

Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Date: Tuesday, 4th September, 2012
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Committee Suite 1 & 2, Westfields, Middlewich Road,
Sandbach CW11 1HZ

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Declarations of Party Whip**

To provide an opportunity for Members to declare the existence of a party whip in relation to any item on the agenda.

4. **Public Speaking Time/ Open Session**

A total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to make a statement(s) on any matter that falls within the remit of the Committee.

Individual members of the public may speak for up to 5 minutes, but the Chairman will decide how the period of time allocated for public speaking will be apportioned, where there are a number of speakers

For any apologies or requests for further information, or to give notice of a question to be asked by a member of the public

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5. **Cheshire East Car Park Management Review** (Pages 1 - 44)

To give consideration to the final report of the Task and Finish Group which conducted a scrutiny review of Cheshire East Car Park Management.

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 4 September 2012
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Cheshire East Car Park Management Review

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 This report encloses the final report of the Task and Finish Group which conducted a scrutiny review of Cheshire East Car Park Management.

2.0 Recommendations

- a) That the report of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group be approved;
- b) That the recommendations of the Group be endorsed, and referred to the Cabinet for consideration and necessary action, and that Cabinet be invited initially to comment on the details of the recommendations.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 To progress the findings of the Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Group who reviewed the management of Cheshire East car parks.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 All

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction - Health

6.1 Not known at this stage.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Not known at this stage.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 Not known at this stage.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no identifiable risks.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 At its meeting on 24 February 2012 the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to review car park management on Cheshire East car parks.

10.2 The aim of the review was to ensure that Cheshire East Council's car parks were being managed in a way that assists the vitality and viability of town centres and villages.

10.3 The review consisted of a Member car parking survey which was distributed to all Members of Cheshire East Council as well as a review of the Car Parking Strategy, relevant legislation and guidance and consideration of information from other authorities.

10.4 The findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group are contained within the final report.

11.0 Access to Information

11.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Overview and Scrutiny Review
Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee
April 2012 – September 2012



Cheshire East Car Park Management Review

Task and Finish Group Membership

Chairman (April-May 2012) Councillor Les Gilbert
Chairman (May-September 2012) Councillor Bill Livesley
Councillors Philip Hoyland, Steven Hogben, Peter Hayes, Rod Fletcher

Officers:

Paul Burns (Parking Services Manager)
James Morley (Scrutiny Officer)

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Chairman's Foreword



Councillor Bill Livesley
Chairman - Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Car parking is an important issue for local authorities, councillors, businesses and the public in all areas of the Country. The decisions that local authorities make regarding car parks attract a lot of attention and parking is often a subject which members of the public approach their local councillor to discuss.

When it was formed in 2009 Cheshire East inherited different approaches to a variety of services from the legacy authorities which over time we have had to harmonise or reform in order to establish and develop Cheshire East policy and strategy. Car parking is one of those services and it is important that we establish the best approach for the towns and villages of Cheshire East.

During these harsh economic times Cheshire East Council is working to help residents and businesses survive. Part of the process is to nurture strong communities and create conditions for business growth. This involves sustaining the economic vitality and viability of our towns and villages as well as supporting sustainable infrastructure such as transport. Car Parking is an important factor in both the vitality of towns and villages and the development of sustainable infrastructure. The demands on car parks of each objective need to be balanced through effective management.

This review was commissioned by the Committee to address the concerns of various groups and to help the Council move forward in the implementation of Cheshire East policies and strategies. Having considered a variety of sources and gathered the views of Cheshire East Councillors we hope that this report helps to establish car park management that is supported by all Members and is supported by local businesses, service users and residents.

I'd like to thank the members of the Task Group, including the former Chairman Councillor Les Gilbert, and officers Paul Burns and James Morley for their effort and commitment during this review as well as the Councillors who took the time to respond to the car parking survey.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 24 February 2012 the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) received a report on the Council's proposals for a new tariff structure which would harmonize the previous charging structures inherited from the legacy authorities and make charges easier to calculate and understand.
- 1.2 During this meeting there was a great deal of apprehension; Councillors and the public had concerns about the effect car parking charges have on the economies of the towns and villages in Cheshire East, particularly in a poor economic climate nationally.
- 1.3 As a result of concerns shown the Committee agreed to commission a Task and Finish Group (Task Group) to give consideration to the issue of Car Park Management in Cheshire East.
- 1.4 The Aim of the Review was to ensure that Cheshire East Council's (the Council) car parks were being managed in a way that assists the vitality and viability of town centres and villages.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 In conducting the review the Task Group:
 - reviewed the Cheshire East Car Parking Strategy to recommend any alternations, additions and deletions necessary to provide a suitable and up to date strategy,
 - produced a Member Car Parking Survey to collect the views of Cheshire East Councillors about the availability of parking and the appropriate parking management and control mechanisms for their area,
 - met with the Parking Services Manager to discuss car parking in Cheshire East and potential improvements to the management of car parks individually and as a whole across the Borough,
 - considered the Council's Charging and Trading Strategy regarding charges for services and income generation,
 - gave consideration to information from other authorities,
 - discussed new technology for charging and control, and its potential in car parks in Cheshire East, and
 - considered relevant legislation and guidance from the Institution of Highways and Transportation and the Audit Commission

3.0 Background

- 3.1 When the Council was formed in 2009 it inherited three different parking strategies from the three legacy borough councils. Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and Macclesfield Borough Council had off street charging and control of on- and off-street parking through Traffic Management Act 2004 compliant Civil Parking Enforcement. However, Congleton Borough Council had neither off-street charging nor on- or off-street civil parking control.
- 3.2 In July 2009 the Council agreed and adopted a Cheshire East Car Parking Strategy which contained basic principles, objectives and policy to achieve unified management and control across Cheshire East; the Strategy was later updated. In February 2010 charges for off-street parking were introduced in Congleton town centre.
- 3.3 In July 2010 a comprehensive programme of parking provision review for all the town centres in Cheshire East began. The purpose of these reviews was to study the controls and facilities for parking in the central area of each town centre; and to identify changes needed to improve the provision, control and management of parking. These reviews did not involve the consideration of charges and tariff structures. In February 2012 reviews had yet to be conducted in the following centres:
- Poynton
 - Bollington
 - Prestbury
 - Middlewich
 - Sandbach (due to being September 2012)
 - Holmes Chapel
 - Audlem
- 3.4 At the Committee's meeting on 24 February 2012 the Parking Services Manager presented a report suggesting a new tariff structure for Cheshire East which is shown at Appendix A along with the structure that was in place at the time. The proposed tariff structure was intended to remove the inconsistencies of the existing tariff structure by introducing a logical pattern which was transparent to customers and at the same time reflected the need to control long and short stay parking.
- 3.5 The new tariff structure was based in part on a review carried out by the Committee which concluded in October 2010. In June 2010 the Cabinet Member for Environment requested that the Committee set up a task and finish group to rank towns and villages within Cheshire East. The rankings were calculated based on criteria suggested by the Cabinet Member. The task and finish group considered socio-economic, and other, factors such as facilities, retail, hospitality, business and travel during a series of site visits. This review was carried out to ensure that if parking charges were reviewed in future comparable towns and villages were treated equally. It was agreed that during the review Members would not be making recommendations to Cabinet on parking charges. Appendix F shows the results of this review.

- 3.6 The Parking Services Manager's report received a lot of interest from both members of the public and local town councillors some of whom were under the assumption that a change in the tariff structure meant an increase in charges. Some borough councillors had attended the meeting to suggest that the classification given to their town did not accurately reflect the characteristics and needs of the town which meant that the wrong tariff was being applied to its car parks. It was also suggested that the results of the review were out of date 18 months on. Others attended the meeting to suggest that tariffs should not be standardised and should be set on a local basis to exclusively reflect the needs of the town. Some of these concerns were reflected by the Committee which led to this Cheshire East Car Park Management Review.
- 3.7 At several points during the Committee's February 2012 meeting attendees quoted a government endorsed report which had been produced by Mary Portas, a retail marketing consultant famous for her television programme "Mary Queen of Shops", entitled "The Portas Review – An independent review into the future of our high streets". In her report, published on 13 December 2011, she recommended that local areas should implement free controlled parking schemes that worked for their town centre. An example is the 'Free after 3' scheme which is currently being used by some councils. She suggests that town centres can't compete with out-of-town centres such as malls and retail parks which offer attractive free parking. Members of the public quoted these recommendations to argue that parking charges in their area should be reduced or scrapped.
- 3.8 In March 2012 the Government's Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published its response to the Portas Review entitled "High Streets at the Heart of our Communities". In its response DCLG agreed that parking charges can have a real impact on the success of the high street and encouraged local authorities to look closely at their parking provisions and charges, ensuring they deliver the best outcomes locally. DCLG also introduced a policy that parking charges should not undermine the vitality of town centres. The response also states that while the setting of parking charges and all decisions relating to the operation of parking are a matter for the local authority, there are clear legal restrictions preventing councils from using on-street parking charges as a way of raising general revenue or as a local tax.

4.0 Legislation and Guidance

- 4.1 During the review the Task Group gave consideration to relevant legislation regarding local authorities and car parking. The sections of legislation most relevant to this review are briefly covered in this section.
- 4.2 **The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Part IV** covers parking places and the provision of on- and off-street parking. Section 32 states that for the purpose of relieving or preventing congestion a local authority may:
- Provide off-street parking places; and
 - Authorise the use as a parking place of any part of the highway.

Section 35 allows the Council to set charges for the use of off-street parking provided and Section 45 gives the Council powers to charge for parking on the highway. Section 55 (4) of the Act deals with how any surplus funds from on-street parking can be used. Surpluses from on-street parking can be used on the following:

- Making good any charges against the Council's general fund (cost recovery);
- Provision and maintenance of off-street parking;
- Highway improvement and transport schemes;
- Local environmental improvements (updated by 2004 Act).

This is also amended by Section 95 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to allow high performing councils the freedom to use parking surpluses for any purpose. The use of revenue from off-street car parks is not constrained in the way that on-street revenues are, and Councils can, and do, use it to help keep down the local council tax.

4.3 The Integrated Transport White Paper 1998 sets out five main objectives for transport policy. Parking policies at national, regional and local level are designed to support them. These objectives are:

- To improve safety;
- To promote accessibility;
- To contribute to an efficient economy;
- To promote integration; and
- To protect the environment.

The White Paper supports explicitly the following aspects of local traffic management as related to parking:

- Control of on-street parking to prevent vehicles obstructing traffic;
- Parking control, on- and off-street, as a component of plans to reduce the amount of travel in and to congested town centres;
- Parking restraint strategies that include packages of measures to improve access to town centres by public transport and deter through traffic.
- Parking enforcement by local authorities.

Many local Council's transport and parking policies and objectives are influenced by the five main objectives set out in this White Paper. Cheshire East's Car Parking Strategy is reviewed later in this report.

4.4 The Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 2 places a statutory network management duty on Councils responsible for traffic which aims to secure and facilitate 'the expeditious movement of traffic'. The aspects of parking management outlined in the 1998 White Paper contribute to the expeditious movement of traffic by controlling the number and location of parked cars through control of on- and off-street parking places. As mentioned above, **Part 7 of the 2004 Act** amends the 1984 Act regarding the application of surplus income from parking places.

4.5 The Local Government Act 2003 Part 8 gives local councils the power to charge for discretionary services. Section 93 of the Act allows councils to charge for services that it is allowed, but not required by law, to provide as long as for each service the income from charges does not exceed the cost

incurred. This Act does not take precedence over other legislation where a power to charge for a service is provided. Therefore cost recovery only does not apply to car park management as surplus income from charging for car parks is allowed in the 1984 and 2004 Acts.

The aim of the 2003 Act was to encourage authorities to provide more wide-ranging and new innovative services for their communities which they would otherwise choose not to provide because they cannot afford to provide them for free. The 2003 Act also allows that charges may be set differently, so that different people are charged different amounts or provide discretionary services for free.

- 4.6 By charging for discretionary services the Council can provide more services to those that wish to use them without increasing council tax for all residents. They can also choose to charge some people more or less than others depending on circumstances. This policy is explained further in the Council's Charging and Trading Strategy.
- 4.7 As well as the relevant legislation the Task and Finish Group was made aware of several pieces of useful guidance. Again this section covers the advice and guidance most relevant to the review.
- 4.8 In January 2008 the **Audit Commission** produced a national report called "**Positively Charged** – Maximising the benefits of local public service charges". The aims of the report were to: assess the contribution of charging to the general fund and strategic effectiveness; help councils improve their approach to charging to support their strategic objectives better; examine the impact of charging on equality.
- 4.9 The report found that charging for local services makes a significant contribution to council finances. Councils also use charging to influence individuals' choices and behaviours, to bring other benefits to local communities. Charges; can be used to encourage or discourage the use of a service; can be used to ration services and control demand; can be used to pursue local objectives (e.g. in the case of this Scrutiny Review, improve vitality and viability of towns and villages; in the case of the Strategic Transport Plan, reduce congestion).
- 4.10 The report also found that in choosing how charges are used, councils make an important political decision. Councils in similar circumstances make very different decisions about which services to charge for. In the case of Cheshire East this led to the inherited inconsistencies in charging across the Borough. The report suggests that councils can minimise local concern about such variations by explaining the reasons for them and involving local people in the decision making process.
- 4.11 According to the Audit Commission report councils do not always make the most effective use of their charging powers. The powers in the Local Government Act 2003 to charge for discretionary services had remained largely unused by councils up to 2008. Decisions on levels of charging were

most often driven by corporate income targets, historic charges and levels in neighbouring councils rather than knowledge of the likely impact on use of services.

- 4.12 Finally, the report's findings suggested that councils' perceptions of local opposition to charges are not always backed up with robust evidence and that the public is more receptive to charging for some services than is often assumed. People are more willing to pay charges where they can see what they are getting for their money.
- 4.13 The Audit Commission report on charges suggests that charging for services is a powerful tool in achieving a council's objectives besides generating income. In many cases the surpluses produced by charging for a services are a by product of the achievement of objectives. Communication with the public regarding the need for charges is important to minimise negative opinions from service users. By emphasising the benefits to residents of charging service users to reduce the cost of Council Tax a charging policy could receive a positive reception.
- 4.14 In July 2005 the **Institution of Highways and Transportation** published the **Parking Strategies & Management guidelines** for practitioners. The guidelines are designed to assist in tackling the difficult and controversial issues that surround parking in a systematic way.
- 4.15 The guidance suggests that a council's car park tariff and pricing policy can be used to address a number of objectives including:
- Balancing supply and demand;
 - Influencing demand between on-street and off-street parking;
 - Influencing the distribution of demand between different areas;
 - Influencing length of stay and turnover of spaces;
 - Maximising revenue.
- When the strategy for a car park is to limit demand there is a need for parking charges to be more stringent which can be a challenge for councils where people have become accustomed to free or unrestricted parking.
- 4.16 The Parking Strategy should address the issue of whether parking is to be encouraged on the street or in off-street car parks. Where off-street car parks are under used the tariff could include higher charges for on-street parking than for the off-street parking. Increased use and enforcement of residents only parking schemes will also move users from on-street into off-street parking.
- 4.17 Other effects of the tariff and pricing policy include encouraging or discouraging certain types of user in line with other policies (e.g. encouraging shoppers into town centres). For example higher charges for long stay parking discourage all-day commuter parking and frees up space for shoppers and tourists coming and going during the day.
- 4.18 Regarding free parking the guidance suggests that in some cases the cost of charging and the low or occasional demand in a car park may not warrant a

charge. Introducing charges may simply encourage users to seek out free on-street parking or discourage users from visiting the town at all. While there are always costs to providing free parking in maintenance, management and security costs, the Council may consider that the benefits to a small local economy and removing parked cars from the highway justify the public expenditure involved in providing free parking.

4.19 The guidance also includes suggestions on tariff setting and review. As stated above charges can be used to influence the level of use of car parks, the type of users and the length of stay. It is important to ensure that the charging policy adopted conforms to the parking strategy and the overall transport strategy for the Borough. The guidance suggests that while councils may be tempted to avoid higher charges for fear of losing customers, supply and demand issues must be met and the price of parking should support the policy not constitute the policy.

4.20 Tariff graduation will affect the length of stay and type of demand on each car park. The tariff structure can be designed to reflect the policy of encouraging particular users. For instance increasing the rate at which a tariff goes up between 4-6 hours will discourage some long stay users who wish to stay longer than 4 hours without preventing long stay when users judge that the advantage outweighs the price. Rather than setting a maximum stay period a council can increase revenue from long stay users who are willing to pay a higher rate whilst discouraging other long stay users to increase the supply of spaces for short term use.

4.21 Example 1

For shopping and Town Centre car parks a typical fee structure might be:

Duration	Fee	Increase (price/hour)
Up to 2 hours	£1.20	£0.60 (60p)
2-3 hours	£1.80	£0.60 (60p)
3-4 hours	£2.40	£0.60 (60p)
4-5 hours	£3.60	£1.20 (72p)
5-6 hours	£5.00	£1.40 (83.3p)
Up to 10 hours	£7.50	£2.50 (75p)

This structure reflects a policy of discouraging parking longer than four hours, which equates to allowing plenty of time for shopping and related activity, discouraging regular all-day users (commuters), whilst not preventing long stays when users judge that the advantage outweighs the price.

4.22 In the example quoted the car park tariff provides a level fee of 60 pence/hour up to four hours. It then increases at an accelerated rate to a level that is designed to deter regular commuting to work by car.

4.23 Conversely the rate of increase in charges for longer stay can be reduced to make long stay more value for money than short stay. This could encourage commuters to use particular car parks (e.g. car parks further from the centre

that are less desirable to shoppers).

- 4.24 The charges in larger towns and cities can be expected to be higher than in small towns due to the larger number of facilities and attractions in the area increasing the lure to visitors and demand for parking. The Committee's previous Review of Towns and Villages intended to classify towns and villages for this purpose.
- 4.25 The guidance explores short stay parking further, including limited period free parking. It suggests that limited period free parking (usually up to 2 hours) is very difficult to enforce and is usually widely abused. Limited period free parking also has a cost in lost revenue and additional enforcement costs if abuse is going to be avoided. This will have a detrimental effect on the overall profitability of car parks. However the Council may see an advantage in offering limited period free car parking to encourage shoppers to use town centres rather than out of town retail parks.
- 4.26 On balance it is generally preferable to charge a modest amount for short-term parking (e.g. up to 2 hours) rather than attempting to provide a readily enforceable system that is free
- 4.27 Finally the guidance also considers the generation and use of surplus funds from car parking. Councils' finances are now more stringently controlled than previously and they are expected to minimise costs to taxpayers by developing revenue streams where possible to at least balance revenue and costs on a year-by-year basis.
- 4.28 As mentioned above in the Audit Commission guidance on benefiting from charges, a number of councils who are providing free town centre parking to benefit the retailing viability of centres are being criticised for not covering the cost of maintenance, supervision and rates of car parks. The provision of free parking must be fully justified by the wider benefits and objectives should be clearly stated. The council's business plan should clearly identify such issues as free parking in district shopping centres or villages and rural areas and indicate where the subsidy for this arises.

5.0 Findings

Cheshire East Charging and Trading Strategy

- 5.1 The Council's Charging and Trading Strategy focuses on how the Council will raise funds each year to pay for local services. As mentioned above, under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council can charge service users for discretionary services. Although car parking charges are allowed under separate legislation that takes precedence over the 2003 Act the Charging and Trading Strategy still applies to the setting of charges for car parks.
- 5.2 Income to provide local services will come from a number of key sources, including local taxation, national taxation and charges to service users.

Elected Members make key decisions on the level of income to be generated by taxation of local residents and the level of charges where customers pay for service at source. The Council's intention to control the relative impact of Council Tax in the local area, and increase direct income from services, presents a clear intention to align the cost of services with service users where this promotes the Council's priorities, and away from the wider taxation of citizens.

5.3 Each service that intends to set charges for discretionary services should develop and publish a detailed strategy to support the approach to charge setting. The Council has agreed the following overall charging principles as part of the Strategy. Charges for Cheshire East discretionary services will be set with:

- Consistent criteria for concessionary reductions relevant to service priorities;
- A consistent approach to the calculation of 'cost';
- Due consideration to the total impact based on a corporate approach to household costs, informed by suitable comparative data;
- A periodical review (at least annually) as part of the budget setting process;
- Maximum value provided to the service user;
- Any capacity identified in services, where charges are made, being considered for further income generation before being released as efficiency savings.

5.4 These principles provide Members and officers with appropriate guidelines for setting charges, monitoring expenditure and maximising income whilst providing a fair system for residents of Cheshire East. The Council also recognise that free to access services can sometimes lead to abuse and a subsequent reduction in value to citizens.

Cheshire East Car Parking Strategy

5.5 During a meeting on 26 April 2012 the Task Group reviewed the Car Parking Strategy to consider whether it would be necessary to make updates or amendments to improve the strategy for the current needs of the Borough.

5.6 The Strategy contains key principles, objectives and actions which are linked to the wider Local Transport Plan. Appendix B contains the Parking Strategy Objectives which are based on the Primary Local Transport Plan Areas for Action and Corporate Priorities. Objectives 1 and 2 were the main focus of this review. Appendix B also contains the proposed actions to achieve the objectives. The Task Group was keen to ensure that these proposed actions

were suitable to achieve the objectives in each town.

5.7 In order to sustain the economic vitality of towns and villages through parking management (Objective 1) it was proposed to maximise the availability of short stay parking spaces in prime, central locations for use by shoppers and other short stay users. Discouraging long stay parking in prime locations will increase the supply of spaces throughout the day as short stay shoppers vacate spaces after a couple of hours or so. The availability of short stay spaces is essential to maintaining the commercial viability of town centres.

5.8 Objective 2, to provide excellent parking facilities at an appropriate charge to customers and Council tax payers, has a number of proposed actions to achieve it. These proposed actions include the following:

- Review charges annually, in accordance with the charging and trading strategy.
- The scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across stay periods in all towns. The steps in charge level from one time period to the next should be broadly consistent throughout all locations.
- All car parks on which no charges apply will be periodically reviewed and the need for application of charges considered in light of demand for and supply of parking.
- Any charges imposed will be designed to regulate use and improve availability of spaces as well as diverting long stay users away from very central locations. Income earned should at least cover operating and maintenance costs and allow necessary improvements to usability, environment and security.

5.9 Example 1 of a tariff structure provide at paragraph 4.21 conforms to the Council's Car Park Strategy as it has a consistent pattern across stay periods i.e. 60 pence/hour up to 4 hours. The price/hour increases for over 4 hours to discourage long stay parking. However the tariff structures currently used by the Council (as shown in Appendix A) have no consistency with each other and have no consistent rate per hour.

5.10 Example 2

Current tariff structure for a Band A car park in Macclesfield.

Duration	Fee	Increase (price/hour)
Up to 1 hour	£0.70	£0.70 (70p)
1-2 hours	£1.10	£0.40 (55p)
2-3 hours	£2.30	£1.20 (76.6p)
3-4 hours	£3.40	£1.10 (85p)
4-6 hours	£4.30	£0.90 (71.6p)
Up to 10 hours	£5.50	£1.20 (55p)

This inconsistency makes the calculation of cost per hour difficult but also makes stay over 4 hours more value for money/hour than short stay. If the Council wish to discourage long stay users on central car parks the current tariffs will have to be changed.

5.11 Example 3

Proposed tariff structure (Appendix A) with same charge for first hour for a Band A car park.

Duration	Fee	Increase (price/hour)
Up to 1 hour	£0.70	£0.70 (70p)
1-2 hours	£1.40	£0.70 (70p)
2-3 hours	£2.10	£0.70 (70p)
3-4 hours	£2.80	£0.70 (70p)
4-5 hours	£4.20	£1.40 (84p)
5-6 hours	£4.90	£0.70 (81.6p)
Up to 10 hours	£5.60	£0.70 (56p)

This structure creates the consistency required by the Car Parking Strategy but also provides an increase in cost for stay over 4 hours which should discourage some long stay users.

5.12 The current financial position of the Car Parking Services is covered at 5.21. The Council have adopted the strategic aim of operating car parks at no overall cost to the Council taxpayer. According to the strategy, the pricing mechanism that has been adopted is appropriate for the following reasons:

- Managing demand, required to promote the use of town centre short stay spaces for shoppers;
- Ensuring that direct users pay for the services wherever practical;
- Providing finance to implement other strategic transport aims.

5.13 If charges are to be introduced to a car park that currently has no charges on there is a specific process that must be followed.

- (1) The Parking Services Manager must submit a report proposing the charges to the Portfolio Holder for Environment at a public meeting.
- (2) Any decision by the Portfolio Holder is subject to consideration of the results of statutory public consultation (21 days advertised in the local press).
- (3) The results of the consultation will be considered by the Portfolio Holder at a further public meeting. If objections from the consultation are rejected the charges will be approved.
- (4) Work on installation of meters and signs can be carried out.
- (5) The introduction of charges must be advertised on the car park one week prior to charges being implemented.

Member Car Parking Survey

5.14 The Task Group developed a survey (Appendix C) which would help it to collect the views of Councillors from all wards in the Borough regardless of

whether their ward contained a Cheshire East controlled car park or not. The questions contained in the survey asked for views on various aspects of parking including the current level of charges and how charges should be calculated as well as alternative forms of control such as enforcement.

5.15 The survey was sent to all Cheshire East Councillors who were given a month to return their responses. Members were given the opportunity during this time to consult with local parish/town councils and community groups to take their views into consideration when completing the survey. 27 out of the 82 (33%) Members responded to the survey. Responses came from Members in both Urban and Rural wards from most areas of Cheshire East giving the survey results a good coverage of the whole Borough. The Task Group agreed that if responses or comments on a particular area were not received it would be presumed that there were no issues with parking in that area.

5.16 Appendix D contains the tables and charts developed for the responses to the survey. The majority of questions received various responses with few overwhelming trends to the views of Members. There were some responses which received at least 50% support and others which received very little. The following points were drawn from the responses:

- Many Members commented that they believe an increase in charges would be detrimental to the vibrancy and vitality of their town/village.
- Members want to encourage shoppers with short stay free or cheap parking in the centres and would like to see a distinction between long stay and short stay car parks in the centres.
- Question 2, a large majority of Members were happy with the current level of charges including not charging in particular car parks and very few believed charges were either too high or too low.
- In Question 3, 60% of Members believe that charges should be based on demand for each car park. 40% believe charges should be based on demand but also where that puts the car park in relation to other car parks in the Borough.
- In Question 4, 50% of Members think that central car parks should be more expensive than car parks further out from the centre due to the higher demand for parking closer to shops and attractions. 33% thought there should be consistent steps from one period of time to the next and only 17% thought there shouldn't be any demonstrable method of calculation.
- In Question 5, 50% of Members believe that there should be control of maximum length of stay on car parks that don't have charges although 36% believe there shouldn't be any control on them.
- In Question 8, just over 50% of Members believe that there is adequate non-council parking in their ward with the rest split between inadequate

and non-existent.

- There doesn't seem to be a detrimental effect on traffic management in many areas as 75% of Members do not believe that there are problems with traffic flow in their wards as a result of the supply of parking. However 25% of Members believe that there are issues with traffic flow caused by parking.
- Answers to question 6 varied but there did seem to be trends. The majority of Members that gave (a) or (e) as an answer came from semi-urban/rural wards where as Members responding (b) or (c) came from larger urban areas with more car parks.
- Answers to question 7 were also varied but again appeared to follow a trend. No single method of charging was preferred above another by Members as the preferred method appeared to depend on local conditions such as type or level of demand for parking.

5.17 The Task Group received responses from Members in a variety of wards but also received multiple responses regarding some of the larger centres in the Borough. There were several responses related to Congleton, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Crewe and Sandbach. This would not be unexpected due to these areas having a greater number of Councillors however this helped to identify particular issues within each town.

5.18 It should be noted that while responses related to the same area were generally similar, responses differed between towns. For example, one of the main issues for Members commenting on Macclesfield was problems with commuters and shoppers parking in residential areas where as comments on Knutsford had similar themes regarding the need to differentiate between long stay and short stay.

5.19 This would suggest that each town or village is different and has its own issues and demands which need to be dealt with on an individual basis. Based on the responses received to the questionnaire, Members have the same objective to improve the vitality and vibrancy in their town however what is needed to achieve that objective seems to differ between each town.

5.20 There appears to be a lot of support from Members for varying the level of charges in each car park of a centre with multiple car parks. 60% of Members believed that charges should be set based on demand for each car park. It was also suggested by a variety of Members that differentiating between short stay and long stay car parks would allow the Council to encourage specific groups to use particular car parks in order to optimise their use for the needs of the town.

Finance and Budget Pressures

5.21 As explained above (5.2) it is the Council's intention to keep down local council tax by charging for discretionary services and generating income

where possible. Current legislation allows the Council to use revenue from off-street car parks to fund other services to reduce the cost to local tax payers.

- 5.22 In the budget for 2012/13 the Council set the gross income target from car parking at £5.2m (Appendix E). Overall, the budget for Car Parking Services is expected to produce a net surplus of £5.047m which equates to approximately £13.20 per person in Cheshire East; or £30.50 per household. At the date of this report the income from car parking was projected to fall £441,601 below the annual target.
- 5.23 In December 2011 the Parking Services Manager was asked to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding car parking income budget shortfall during 2011/12. Councils nationally were experiencing budget shortfalls of around 5-15%. Possible reasons given for the shortfalls were economic downturn and reduced customer spending power as well as lower high street footfall and internet shopping. The Committee resolved that the shortfall was due to the budget being set too high as income over previous years had remained consistent but had always fallen below the budget set. The Committee suggested that in future a more realistic budget would be set based on historical data and achievable income in the current climate rather than desired outcomes.
- 5.24 If income from car parking does not meet the desired levels set in the budget then budget pressures will be produced in other areas of the Council. In order to meet the target for income this year Parking Services will need to either increase charges on car parks which are well used and/or increase the use of underused car parks with charges by restricting free on- and off-street parking in the vicinity.
- 5.25 If decreases in charges for car parking are proposed in order to assist the economic vitality of towns and villages, the effect on income and budget pressure must be taken into consideration as well as any other factors such as affect on supply/demand and congestion/traffic flow. Reducing budget income targets to support parking charge decreases would reduce the surplus that Parking Services is able to contribute towards the General Fund. This would increase pressure on the Council's budget and increase the need to raise funds from Tax Payers. In many cases a reduction in parking charges would not help the economic vitality of towns and villages by increasing demand for parking because the demand for parking in many car parks is already outstripping the supply of spaces and car parks are full with the current level of charges.

Initiatives to Increase Income

- 5.26 One potential initiative to increase income from underused car parks is to sell parking permits to companies who wish to provide staff with somewhere to park. The Grosvenor multi-storey car park in Macclesfield has been identified as a car park with spare capacity that could be used for such a scheme and Parking Services have already been in discussions with businesses. By issuing permits/contracts to companies and individuals for long term use of a

car park the Council are guaranteed income for the period of contract and car parks are being used by a core group on a regular basis.

- 5.27 The introduction of new technology to particular car parks may also help to increase car park use and income. Part of the Parking Services Manager's report to the Committee in February 2012 was regarding the potential of new technology. Pay by phone and pay by card options have recently been trialled or installed in a few car parks in Cheshire East. The option to pay by card or phone is often more convenient for service users which leads to more people being tempted to use the parking facilities. If customers do not have change for a machine this often leads to them seeking free on-street parking which would be avoided if they are able to pay by card or phone. Being able to pay by card or phone can also lead to customers paying to stay for longer periods of time which can increase income and footfall in town centres.
- 5.28 Retailer linked promotions are opportunities to connect purchases in town to parking discounts. Two such schemes are currently in operation in Knutsford and Wilmslow and could be extended to more towns in the Borough. This can be an effective method of driving increased footfall or dwell time in stores as long as retailers and businesses consider it beneficial.
- 5.29 Careful consideration needs to be given to any schemes as there is always an additional cost involved in the necessary machinery or subsidy of parking charges. The Council would need to ensure a sufficient net income increase to make the implementation of initiatives worthwhile.

Other Authorities

- 5.30 During the review the Task Group has consulted with several other authorities and conducted research on similar reviews that have been carried out.
- 5.31 In December "2002 Kirklees Metropolitan Council produced a Scrutiny Report on the rationale behind car parking charges to establish the reasons why and how parking charges were applied in Kirklees. At the time Kirklees had 96 car parks, 36 of which had parking charges imposed on them and 60 that were either free of charge or regulated by time limits.
- 5.32 The Scrutiny Panel found that there were a number of reasons why car parking charges were applied in Kirklees; they were:
- To control the demand for parking spaces.
 - Because of the need to encourage long stay car parking on the outskirts of towns and shoppers provision near to town centres.
 - Because of the need to cover costs and the expectation of generating surplus income.
 - To encourage the use of alternative forms of transport to the car.
 - As a result of benchmarking and comparisons with other towns in West Yorkshire.
- 5.33 The Panel also found that surplus income was used to support the Council's Highways Budget and General Revenue Budget. Some of the car parks were

managed through time limits. The Panel discouraged the use of time limited parking as a mechanism for controlling demand as it would mean that revenue is reduced (by not charging) yet costs for enforcing parking controls and maintaining car parks would remain.

- 5.34 Whilst the Panel agreed with the rationale for applying charges to car parks however was concerned that these rationale were not being applied consistently across the Borough. It appreciated that it would not be economical to apply parking charges in some car parks however identified car parks where parking charges could be applied but were not. It asked the Cabinet Member to look at the feasibility of applying the rationale more consistently and fairly throughout Kirklees.
- 5.35 The findings of the review from Kirklees are consistent with the guidance and legislation contained in this report and supports the Policies and Strategy adopted by Cheshire East.
- 5.36 Regarding the issue of limited period free parking the Task Group has contacted a number of authorities that currently or has operated limited period free parking schemes such as “Free After 3”.
- 5.37 The only strong evidence that any of the authorities could provide was that income from car parking was down during periods of limited free parking on when there was full charging. There was no statistical evidence to suggest that any of the free parking schemes had increased the footfall in town centres or improved performance for businesses and retailers overall.
- 5.38 Those authorities which operated “Free after 3” found that the parking trend for short stay had changed with less people using the car parks before 3pm and more using them after 3pm with overall usage only slightly increased. This would suggest that rather than increasing usage and footfall in towns these schemes simply alter the times during which regular users arrive.
- 5.39 As indicated above, the Parking Service currently has significant budget pressure as a result of a shortfall in income to date against income targets for the year. The introduction of any free parking where charges are currently imposed would reduce income and increase the pressure on the budget without being able to demonstrate effectively that the loss of income has resulted in an increase in footfall in town centres.

6.0 Local Issues

- 6.1 During the Cheshire East Car Park Management Review the Task Group was asked by the Portfolio Holder for Environment to give consideration to some specific issues related to car parks in individual areas. This section of the report outlines the issues and the views of the Task Group.

Parade Car Park – Alderley Edge

- 6.2 Alderley Edge has four public car parks which are operated by the Council. The Task Group was informed by the Parking Services Manager that the ownership of the Parade car park had recently changed and as a result the annual rent paid by the Council had increased to £40,000 for a 15 year lease to be reviewed every three years. The Council's operating cost for the car park was £9,000 and a total cost including rent of £49,000. Income from the Parade car park is budgeted at £30,000 so the increase in rent costs has produced a budget pressure of £19,000.
- 6.3 To address the budget shortfall the Task Group recommend that the Ward Member for Alderley Edge be consulted about this issue with a view to increasing charges on the car park to cover the increase in cost. This would allow the Member the opportunity to consult the local Parish Council and public.

School Road and Wilmslow Road - Handforth

- 6.4 Handforth has two public car parks operated by the Council, neither of which have any charges for use. These car parks are in high demand and are regularly full with users parking inappropriately and overspill being forced onto side streets. Improvements to the surface, line marking, and erection of regulation notices have now been completed which should reduce bad parking and increase capacity slightly.
- 6.5 To control the demand for this car park and to ensure spaces become available for local short to medium stay use (as well as long stay for workers and commuters), the Council may consider introducing charges and enforcement. As mentioned above (5.13), the introduction of charges is subject to the submission of a business case and statutory consultation which local residents.
- 6.6 The introduction of charges would conform to the Car Parking Strategy through the need to manage demand and by ensuring that shoppers can have a reasonable expectation of finding a short stay parking space. This should also help to improve the use of the town's retail and businesses as well as cover the Council's costs in providing excellent parking facilities.

Nelson Pit Car Park- Poynton

- 6.7 As well as the car parks operated by Parking Services the Council has three countryside car parks which are operated by the Countryside Ranger Service. Nelson Pit car park in Poynton is one of these car parks and currently has no charges for use. The other two car parks, Brereton Heath and Teggs Nose, have had charges in place for over 15 years to control demand for spaces and recover the costs of providing the car park and amenities such as visitor centres and public toilets.

- 6.8 For consistency the Countryside Ranger Service wishes to impose parking charges on the Nelson Pit car park. Charges would be set on a cost recovery basis with income ring fenced to support the amenities on the Nelson Pit site; the cost to the Council of running the amenities is currently £8,200. Initial charges would be set at an introductory rate to minimise the impact of charges on a previously uncharged car park.
- 6.9 Demand for the car park is high particularly during peak times and holiday periods which results in overspill onto local roads which can cause traffic issues. Introducing charges would help to control the demand for the car park and increase the turnover of spaces meaning visitors will have a reasonable expectation of finding a space. This would reduce the risk of displacement onto roads caused by over spill. Local visitors may also be encouraged to use alternative travel arrangements such as public transport, cycling or walking.
- 6.10 This approach would be consistent with the Council's Charging and Trading Strategy regarding cost recovery and the Car Parking Strategy regarding the control of supply and demand and encouraging alternative forms of transport.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The Task Group note that whilst the aim of this review is to ensure that car parking assists the vitality and viability of towns and villages there are other priorities which car parking must contribute to, particularly Strategic Transport aims. These Strategic Transport aims need to be taken into consideration when developing action plans for each town and Councillors and members of the public must understand the importance of them.
- 7.2 A car park tariff and pricing policy is a useful tool for achieving Transport and Economic objectives. In supporting the economic objectives of towns and villages car park tariffs can be used to control supply and distribution of demand as well as encourage desired user groups with favourable charges. However the influence of car park tariffs on the vitality and viability of towns and villages is small compared to other factors necessary for a sustainable economy. The Portas Review makes 28 recommendations, only one of which relates to car parking. The retail offer and attractiveness of town centres needs to be at a level that encourages shoppers and tourists into those areas.
- 7.3 The Task Group has identified car park management policies and practices that can contribute to the vitality and viability of towns and villages. The Car Parking Strategy states that the availability of short stay parking is essential to maintaining the commercial viability of town centres. In the towns that have multiple car parks, tariffs on each could be set to attract particular user groups. The Task Group believe that it is important to design parking tariffs to favour short stay users over long stay users in central car parks. This will increase the turnover of spaces and ensure that shoppers and tourist can have a reasonable expectation of finding a car parking space. Car parks further from the centre could have a different tariff structure which is more favourable to long stay users to encourage them to use those particular car

parks.

- 7.4 The Task Group believes that the current Car Parking Strategy is an appropriate document to allow car parks to be managed in an effective way. The Strategy conforms to the relevant legislation and follows best practice suggested in the guidance from the Institute of Highways and Transportation. The Task Group agreed with the objectives and principles of the Car Parking Strategy.
- 7.5 There are some issues which need to be addressed in order to align operations with the Strategy. The current tariff structures being used by the Council do not conform to some of the objectives of the strategy as they are not consistent across towns and do not conform to consistent patterns across time periods as required by the Strategy.
- 7.6 Having given consideration to the results of the Members Car Parking Survey and guidance the Task Group believe that in order to achieve the objectives of the Car Parking Strategy (i.e. sustain economic vitality of towns and villages) for each town in Cheshire East there needs to be specific management, including tariffs, for individual towns because each town is different. The specific requirements to achieve sustained economic vitality of a town need to be established before adopting parking management arrangements that will help to address those needs. However in doing so the Council must ensure that the management arrangements adopted for each town (or village) do not adversely affect the economic vitality of neighbouring towns.
- 7.7 Ideally the tariff structures would conform to the Strategy however the Task Group believe that there needs to be provision for allowing tariffs to be adaptable to local conditions to provide the best possible outcomes. Tariffs on each car park should reflect the characteristics and demand for that particular car park in relation to other car parks in the town to achieve the objectives of the Car Parking Strategy. Where possible rates of tariff increase on each car park should be level as demonstrated by Example 1 at 4.21 of the report to make the value of an hour of parking consistent up to 4 hours. The cost of subsequent hours of parking should be based on whether the tariff is designed to attract short stay or long stay users.
- 7.8 Car parks can also support the vitality and viability of local economies by using the surplus income received from charges on regeneration projects in towns and villages. Currently surpluses are used to support the general fund in order to reduce Council Tax. While it may be important in this economic climate to help residents by keeping Council Tax down the Task Group believe that at least some of the surplus raised from car parking should be ring fenced for improvements to highways, public transport and town centre environmental as recommended in the relevant legislation. Not only will this help the regeneration of towns and villages, and contribute to sustained economic vitality, but also by highlighting these benefits derived from parking charges local service users will be more supportive of car parking tariffs.

- 7.9 Some car parks with no charges have been identified that may need to be considered for the introduction of charges due to high demand. Car parks in Handforth and Poynton (Nelson Pit) have high demand and may need to have charges imposed on them. This would be subject to consultation with local residents however the introduction of charges would be consistent with the Car Parking Strategies criteria for charging.
- 7.10 The Task Group reiterate the Committee's resolution from December 2011 that the current income projection from car parking is too high and that the budget setting process needs to be reassessed in order to develop a more realistic and attainable budget based on historic figures. There is significant pressure on the parking services budget to generate surpluses to support the General Fund. This makes reducing/removing charges in any car parks unviable as this would only increase the pressure on the budget.
- 7.11 The Task Group believe that the condition of car parks is very important in their management. The Task Group want to ensure that all car parks are being maintained to an acceptable standard of accessibility and security. If car parks have tariffs applied to them then service users can expect clean, safe, accessible and secure facilities. The Council needs to ensure that there are sufficient funds allocated in the budget to effectively maintain all car parks. This should also be the case in car parks without charges even though they do not generate income for the Council.
- 7.12 In order to meet projected income targets increasing charges will not necessarily increase income (the law of diminishing returns). Increasing charges may reduce demand to a point at which total income is lower than previously achieved due to fewer users paying for the service. Initiatives have however been identified that may help to increase income without increasing charges on most car parks. Paragraphs 5.26 to 5.29 give examples of initiatives currently being considered. The Task Group support any initiatives that help to increase the use of car parks for the economic vitality of towns and villages and subsequent higher total income would be a positive consequence.
- 7.13 The Task Group believe that most of the car parks that currently have no charges do not have sufficient demand to make it practical to charge users. Adding charges to these car parks may not cover the cost of charging and would reduce the demand for the car park further. However, the cost of providing these car parks free of charge reduces the surplus revenue that supports the General Fund. These costs may be justifiable as income from car parks with high demand cover the costs of low demand car parks and assists in improving the economic vitality of the smaller areas, improving the Borough as a whole.
- 7.14 As stated above the Task Group want to ensure that the policies adopted for each town, to achieve the overall Cheshire East objectives, do not adversely affect neighbouring towns. If free parking is going to be provided in a town or village the Council must ensure that it does not adversely affect the economic vitality of neighbouring towns where charges are applied by attracting

shoppers and tourists away from those areas on a detrimental scale.

7.15 The Task Group believe that Residential Parking Schemes should be used to control on-street parking but only where necessary to ensure that residents can be confident of finding a parking space near their home. Several Members commented in responding to the Survey that there were some issues in their ward with commuters and shoppers seeking free on-street parking in residential areas near town centres. It is necessary to ensure that these issues do not occur by implementing Residential Parking Schemes where there is significant evidence that it is required. By doing so the Council would reduce the supply of on-street parking which should increase the use of off-street car parks.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 Below is a list of recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment that the Task Group have developed as a result of carrying out this review.

8.2 The Task and Finish Group for the Cheshire East Car Park Management Review recommend:

- That Objective 2 of the Car Parking Strategy be amended to include specific reference to car parks that have no charges. Objective 2 should read as follows - "To provide excellent parking facilities at an appropriate charge (**which may include a zero charge**) to customers and Council Tax payers".
- That the actions points relating to Objective 2 of the Car Parking Strategy be amended to allow more flexibility in the development of car park tariff structures. The second bullet point should read as follows - "The scale of charges should **ideally** conform to a consistent pattern across stay periods in all towns."
- That where possible tariff structures should provide broadly consistent charges from one stay period to the next (i.e. cost per hour is the same for 1-2 hours as 3-4 hours) up to four hours.
- That whilst tariff structures should ideally conform to a consistent pattern tariffs for each individual car park should be set based on the characteristics of the car park, demand for that car park, desired service users, local needs and relationship with other car parks in the same town.
- That to achieve Cheshire East Council objectives each town or village should have individual parking management action plans based on the characteristics of the town or village and that those action plans should achieve the Council's overarching objectives without negatively affecting the economic vitality of neighbouring towns or villages.
- The income projection from parking for 2012/13 is too high and previous budget have been over optimistic. Future budget setting processes should

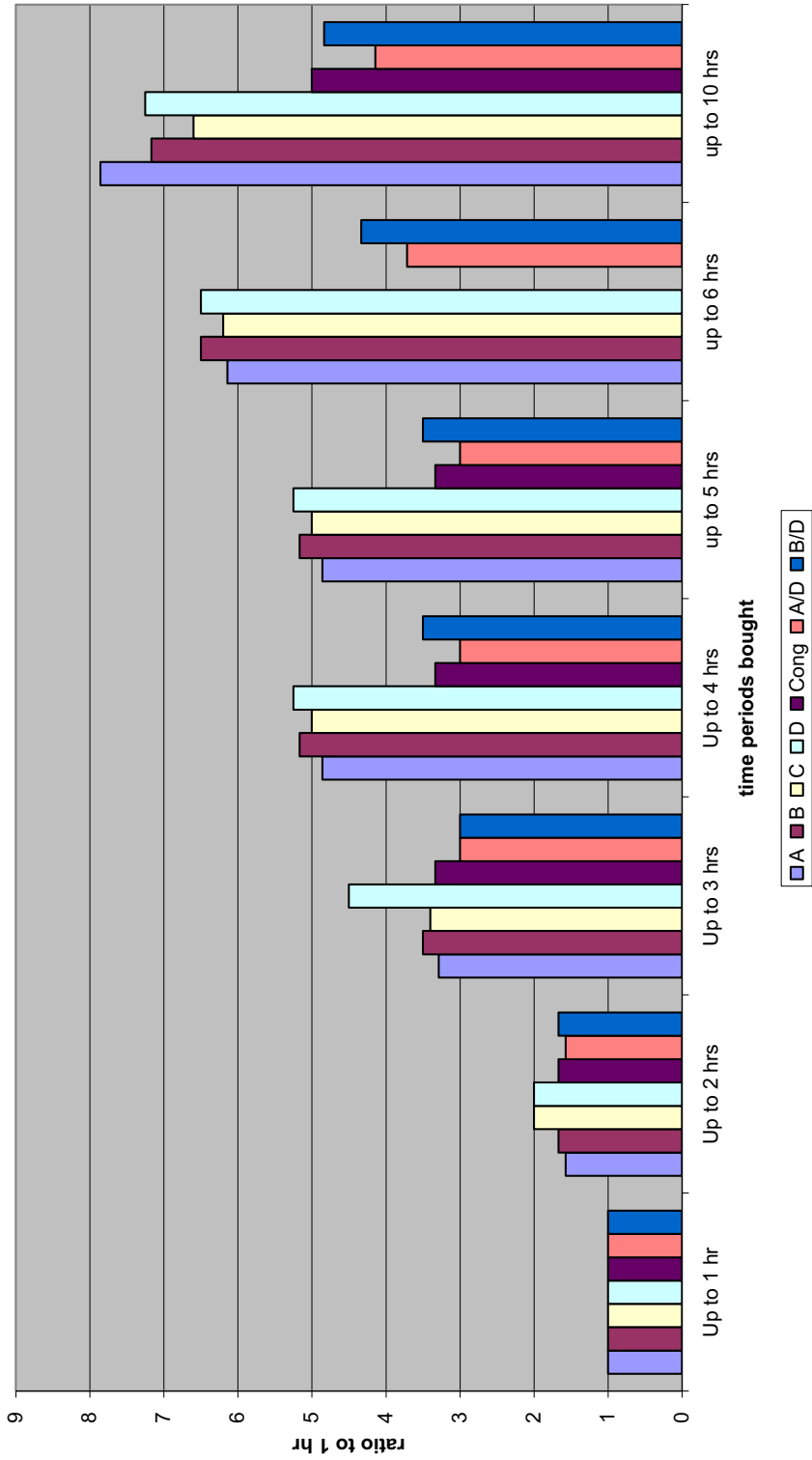
be based on historic data to produce a more realistic income target for Parking Services

- That the implementation of car parking charges on School Road car park and Wilmslow Road car park in Handforth should be considered to control demand, increase turnover and provide more spaces for short stay users and recover cost of maintenance and improvements to the car park facilities.
- That the implementation of car parking charges on Nelson Pit car park should be considered to align Nelson Pit with Teggs Nose and Brereton Heath and establish a consistent approach to all three Countryside Ranger Service car parks, control demand and recover cost of providing services.
- That initiatives to increase the use of car parks through new technology and sale of parking contracts be supported by Cabinet and the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.
- That attempts to increase revenue generation to reach the parking service's budgeted income projection for 2012/13 should not include wide scale increases in charges as this may reduce demand and result in lower income overall.
- That residential parking schemes should be used to restrict on-street parking to provide residents with a reasonable expectation of finding a parking space near their home but only where it is deemed absolutely necessary.
- That zonal charging should be implemented in towns and villages with multiple car parks to discourage long stay commuters from parking in central car parks to free up spaces for short stay users.

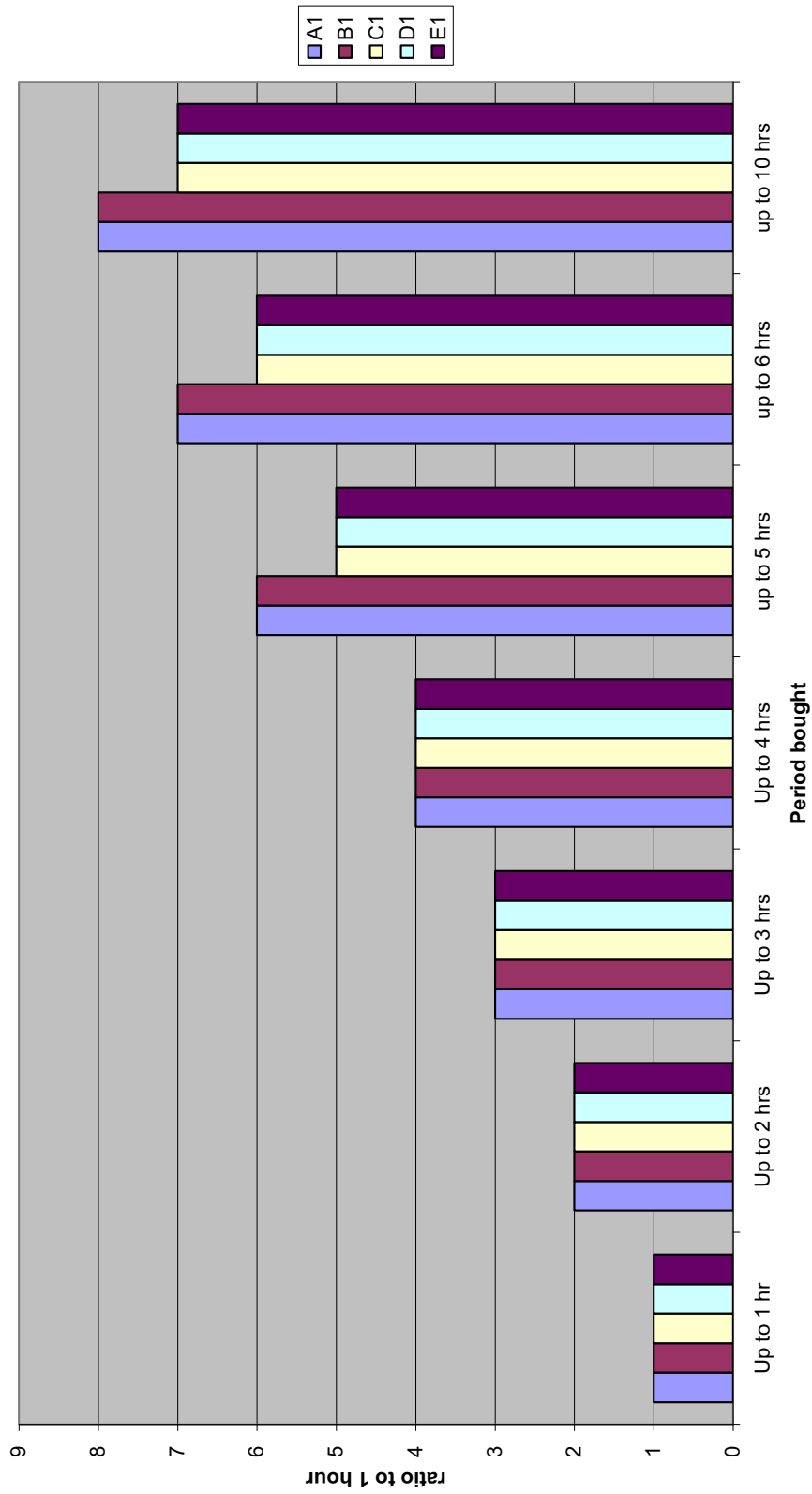
Appendix A

Charts of Current and Proposed Tariff Structures

Cheshire East Parking Tariff Structure: Now



Cheshire East Tariff Steps: Proposal



Appendix B Car Parking Strategy Objectives and Actions

The objectives of the Car Parking Strategy are linked to the wider Local Transport Plan Areas for Action. Objectives 1 and 2 are the focus of this Review.

Primary Local Transport Plan Area for Action (secondary areas)	Parking Strategy Objective
<i>Create conditions for business growth (Unlock the potential of our towns)</i>	1. Control and manage parking so as to sustain the economic vitality of Cheshire East town centres and villages 2. Provide excellent parking facilities, at an appropriate cost, to users and Council tax payers.
<i>Nurture strong communities (Create conditions for business growth)</i>	3. Balance the parking needs of disabled people, local residents, suppliers of goods and services, businesses and their customers 4. Ensure that motorists comply with parking restrictions both on and off- street.
<i>Ensure a sustainable future (Drive out the causes of poor health)</i>	5. Encourage alternative travel choices through availability and pricing of town centre car parking 6. Support car share schemes 7. Support provision for electric vehicle recharge where economic and appropriate
<i>Nurture strong communities</i>	8. Support the provision of appropriate on and off street parking for residents of Cheshire East.
<i>Unlock the potential of our towns</i>	9. Perform an influencing role in addressing local transport issues.

Proposals and Action to Achieve Objectives 1 and 2

- 1. *Control and manage parking so as to sustain the economic vitality of Cheshire East town centres and villages***
 - 1.1 Maximise the availability of short stay spaces in prime, central locations for use by shoppers and other short stay users. Availability of short stay spaces is essential to maintaining the commercial viability of the town centres.
 - 1.2 Improve compliance with on street restrictions to maximise traffic circulation, and contribute to safety.
- 2. *Provide excellent parking facilities, at an appropriate charge, to customers and Council tax payers***
 - 2.1 Review charges annually, in accordance with the Council 's Fees and Charges policy, at least recovering the cost of the car park service. The annual review should consider the charges applied at comparator Councils and similarities in demand profile of each of the town centres and villages.
 - 2.2 The scale of charges should conform to a consistent pattern across the stay periods in all towns, to improve choice and optimise management of parking supply. The steps in charge level from one time period to the next should be broadly consistent throughout all locations.
 - 2.3 Car Parks in certain locations are currently not charged for at point of use. All car parks will be periodically reviewed and the need for application of charges considered in the light of the local demand for and supply of parking; the aim will be to balance the needs of different potential users and local organisations, together with the cost of provision and asset use.
 - 2.4 Any charges imposed will be designed to regulate use and improve availability as well as diverting long stay away from very central locations. Income earned should at least cover operating and maintenance costs and allow necessary improvements to useability, environment and security.
 - 2.5 Establish a programme for lighting maintenance and improvement, and for the consideration of the installation of CCTV within the Council's car parks.
 - 2.6 Increase awareness, and sales, of the Council' s contract permits where appropriate to the other objectives.
 - 2.7 Review the designations of each car park to ensure the right spaces are in the right places
 - 2.8 Review the location of disabled spaces in car parks
 - 2.9 Ensure all of the Council's car parks are DDA compliant.
 - 2.10 Carry out satisfactory annual maintenance of car parks.

Appendix C

Cheshire East Car Park Management Task Group

Ward Member Survey

2012

Scrutiny Committee has set up this Group to review car park control and charging across the Borough. It will make recommendations to improve parking management so as to contribute to the vitality and viability of our centres. The Task Group would like your views in order to help draft these recommendations.

We would be grateful for your answers to the questions below.

The answers will help the Group in considering whether any changes to existing control and charging should be made.

No presumptions have been made about either 1) the levels of charges or 2) whether or not to introduce charging on any currently uncharged car parks.

Name: Ward:

Q

1 Which of the following are most important issues concerning parking in your ward (tick as many as you like) *(please tick box)*

- a Level of charges in relation to demand
- b availability of spaces
- c condition of car parks
- d length of controlled hours (i.e. long stay vs. short stay)

2 In the car parks in your ward (refer to attached list) indicate your opinion of charge levels (or no charges), for each car park. Please write in car park name and tick answer that best fits your view;

Car Park Name	No charges should apply	Charges too low for type of use and location	charges too high for type of use and location	Charges just right

3 *In general*, should parking charge decisions (including nil charge) be made with reference to *(please tick box)*

- a The demand for each car park with no other reference point
- b The demand **and** where that puts it in relation to other Cheshire East car parks (i.e. choosing a "grade" from a set range)

4 We currently use a range of charge grades with different charges per hours bought. In your opinion, where charges are applied, should these be calculated :

- (tick as many as needed)*
- a with consistent steps from 1 period's charge to the next (i.e. 2hrs = 2 x 1hr, etc)
 - b to make central car parks charges higher than less central ones (in larger centres)
 - c with no demonstrable method of calculation

5 If there are car parks in your ward without charges or control over maximum stay, should they:

- a have controlled stay but without charges
- b have controlled stay with reasonable charges to help enforcement and cover costs
- c remain without control or charges

6 In your ward, which of the following best describes the special features of the demand for parking:

- a tight local community with small business, locals parking short stay
- b wide range of visitors to the centre, needing a range of long and short stay
- c Local workers parking for long periods in the day
- d many commuters parking for long periods of the day
- e Community using car parks infrequently for events, meetings etc
- f Leisure or amenity users, visiting parks etc: frequent high usage
- g other (please specify):

(please tick box)

7 In general, which of the following would be best for managing parking in your ward:

- a charges and controlled hours geared to accommodate longer stay (5hrs +)
- b charges and controlled hours geared to favour short stay
- c controlled hours (maximum stay) only without the use of charging
- d no control over hours' maximum stay

(please tick box)

8 Please describe availability of non-council run public parking (e.g. supermarkets) in your ward:

- a adequate
- b inadequate
- c non-existent

(please tick box)

9 In your opinion, does the available supply of parking spaces in your ward result in difficulties for traffic flow?

Yes	No
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10 Please add a short statement which best covers your view as to parking issues in respect of charging and control in your ward

Thank you for completing this survey.

The results and analysis will be reported by the Task Group to the Environment and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee and as such will be available for inspection at a date to be announced.

Appendix D Member Car Park Survey Analysis

Responses to each question

Q1 - Which of the following are most important issues concerning parking in your ward?	
a - Level of changes in relation to demand	12
b - Availability of spaces	12
c - Condition of car parks	5
d - Length of controlled hours	6

Q2 - In the car parks in your ward indicate your opinion of charge levels, for each car park.	
No charges should apply	38
Charges too low for type of use and location	5
charges too high for type of use and location	7
charges just right	23

Q3 - In General, should parking charge decisions (including nil charge) be made with reference to	
a - The demand for each car park with no other reference point	12
b - The demand and where that puts it in relation to other CE car parks	8

Q4 - We currently use a range of charge grades with different charges per hours bought. In your opinion, where charges are applied, should these be calculated:	
a - with consistent steps from 1 period's charge to the next	6
b - to make central car parks charges higher than less central ones	9
c - with no demonstrable method of calculation	3

Q5 - If there are car parks in your ward without charges or control over maximum stay, should they	
a - have controlled stay but without charges	11
b - have controlled stay with reasonable charges to help enforcement and cover costs	3
c - remain without control or charges	8

Q6 - In your ward, which of the following best describes the special features of the demand for parking:	
a - tight local community with small business, locals parking short stay	12
b - wide range of visitors to the centre, needing a range of long and short stay	9
c - Local workers parking for long periods in the day	9
d - many commuters parking for long periods of the day	2
e - Community using car parks infrequently for events, meetings etc	7
f - Leisure or amenity users, visiting parks etc: frequent high usage	1
g - Other	3

Q7 - In general, which of the following would be best for managing parking in your ward:	
a - charges and controlled hours geared to accommodate longer stay (5hrs +)	2
b - charges and controlled hours geared to favour short stay	4
c - controlled hours (maximum stay) only without the use of charging	5
d - no control over hours' maximum stay	5

Q8 - Please describe availability of non-council run public parking (e.g. supermarkets) in your ward:	
a - adequate	11
b - inadequate	4
c - non-existent	6

Q9 - In your opinion, does the available supply of parking spaces in your ward result in difficulties for traffic flow?	
Yes	5
No	15

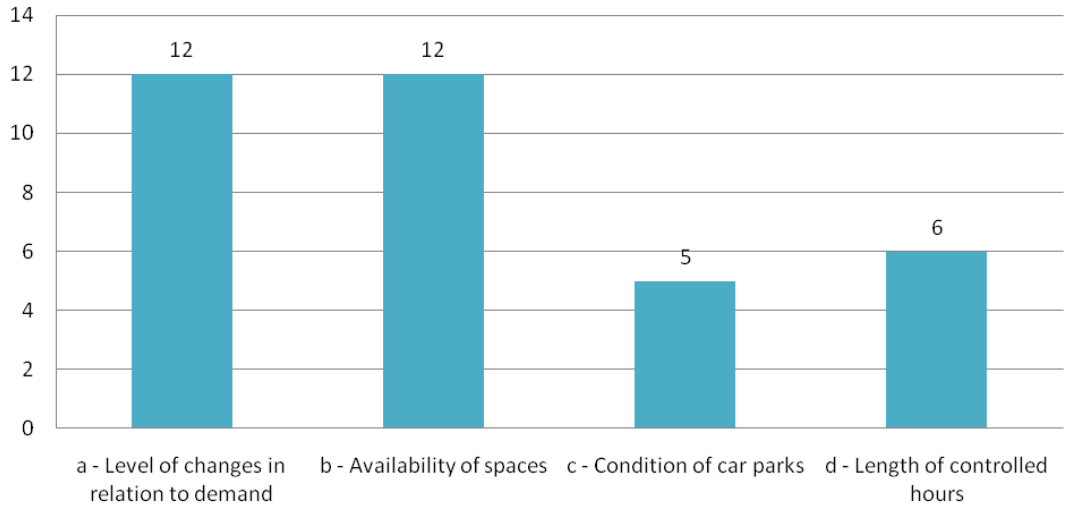
Analysis Question 2

NB: Does not include any car parks that didn't receive any comments

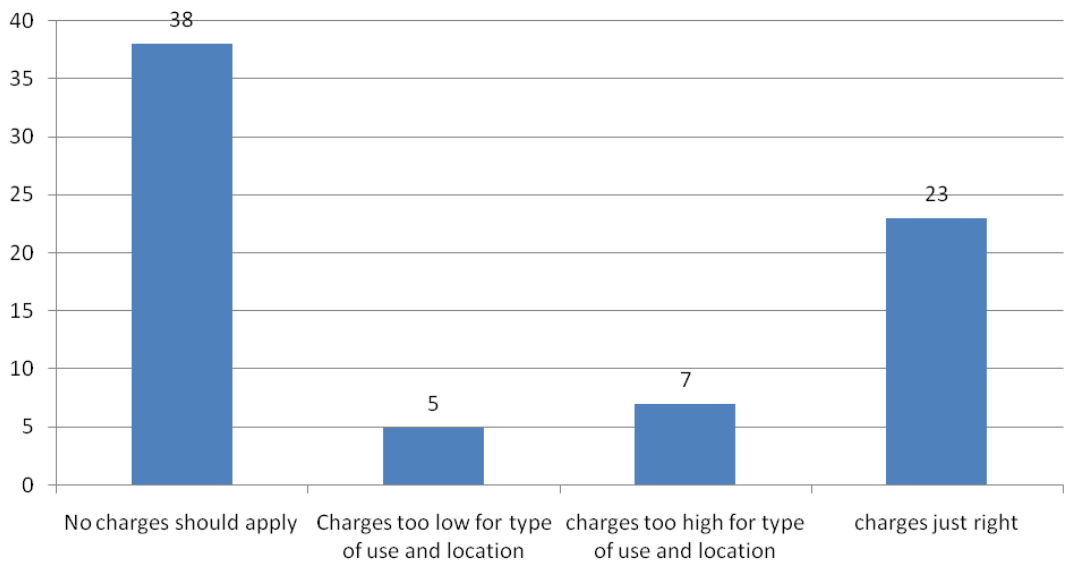
			No Charges should apply	Charges too low	Charges too high	Charges just right
Back Park Street	Cong	Cong		1		5
Chapel Street	Cong	Cong				4
Park Street	Cong	Cong			3	2
West Street	Cong	Cong				5
Antrobus Street	Cong	Cong				5
Fairground	Cong	Cong				5
Princess Street	Cong	Cong				3
Chester Street	Crewe	A/D	1			
Thomas Street (8 to 5pm, free Sat Sun)	Crewe	A/D (old)	1			
King Street	Knutsford	B				2
Old Market Place	Knutsford	B				1
Princess Street	Knutsford	B				2
Silk Mill Street	Knutsford	B				1
Tatton Street	Knutsford	B			1	1
Booths	Knutsford	D				2
Exchange Street	Macc.	A			2	
Station	Macc.	B			1	
Waters Green	Macc.	B			1	
Gas Road	Macc.	C			1	
Churchill Way	Macc.	A			2	
Grosvenor Multi-storey	Macc.	A			1	
King Edward House (Sat/B Hol)	Macc.	A			1	
Pickford Street	Macc.	A			1	
Town Hall (½hr max)	Macc.	A			1	
Town Hall (Sat/B Hol)	Macc.	A			1	
Christ Church	Macc.	B	1		1	
Duke Street	Macc.	B			1	
Old Library	Macc.	B			1	
Park Green	Macc.	B			1	
Parsonage Street	Macc.	B			1	
Sunderland Street	Macc.	B			1	
Commercial Road	Macc.	C			1	
Hibel Road	Macc.	C			1	

			No Charges should apply	Charges too low	Charges too high	Charges just right
Jordangate Multi-storey	Macc.	C			1	1
Whalley Hayes	Macc.	C			1	1
Fairview	Alsager	uncharged	2			
Fanny's Croft	Alsager	uncharged	2			
Station Road	Alsager	uncharged	2			
Well lane	Alsager	uncharged	2			
Pool Bank	Bollington	uncharged	1			
Blake Street/Edgerton St	Cong	uncharged				2
Congleton Leisure Centre	Cong	uncharged		2		3
Roe Street	Cong	uncharged	4			0
Rood Hill	Cong	uncharged	0			2
Rope Walk	Cong	uncharged	0			2
Royle Street	Cong	uncharged	0			2
Thomas street	Cong	uncharged	0			2
London Road	H Chapel	uncharged	1			
Parkway	H Chapel	uncharged	1			
Waterloo Road	Haslington	uncharged	1	1		
Civic Way	Middwch	uncharged	1			
Seabank	Middwch	uncharged	1			
Southway	Middwch	uncharged	1			
Springfields	Prestbury	uncharged	1			
The Shirleys	Prestbury	uncharged	1			
Brookhouse Road	Sandbach	uncharged	2			
Chapel Street	Sandbach	uncharged	3	1		
Crown Bank	Sandbach	uncharged	3			
Hawk Street	Sandbach	uncharged	3			
Little Common	Sandbach	uncharged	3			
Scotch Common	Sandbach	uncharged	4			
Well Bank	Sandbach	uncharged	2			
Westfields	Sandbach	uncharged	3			
Queen Street	Shavington	uncharged		1		

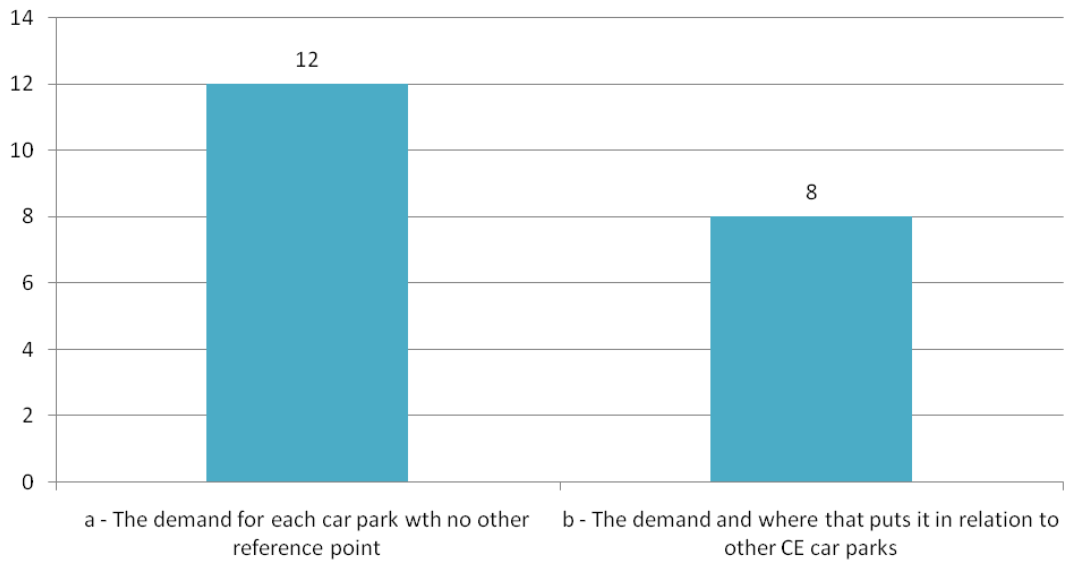
Results Q1 - Which of the following are most important issues concerning parking in your ward?



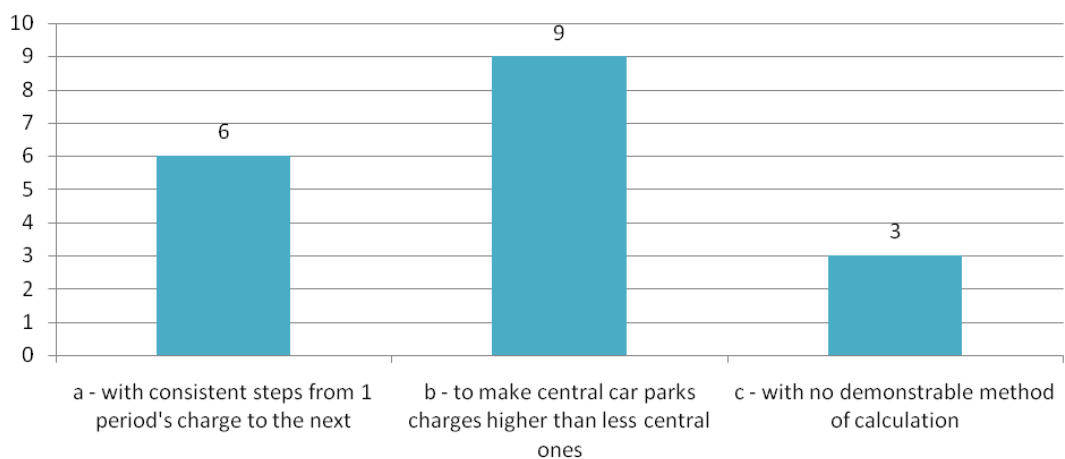
Q2 - In the car parks in your ward indicate your opinion of charge levels, for each car park.



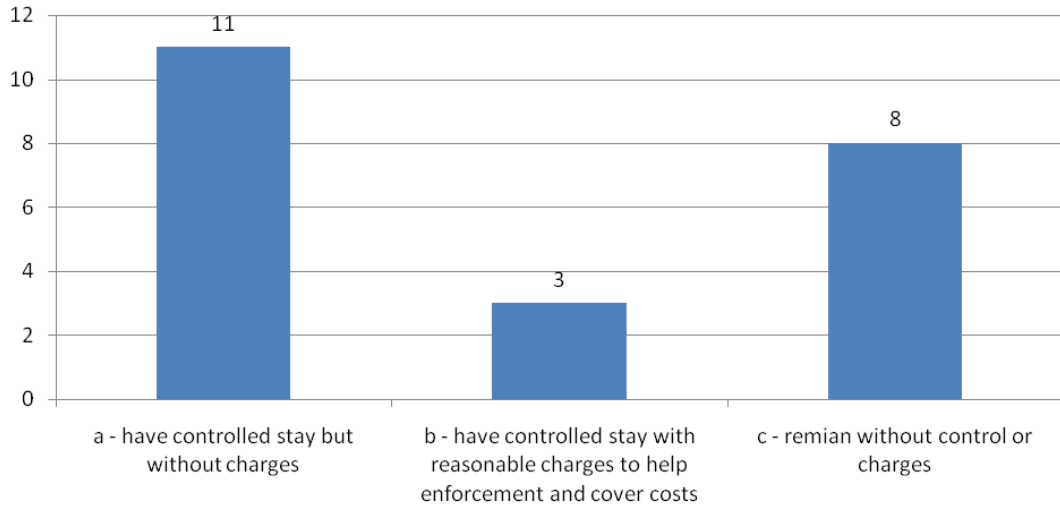
Q3 - In General, should parking charge decisions (including nil charge) be made with reference to



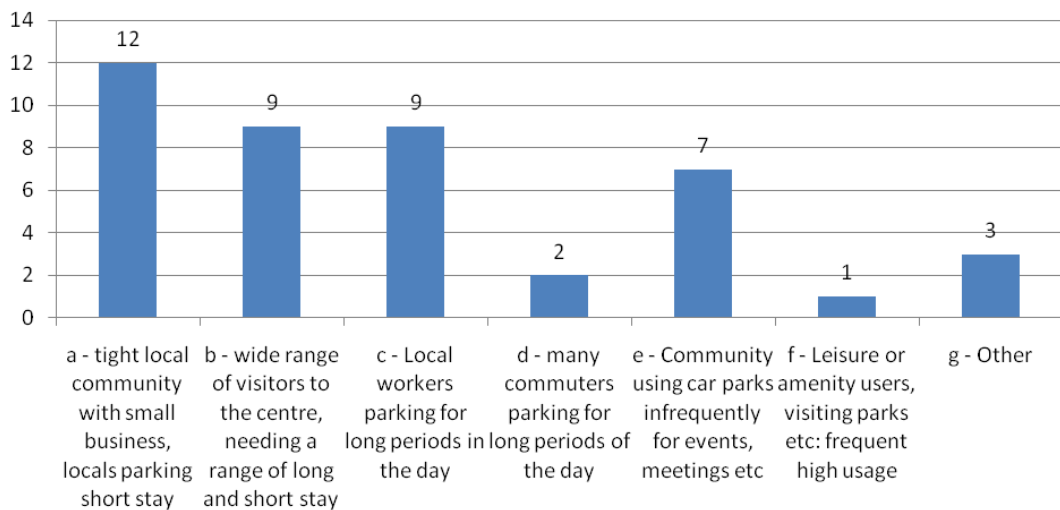
Q4 - We currently use a range of charge grades with different charges per hours bought. In your opinion, where charges are applied, should these be calculated:

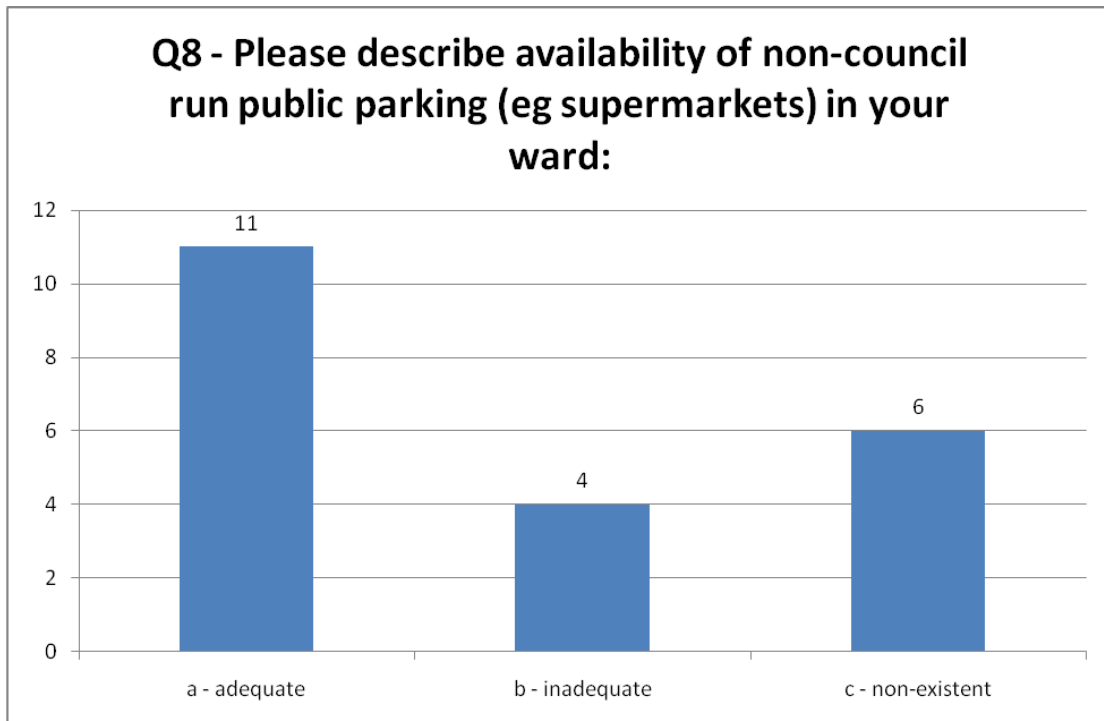
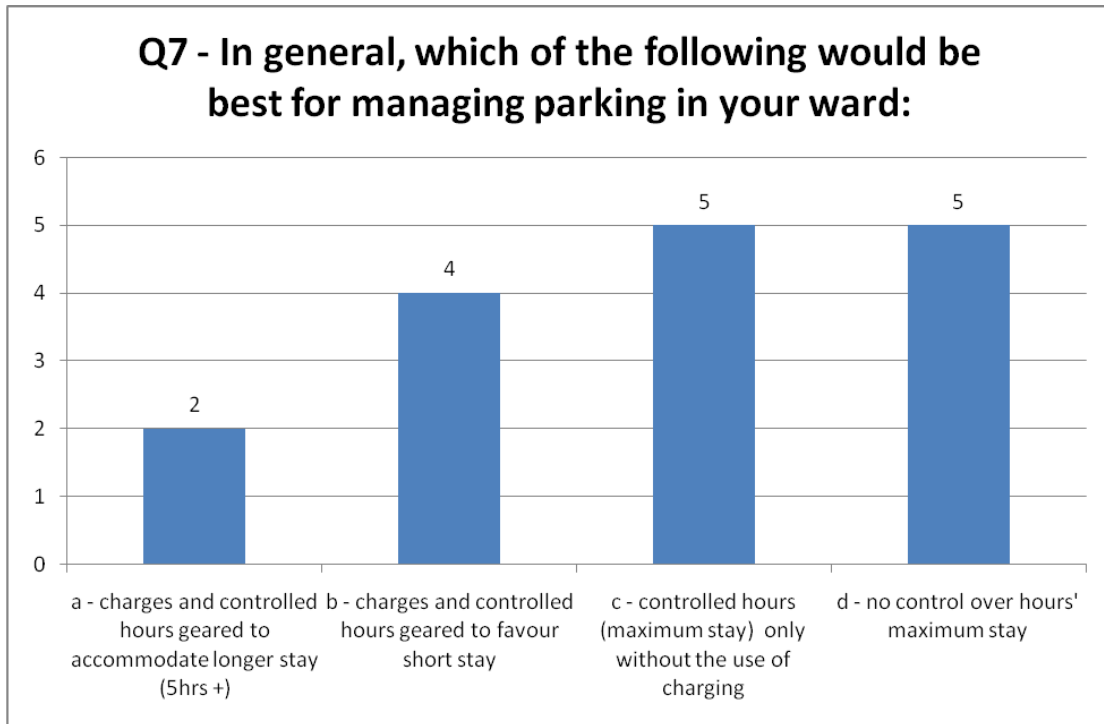


Q5 - If there are car parks in your ward without charges or control over maximum stay, should they

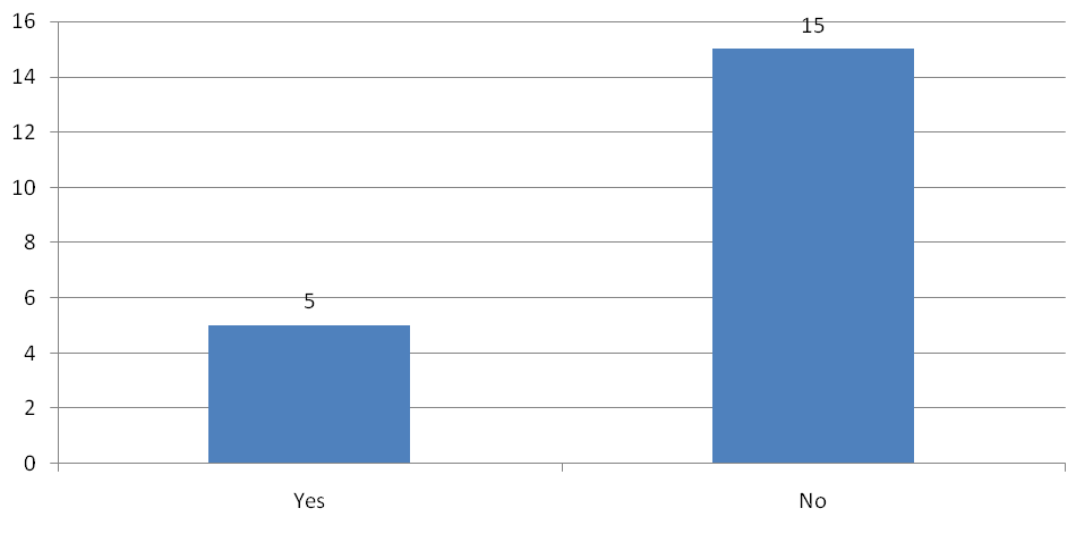


Q6 - In your ward, which of the following best describes the special features of the demand for parking:





Q9 - In your opinion, does the available supply of parking spaces in your ward result in difficulties for traffic flow ?



Appendix E

Parking Services Budget 2012/13

Car Park Management	Budget £'000
Gross Expenditure	89
Gross Income	-35
Net Budget	54

Car Park Pay and Display	
Gross Expenditure	257
Gross Income	-5,204
Net Budget	-4,947

Parking Enforcement	
Gross Expenditure	1,003
Gross Income	-1,157
Net Budget	-154

Total Car Parking Service	
Gross Expenditure	1,349
Gross Income	-6,396
Net Budget	-5,047

Appendix F Scrutiny Committee Review – Towns & Villages

Review of Towns and Villages within Cheshire East – July/August 2010 Draft Report of the Car Parking Task and Finish Group

Agreed Terms of Reference

To rank towns and villages by criteria, to ensure that, if parking charges are reviewed sometime in the future, comparable towns and villages are treated equally and a reasonable tariff is created.

TOWN	POPULATION	UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS as at Oct 09 (%)	FACILITIES	RAILWAY	CCTV	RETAIL	FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION	NIGHT TIME ECONOMY	EASE OF ACCESS	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	NUMBER OF SPACES ON CHESHIRE EAST CAR PARKS	TOTAL	RANK
CREWE	(50600) 10	5	10	10	(48) 6	10	8	6	5	9	(2643) 10	86	A
MACCLESFIELD	(50470) 10	3.5	8	10	(78) 10	8	10	8	8	9	(2166) 9	90	A
WILMSLOW	(30020) 6	2.5	7	10	(62) 8	9	10	8	9	8	(1239) 6	81	A
NANTWICH	(14100) 2	2.6	9	8	(15) 5	9	10	8	9	8	(750) 4	72	B
KNUTSFORD	(12650) 2	2.7	10	8	(14) 5	9	10	9	8	8	(635) 4	73	B
CONGLETON	(26350) 5	3.2	7	7	(8) 3	7	8	6	7	7	(799) 4	61	C
SANDBACH	(17840) 3	3.1	5	7	(5) 3	6	8	7	9	8	(487) 3	59	C
POYNTON	(14360) 2	2	7	8	(6) 3	6	7	6	7	7	(204) 2	55	C
ALDERLEY	(4710) 1	1.4	6	8	(3) 2	6	7	8	8	7	(181) 2	55	C
MIDDLEWICH	(13450) 2	3.1	5	0	(5) 3	6	7	3	5	4	(133) 2	37	D
ALSAGER	(12440) 2	2.6	5	7	(6) 3	5	7	3	8	7	(403) 3	50	D
HANDFORTH	(8014) 1	3.5	5	8	(3) 2	6	6	4	8	8	(102) 1	49	D
BOLLINGTON	(7400) 1	3.5	6	0	(0) 0	4	6	8	7	4	(71) 1	37	D
HOLMES CHAPEL	(5780) 1	1.3	5	8	(3) 2	5	7	4	8	6	(47) 1	47	D
DISLEY	(4210) 1	2.1	4	7	(3) 2	4	6	4	6	7	(60) 1	42	D
PRESTBURY	(3290) 1	1.1	4	7	(0) 0	3	7	7	5	7	(122) 2	42	D
HASLINGTON	(6670) 1	1.8	2	0	(0) 0	3	2	2	8	4	(15) 1	23	E
AUDLEM	(1940) 0	1.7	2	0	(0) 0	4	7	6	7	4	(59) 1	31	E

The above criteria have been scored out of 10

The population, number of CCTV cameras and number of carparking spaces for each town are quoted in brackets.