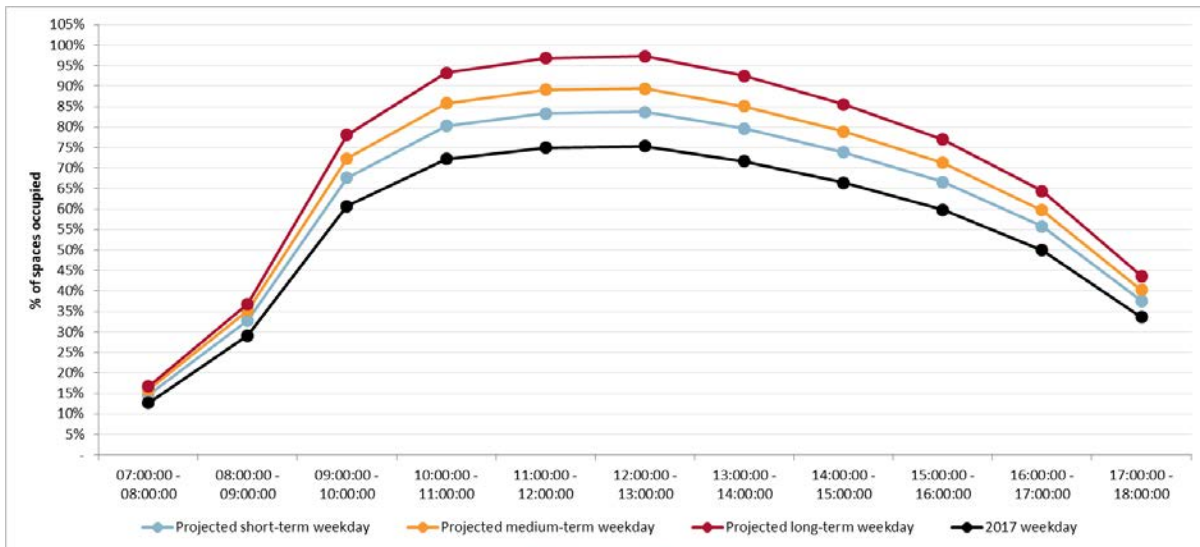
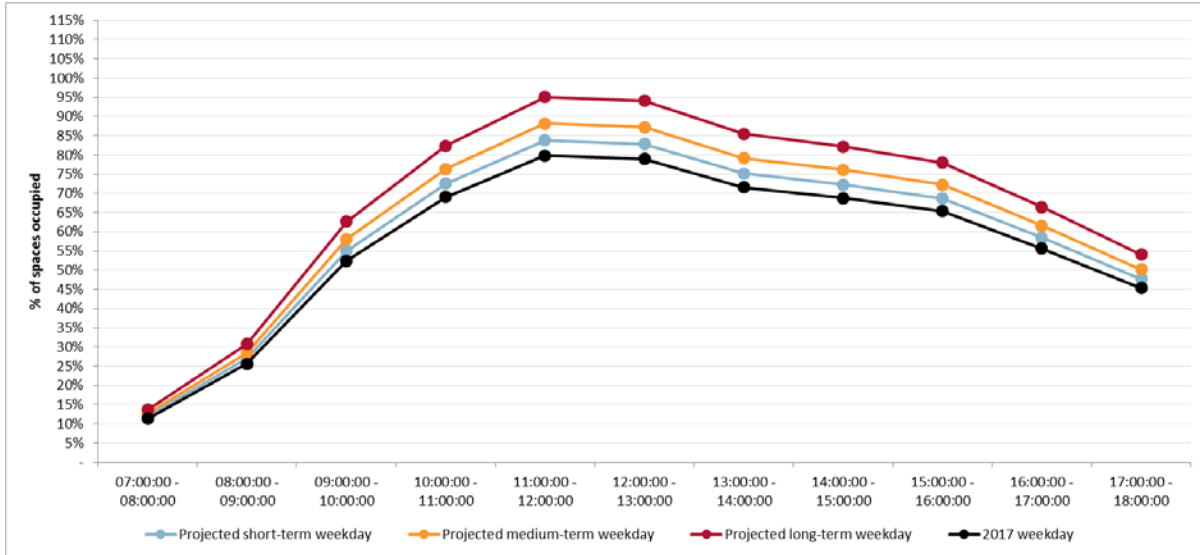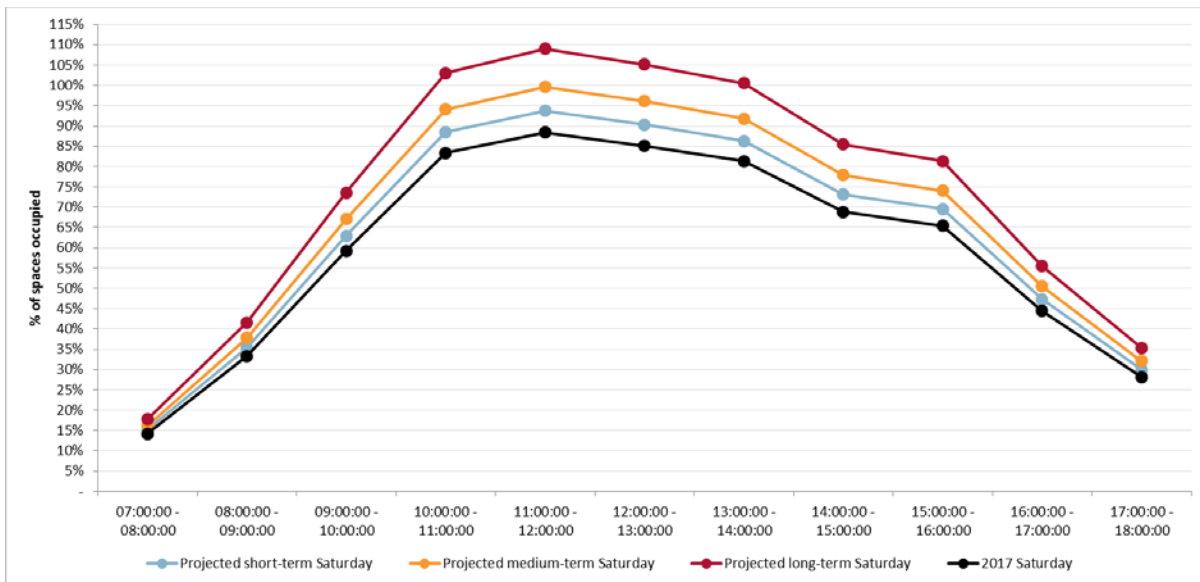## Huntingdon - Future Occupancy Projection (Saturday)
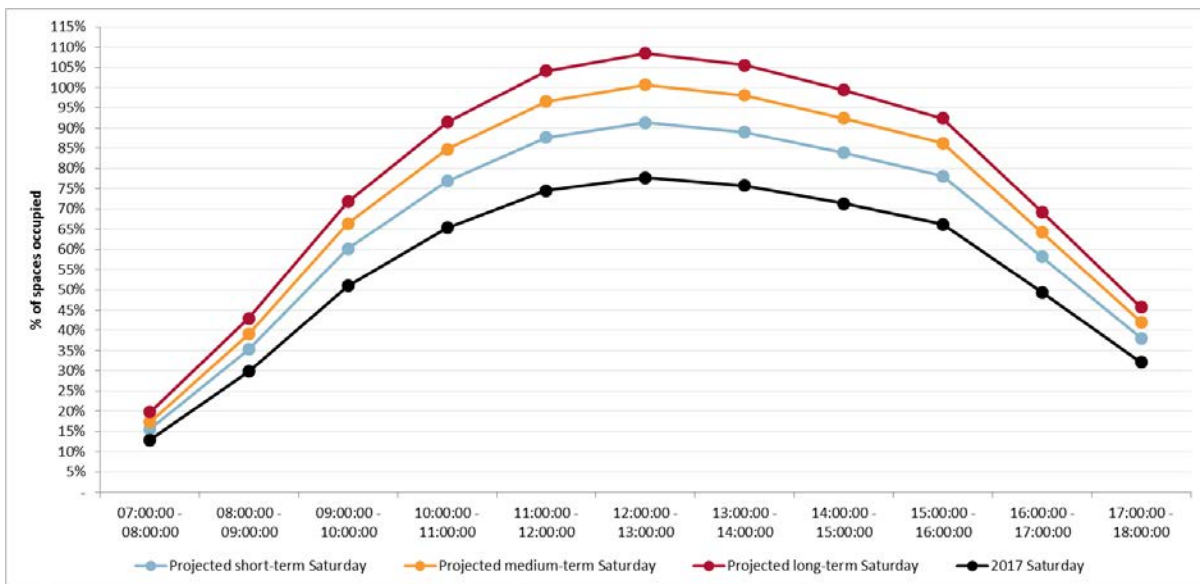
St Ives

Key findings:

- **Weekday** occupancy for the council operated car park network as a whole peaked at **80%** of the overall capacity of **592 spaces** in Council-operated car parks between **11:00 & 12:00**

- **Future** weekday occupancy projections are:

  - **84%** in **2022**   (representing **95 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **88%** in **2027**   (representing **71 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **95%** in **2036**   (representing **33 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

- **Saturday** occupancy for the council operated car park network as a whole peaked at **88%** between **11:00 & 12:00**

- **Future** Saturday occupancy projections are:

  - **94%** in **2022**   (representing **36 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **100%** in **2027**

  - **109%** in **2036**   (representing a **shortage of 53 spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

- **High** proportion of vehicle staying **less than 5 minutes**:

  - Waitrose: 22 - 24% vehicles

  - Globe Place: 35 % vehicles

- **High** car park occupancy by **Season Tickets**:

  - Globe Place: **19%**

  - Darwoods Pond: 8%

St Ives - Future Occupancy Projection (Weekday)

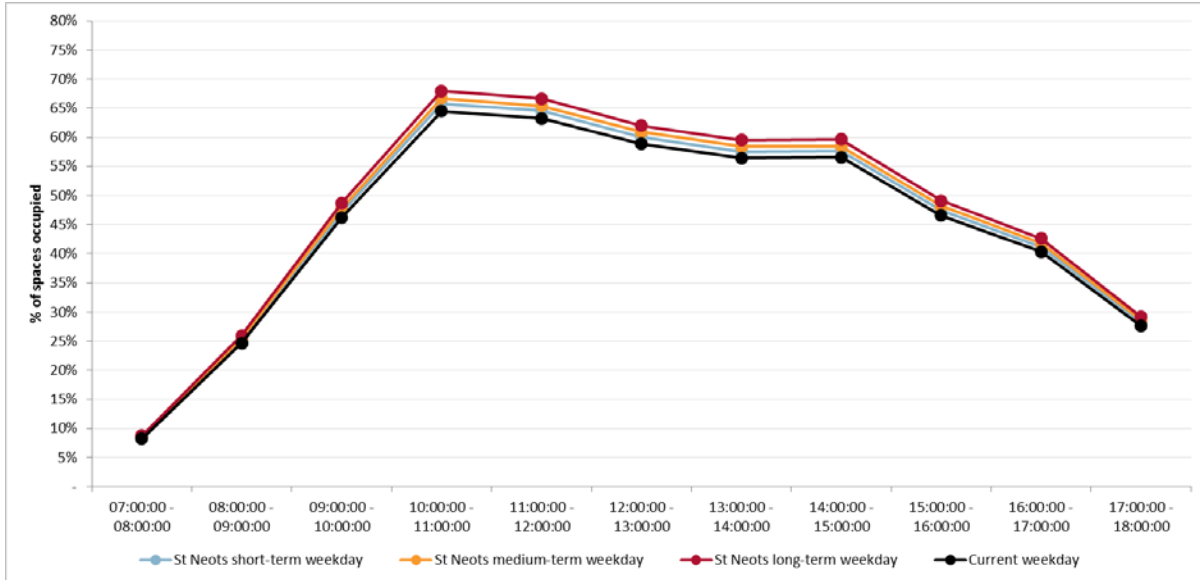## St Ives - Future Occupancy Projection (Saturday)

St Neots

Key findings:

- **Weekday** occupancy for the council operated car park network as a whole peaked at **69%** of the overall capacity of **909 spaces** in Council-operated car parks between **11:00 & 13:00**

- **Future** weekday occupancy projections are:

  - **67%** in **2022**   (representing **300 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **68%** in **2027**   (representing **291 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **68%** in **2036**   (representing **291 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

- **Saturday** occupancy for the council operated car park network as a whole peaked at **69%** between **12:00 & 13:00**

- **Future** Saturday occupancy projections are:

  - **71%** in **2022**   (representing **282 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **72%** in **2027**   (representing **264 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

  - **74%** in **2036**   (representing **255 available spaces** in the peak occupancy period)

- **High** proportion of vehicle staying **less than 5 minutes**:

  - Waitrose: 20% vehicles

  - Priory Lane: 58 % vehicles

  - Tebbutts Road: 17% vehicles

St Neots - Future Occupancy Projection (Weekday)

St Neots - Future Occupancy Projection (Saturday)
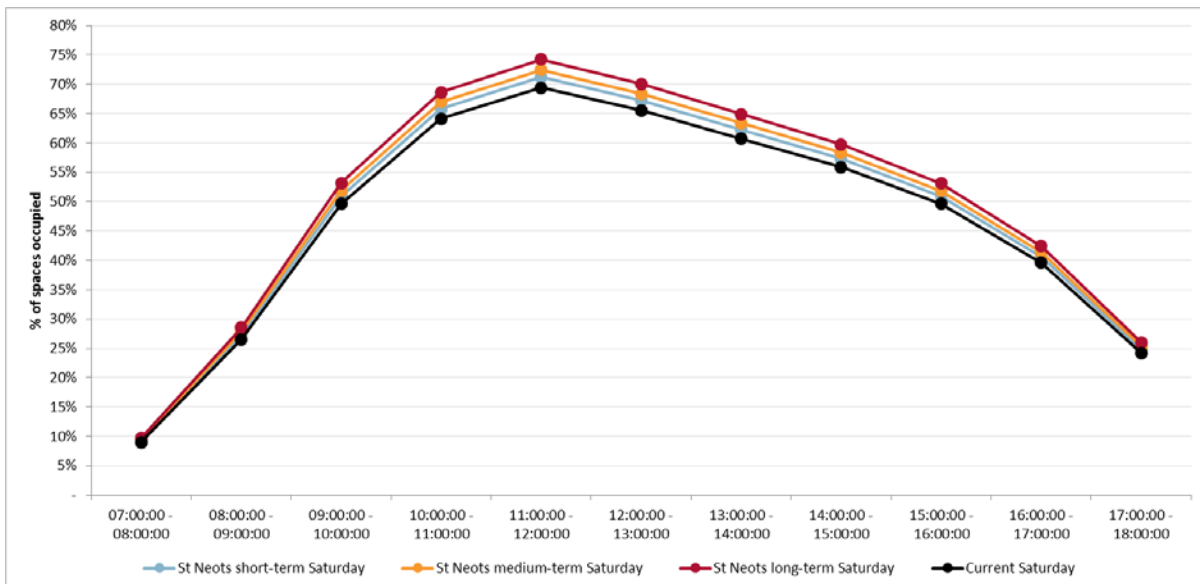
Summary

- **Car ownership** in Huntingdonshire is significantly **higher** than the national average with fewer than 14% of homes **not having access to a car**

    - Promotion and support of alternate means of travel to reduce traffic to maintain occupancy for those travelling further

- Town Centre **footfall** currently **relates to retail offering**, not car park capacity

    - At the time of this study, **Huntingdon** had **high occupancy** following M&S and Next stores opening at the **Chequers Court** development (more stores are now open)

    - The **St Neots Masterplan for Growth** notes a greater **decline in retail footfall** than Huntingdon or St Ives however this is more likely linked to **lack of retail diversity**

- **Maintain and maximize** available parking **capacity** through car park layout & designation reviews:

    - Relocate/remove non-essential car park furniture (e.g. bottle banks, planters etc.)

    - Reduce congestion zones (e.g. drop off points)

    - Review high permit holders user impacts on availability to retail visitors

    - Distributions of car park users across all sites during peak times

        - Bridge Place weekday occupancy under 25%, with only 5% occupancy on weekends - potential to accommodate projected increased users or town centre workers through subsidized permit schemes

        - Potential to incentivize users through variable charging (e.g. lower priced outer car parks, reduced parking cost at non-peak time)

    - Opportunity to introduce/review parking bay designations (e.g. super short stay due to high volume of "less than 10 minute stays")

Appendix 2

Parking User Survey Overview

The Huntingdonshire District Council Car Parking User Survey ran between July 2017 and August 2017. A total of 1177 participated in the survey resulting in 4368 individual car park completions. The survey was used by the Members of the Strategic Review of Car Parking Task and Finish Group to assist in the development of the Car Parking Vision and the Car Parking Strategy.

The findings, of which there is a summary below, helped Members understand the Council's car parking users and identify issues experienced by them. It highlighted what was good about the car parks and what needed improving on.

Usage Trends
The survey identified the following:
- There was a clear distinction between car parks used for retail purposes and those used for leisure.
- Current usage of mobile payment systems, where available, is low.
- Car parks are generally used at least monthly with a high proportion used on a weekly basis.
- The average length of stay is low with most car parks used for two hours or less.
- A total of 75% of users are from a PE postal code, with other users from CB, NN, MK or SG post codes.

Satisfaction Trends
Overall satisfaction with the car parks was generally high across the District. When choosing where to park, respondents selected convenience of location (37%) as the most important factor, followed by value for money (19%), accessibility (14%) and purpose of visit (14%).

Potential Improvements
The survey identified that a significant percentage of respondents (37%) expressed no opinion on potential car parking improvements. Of those who did express an opinion, 50.8% stated that wider bays for all vehicles should be prioritised. Also, 31.7% of remain respondents expressed some form of cheaper parking charges could be a potential improvement.

In addition, respondents stated that more cashless payment options would be welcomed. However, use of the mobile payment system (where available) is currently low indicating a potential awareness issue. Finally, car park security was not highly rated across Huntingdonshire and respondents have requested improvements in this area.

Value for Money
Value for money was identified by the survey as an area where there was a significant amount of dissatisfaction. Despite this the vast majority of respondents rated Huntingdon's and St Ives' car parks as being satisfactory or above for value for money. There was also a majority of respondents rating St Neots' car parks as being satisfactory or above however, 41% of respondents rated St Neots' car parks as poor or very poor for value for money which was the highest in the District.

Full Survey Results
You can view the full survey results at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/media/2782/car-park-survey-results.pdf.

Appendix 3

On-street Parking

On-street parking offences are currently a criminal offence with enforcement falling within the remit of the Police.

Decriminalisation is a process which is overseen and instigated by the County Council with an application submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT). If this process is successful, the end result is Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) where the County Council assumes enforcement responsibility.

This process usually takes 2 years to complete. 1 Local Authority currently in this process is expecting the overall timescale to be between 36 & 48 months

The estimated costs associated with CPE are setup costs of approximately £250k, with early operational losses of £40k - £60k per annum.

Should CPE be adopted within the full extents of the boundaries of the District:

- Huntingdonshire District Council would not automatically assume the powers of enforcement unless approached and contracted to do so by Cambridgeshire County Council provided the Council considers it financially viable and advantageous to do so at the time

- Huntingdonshire District Council must operate its off-street car parks under CPE legislation so would incur costs to make the changes required to continue operation e.g. signs, lines and amendments to current Traffic Regulation Orders

At present, Huntingdonshire District Council has no requirement and does not wish to:

- fund or contribute towards the implementation or setup costs
- fund of contribute towards ongoing costs (e.g. operational)
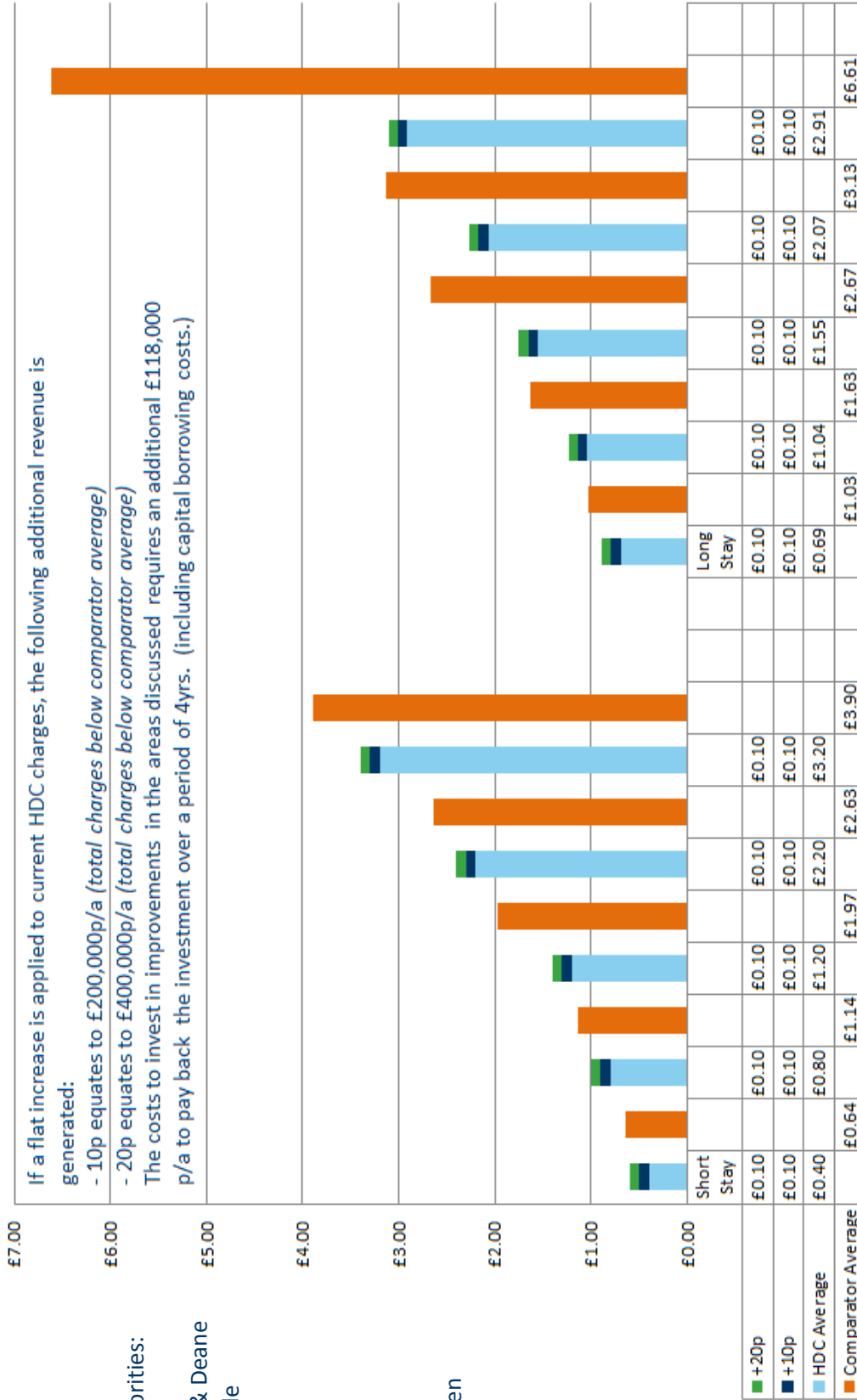- take on the responsibility for any enforcement action

In summary:

- Localised on-street parking issues are present, however the issues are contained and not spread district-wide
- Targeted Police enforcement action is considered an appropriate solution
- On-street parking enforcement and its associated costs are the responsibility of the Police

Appendix 4

Comparator Parking Charges

Comparator Parking Charges

If a flat increase is applied to current HDC charges, the following additional revenue is generated:
- 10p equates to £200,000p/a (total charges below comparator average)
- 20p equates to £400,000p/a (total charges below comparator average)
The costs to invest in improvements in the areas discussed requires an additional £118,000 p/a to pay back the investment over a period of 4yrs. (including capital borrowing costs.)

Comparator Authorities:
- Maidstone
- Basingstoke & Deane
- Aylesbury Vale
- Colchester
- Braintree
- Chelmsford
- Test Valley
- Stafford
- Ashford
- South Kesteven

	Short Stay						Long Stay				
+20p	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10		£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10
+10p	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10		£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10	£0.10
HDC Average	£0.40	£0.80	£1.20	£2.20	£3.20		£0.69	£1.04	£1.55	£2.07	£2.91
Comparator Average	£0.64	£1.14	£1.97	£2.63	£3.90		£1.03	£1.63	£2.67	£3.13	£6.61

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