

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Car Parking Survey 2020 – 2021



Conclusions

No easy solution

The issue of car parking charges in Cheshire East is an extremely complex issue with no easy solution – whatever proposals are made may have negative impacts:

- If the council keeps charges as they currently are, residents in the places that currently pay for parking may feel aggrieved.
- If the council harmonises charges across the borough, residents in the places that do not currently pay for parking may feel aggrieved.
- If the council does not increase revenue from car parking, other key services will have to make even greater savings than already planned.
- If the council does increase revenue from car parking, it risks damaging the footfall and economic vibrancy of its high streets.

Any decision to implement car parking charges is also further complicated by the need for the borough to recover from the pandemic in the short term.

Ideological opposition to car park charges

It seems clear that ideologically many residents are opposed to paying for car parking – many felt car parking should be free.

It is interesting to note however, that when asked *how much* they would be willing to pay for car parking, rather than *if* they would be prepared to pay for it, a far greater proportion of respondents indicated they would pay for car parking.

This suggests that while a majority of residents are opposed to paying for car parking, a good proportion (though not all) will still pay for it if charges are imposed.

Splits in views across different places, and a consistent approach required

It is also interesting to note that views on car parking charges are extremely polarised from place to place – those that currently pay for car parking think everyone should pay, those that currently don't pay for car parking think no one should pay.

There seems there is a “postcode lottery” when it comes to paying for car parking in Cheshire East, and a consistent approach may be required to ensure fairness for all.

Can all places be treated the same?

That said, while it does seem that a consistent approach is required, it also seems clear that individual places have their own unique circumstances.

Where the introduction of car parking charges in one place may generate significant income, because that place has high demand for car parking, a good high street offer, and little nearby competition, the same charges applied in another place may further reduce any remaining footfall, contributing to the further decline of that high street.

A fine balancing act

Whatever approach the council proposes in the future, it is clear that it must tread a fine line between the need to recover costs for car parking infrastructure, and to generate income for highway and transport projects, whilst incentivising the long-term success and vibrancy of all its towns and villages.

Whilst a consistent approach is clearly needed for all places, it may be that charges from place to place will need to differ based on a range of factors, such as [those listed in this report](#), to ensure the vibrancy of towns and villages as a main priority.

Respondents seemed to indicate within the survey that a charge of more than 50 pence for 1 hour of parking would lead to a significant drop off in use – it appears that there will be a tipping point over which the negative impacts of the introduction of car parking charges will outweigh the positive ones.

Opposition to other car parking suggestions

The introduction of other car parking measures suggested in the survey – such as Sunday parking charges – were met with strong opposition.

It may be that measures such as these would best be introduced once a consistent charging policy has been put in place, and once these measures had been more clearly introduced and communicated to stakeholders.

Cars continue to be the preferred transport of choice

Another difficult issue for the council to tackle is whether cars will continue to be the main form of transport within the borough. Some respondents felt that in the immediate future they see no practical alternatives to car use, and so the introduction of car parking charges across the borough would lead to a choice between paying the charge and visiting the town or village, or not visiting at all.

Respondents also indicate that they see cars being their main form of transport for the foreseeable future, particularly as greener, electric cars become more commonplace. If so there may be greater need in future for increasing car parking provision in town and village centres, particularly as development continues in the borough.

Whether to focus on car infrastructure as opposed to alternative means of transport will continue to be another fine balancing act for the council to make in future.

Overall summary

Opposition to the concept of paying for car parking

When asked directly whether the council should charge for car parking in the car parks it manages, two-thirds of survey respondents, 66%, disagreed that it should. One quarter of respondents, 25%, agreed.

Those that opposed the concept of paying for car parking felt the council has an obligation to provide free car parking, and some felt this should be covered by Council Tax. They felt car parking should be free to boost footfall in town and village centres and to support the local economy, especially post-pandemic when it is felt recovery will be vital.

Over half would be prepared to pay to park for up to 1 hour

However, when asked what the maximum amount they would be prepared to pay to park for up to one hour in a car park they use regularly, just over half of respondents, 54%, stated they would be prepared to pay £0.01 or more e.g. they are prepared to pay for parking.

The potential negative impacts of car parking charges

Respondents felt the introduction of parking charges could:

- Discourage local shopping, and push shoppers to retail parks and online shopping.
- Negatively impact the high street, small towns and villages, businesses, and local communities.
- Drive trade out of Cheshire East to neighbouring towns such as Northwich where car parking is free.
- Discourage people from visiting and dwelling in town and village centres.
- Lead to more on street parking in surrounding areas.
- Encourage people to drive further to other places which would have a negative impact on the environment.

Split views on harmonisation of car parking charges

Half of respondents, 51%, agreed that where charged, the same hourly-rate charges should apply across the whole borough, 40% disagreed.

Results were extremely split by respondent location on whether consistent car parking charges should apply across all places in Cheshire East.

Respondents from Nantwich (92%), Audlem, Bunbury & Wrenbury (88%), and Crewe (86%) were most likely to agree consistent car parking charges should apply everywhere.

Respondents from Alsager (7%), Poynton & Disley (15%), Middlewich (15%), Holmes Chapel & Goostrey (19%) and Sandbach (20%) were least likely to agree consistent car parking charges should apply everywhere.

Reasons why charges should be harmonised

Some felt that consistent parking charges should apply – “either charge for (all car parks), or don't charge, but there should not be discordance across the area”. Some felt that with regard parking charges there is a “postcode lottery” which is unfair to people living in certain areas.

Reasons why charges should not be harmonised

On the other hand, others felt consistent parking charges between different places should NOT apply.

They felt individual towns and villages face their own unique circumstances, and that when setting charges each place must be considered individually. They suggested Town Councils could be given the power to decide whether to introduce parking charges or not.

They felt charges should vary from place to place and should be set based on factors such as the:

- Size of the town or village.
- Quality of the town or villages offer.
- Competition faced from neighbouring towns and retail parks.
- Supply of / demand for car parking.
- Availability of alternative transport to cars e.g. public transport.
- Affluence and demographics of the area.

They felt that where a location needs support to attract more users, increasing charges is likely to have the opposite effect and discourage customers.

The maximum amount prepared to pay to park for 1 hour

Of the 54% of respondents that were prepared to pay for car parking, the maximum amount they would be prepared to pay for up to 1 hour of car parking was:

- 100% would pay up to £0.25 for 1 hour parking.
- 87% would pay up to £0.50 for 1 hour parking.
- 44% would pay up to £0.75 for 1 hour parking.

- 28% would pay up to £1.00 for 1 hour parking.

Opposition to other car parking measures

There was strong disagreement that other measures suggested in the survey should be used to make charges for parking fairer in Cheshire East:

- 88% disagreed with Sunday parking charges, 6% agreed.
- 71% disagreed with night-time parking charges, 16% agreed.
- 63% disagreed with emissions-based charges, 22% agreed.

The future role of car parking

Respondents seem generally opposed to using other forms of transport than cars – 73% disagreed that the introduction of car parking charges would encourage them to use other forms of transport, although 64% did feel the council should prioritise town centre access by all forms of transport equally.

Managing car parking in residential areas

There were mixed views on what measures should be used to manage parking pressures in residential areas, with “park and stride” drop off facilities near schools being popular (67% agree with these), along with parking enforcement officers (49% agree).

Less popular measures included resident parking schemes (27% agree) and pay and display parking on streets (between 22% and 26% agree).

Car parking service improvements

Opinion is split on the introduction of Pay by Phone with 39% thinking it should be introduced to some degree, and 45% thinking it should not, though younger respondents were much more likely to think it should be introduced.

Respondents were concerned Pay By Phone should not be the only payment method available, with calls for contactless payment as well as cash.

The top 3 car parking service improvements respondents would like to see over the next 5 years were:

- More enforcement of illegal / inconsiderate parking (59% selected this option).
- Cash-free payment options at all car parks (43% selected this option).
- More electric vehicle charging points (42% selected this option).

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Introduction

Purpose of the survey

In 2021, Cheshire East Council will propose changes to car parking policies, to potentially harmonise them across the whole borough.

To ensure that these proposals are well informed by public opinion, the council conducted a car parking survey with all stakeholders between November 2020 and January 2021. Results of this survey will be used to inform proposed changes to car parking policies.

A further formal consultation period on any final proposals will follow the survey period, due to take place in March 2021.

The following report summarises all responses to the car parking survey which was conducted between November 2020 and January 2021.

Survey promotion and number of responses

The consultation was widely promoted, most notably through:

- [The council's Digital Influence Panel](#).
- Media releases such as [this one of 4 January 2021](#).
- [The council's website](#).
- Cheshire East libraries where paper survey packs were distributed.

In total, 3,783 responses were received, including:

- 3,749 survey responses.
- 34 written responses (see appendix 2).

Charging for car parking

Opposition to the concept of paying for car parking

When asked directly whether the council should charge for car parking in the car parks it manages, two-thirds of survey respondents, 66%, disagreed. One quarter of respondents, 25%, agreed that it should.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that Cheshire East Council should charge for car parking in the car parks it manages?



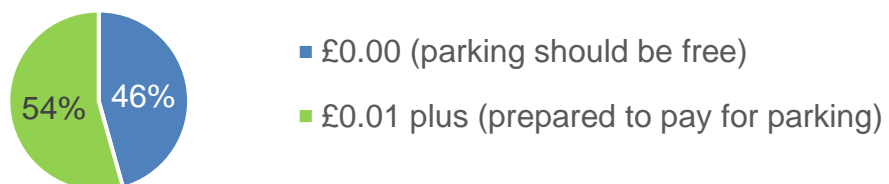
Number of responses = 3,673

Over half would be prepared to pay to park for up to 1 hour

However, when asked what the maximum amount they would be prepared to pay to park for up to one hour in a car park they use regularly, just over half of respondents, 54%, stated they would be prepared to pay £0.01 or more e.g. they are prepared to pay for parking.

Just under half of respondents, 46%, stated that they would not be prepared to pay e.g. they felt parking should be free.

What is the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay to park for up to 1 hour in the car parks you use regularly?



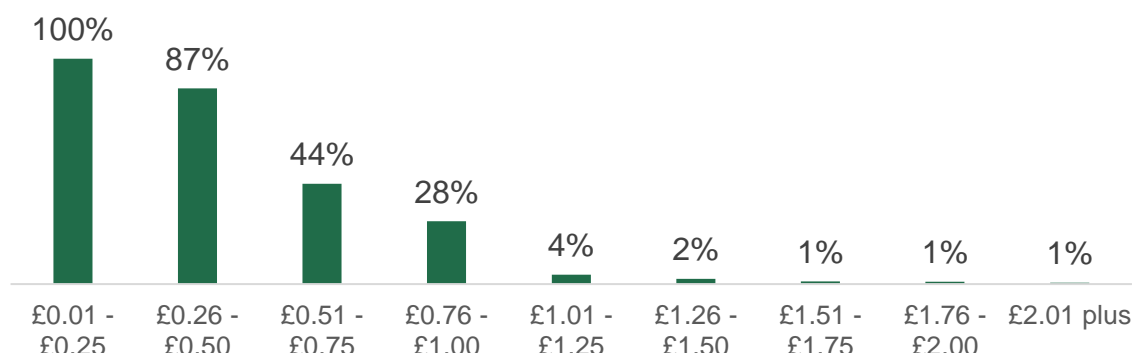
Number of responses = 3,521

The maximum amount prepared to pay to park for 1 hour

Of the 54% of respondents that were prepared to pay for car parking, the maximum amount they would be prepared to pay for up to 1 hour of parking was:

- 100% would pay up to £0.25 for 1 hour parking.
- 87% would pay up to £0.50 for 1 hour parking.
- 44% would pay up to £0.75 for 1 hour parking.
- 28% would pay up to £1.00 for 1 hour parking.
- 4% would pay up to £1.25 for 1 hour parking.

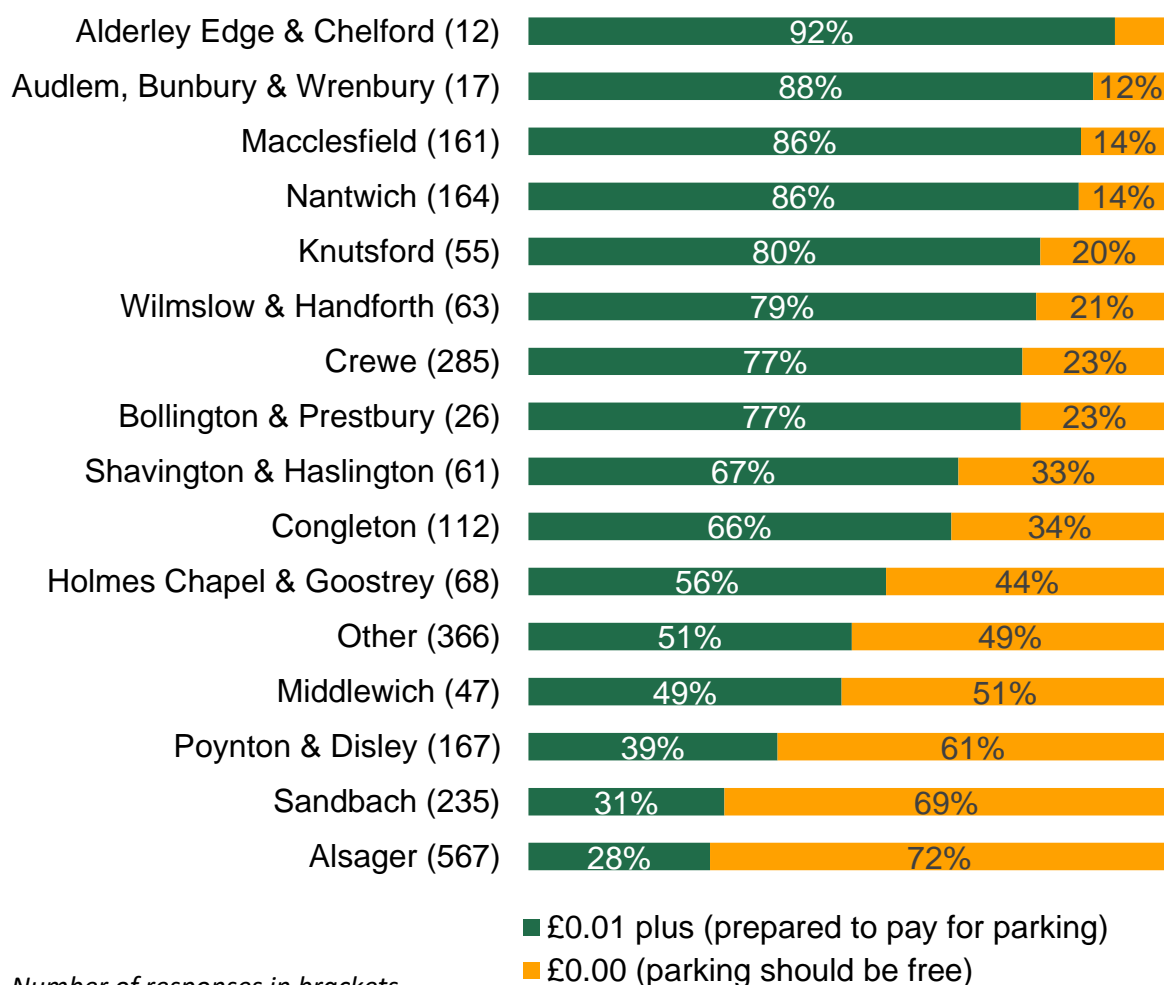
Of the 54% of respondents prepared to pay for car parking - the proportions prepared to pay each of the following maximum pay bands:



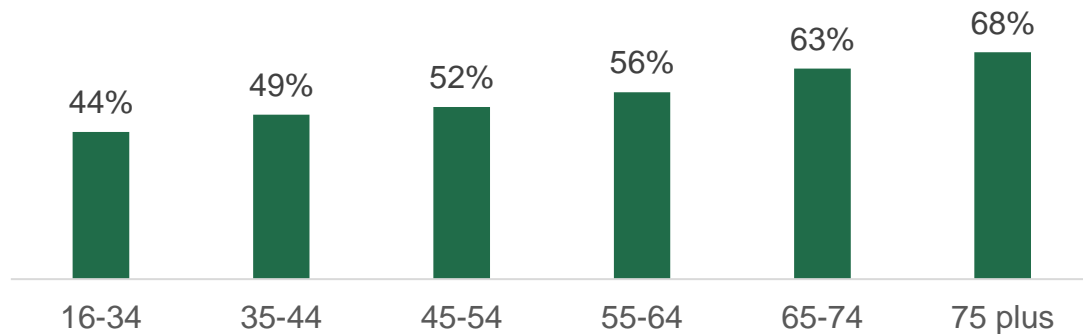
Paying to park for up to 1 hour – By location and age

Whether respondents were prepared to pay for up to 1 hour of parking varied significantly by location and age.

What is the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay to park for up to 1 hour in the car parks you use regularly? *Results by location*



% of respondents that would be prepared to pay to park for up to 1 hour in the car parks they use regularly *Results by age, % that would pay £0.01+*



Number of respondents between 163 and 686

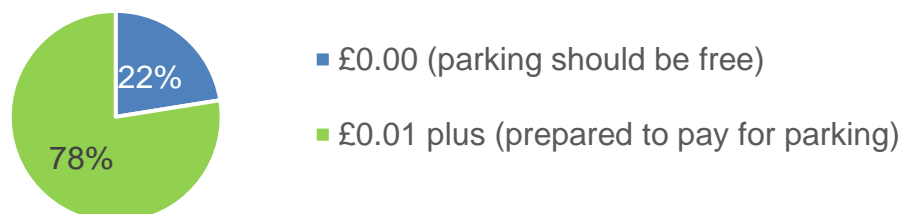
The maximum amount prepared to pay to park for between 6 to 10 hours

A slightly higher proportion of respondents were prepared to pay to park for between 6 – 10 hours, with 78% saying they would pay £0.01+ to pay to park for 6 – 10 hours.

Please note however that this question did not include an answer option for £0.00 – the minimum price band the answer options started at was £3.50 – £4.00.

A number of respondents answered £0.00 in the “other” answer option box which was provided as part of the question, but these results may be skewed as a result of the way the question was set out.

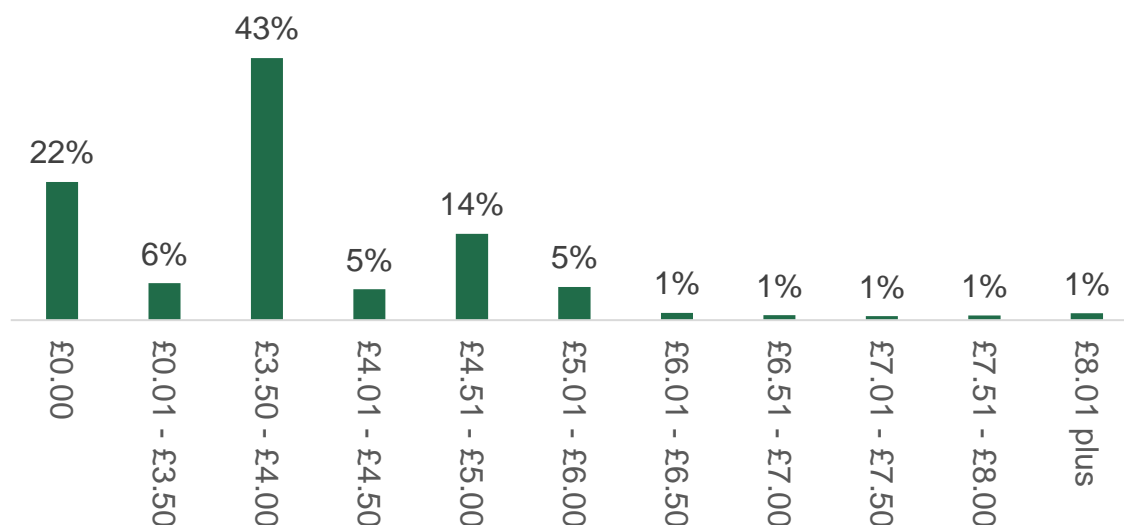
What is the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay to park for between 6 - 10 hours in the car parks you use regularly?



Number of responses = 2,998

43% of the survey respondents that answered the question stated they would pay between £3.50 and £4.00 to park for between 6 – 10 hours – this was the smallest price band presented in the survey question.

What is the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay to park for between 6 - 10 hours in the car parks you use regularly?



Number of responses = 2,998

Discussion about the amount to charge for car parking

Survey respondents were asked if they had any comments to make about the amount charged for car parking. A summary of responses to this question is given below, with a full list of responses given in Appendix 1.

Car parking should be free

Some felt that car parking should be free, and that all charges should be abolished. They felt the council has an obligation to provide car parking free of charge, to facilitate access to local towns and villages for shoppers, workers and visitors, and to boost footfall and in turn support the local economy. They felt free car parking should be covered by the Council Tax they pay.

They felt that pricing needs to be strategic, that the level of parking charges affects where people choose to shop and their dwell time in the town or village centre, that the future of towns and villages is that of a social place where people can meet, but when people pay to park they will be more focussed on what they must get done, and the opportunity to browse and socialise is reduced.

They felt the introduction of car parking charges would be unfair:

- Because public transport and buses do not provide a suitable alternative to cars.
- During and after the current covid-19 pandemic.

The negative impacts of parking charges

Respondents felt the introduction of parking charges could:

- Discourage local shopping, and push shoppers to retail parks and online shopping.
- Negatively impact the high street, small towns and villages, businesses, and local communities.
- Drive trade out of Cheshire East to neighbouring towns such as Northwich where car parking is free.
- Discourage people from visiting and dwelling in town and village centres.
- Lead to more on street parking in surrounding areas.
- Encourage people to drive further to retail parks etc, which would have a negative impact on the environment.

Those who would be more likely affected by charges include:

- Those on a low income.
- Those living outside town and village centres.
- Town and village centre workers who travel in by car.
- Those living in smaller towns and villages.

Discount parking initiatives

Respondents suggested discount parking initiatives including:

- Free or low cost short / medium stay parking e.g. make the first 30 minutes, 1 hour or 2 hours free.
- "Free after 3" parking.
- Free off-peak parking.
- Free parking on Sundays or at the weekends.
- Free parking after 5 or 6pm.
- Being able to pay in 15 – 30 minute time slots rather than hourly.
- Discounts, permits or low cost weekly passes for workers and local residents.
- Car parking charge money back schemes when shopping in certain stores.

It was also suggested that people should be charged differently depending on the type of town and village centre user they are, with workers and shoppers making a high contribution to town and village centre economies, but commuters making little contribution to the prosperity of town and village centres.

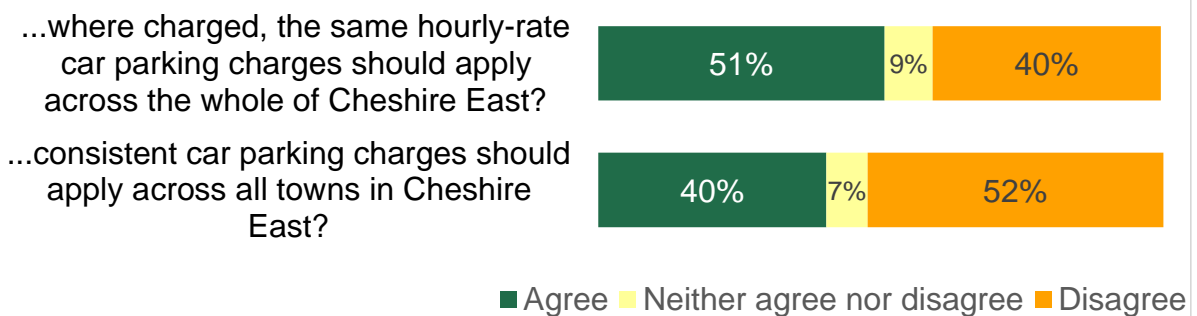
Harmonisation of car parking charges

Split views on harmonisation of car parking charges

Half of respondents, 51%, agreed that where charged, the same hourly-rate charges should apply across the whole borough (51% agree Vs 40% disagree).

40% of respondents agreed that consistent car parking charges should apply across all towns in Cheshire East (40% agree Vs 51% disagree).

How strongly do you agree or disagree that...



Number of responses between 3,654 and 3,670

Views on harmonisation by location

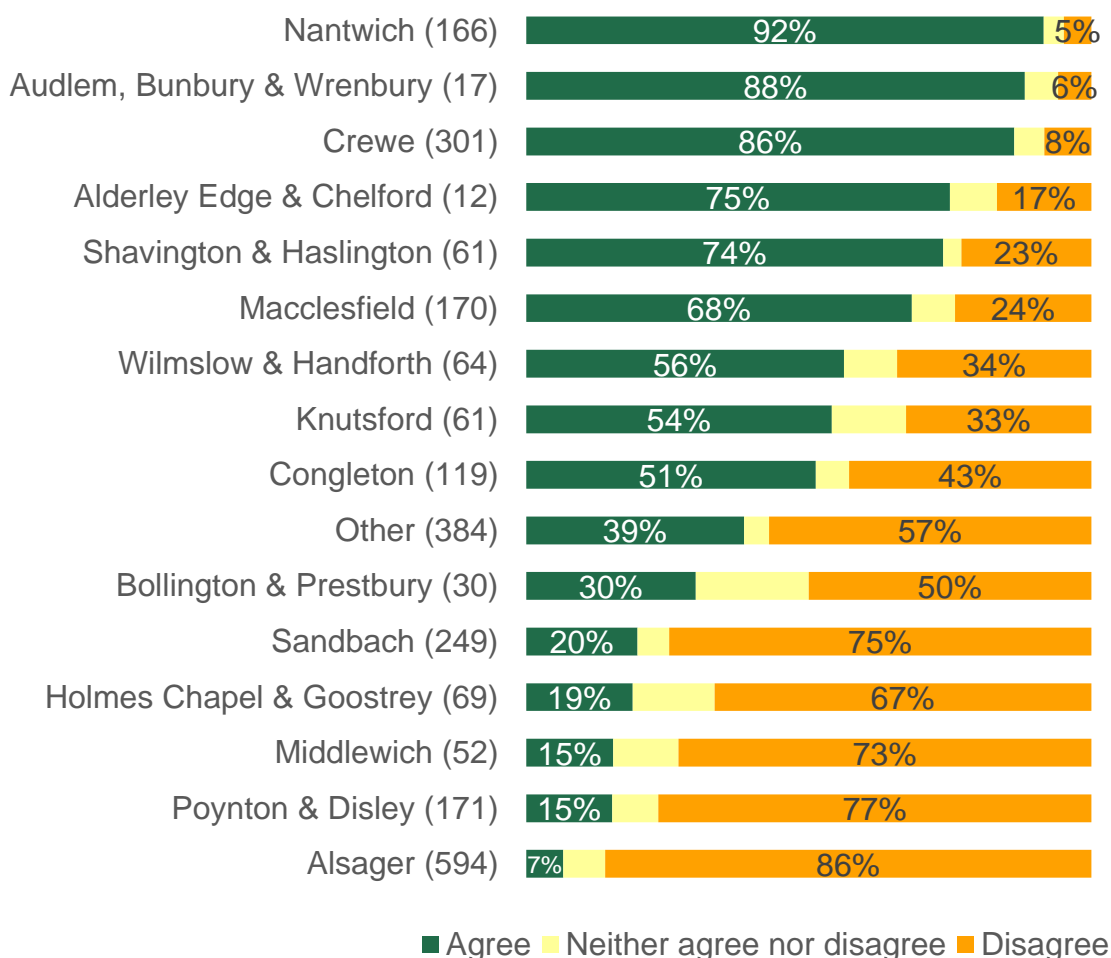
Results were extremely split by respondent location on whether consistent car parking charges should apply across all towns and villages in Cheshire East.

76% of respondents from places that are currently charged for car parking agreed that consistent car parking charges should apply across all locations, whereas just 12% agreed from locations that are not currently charged for car parking.

Respondents from Nantwich (92%), Audlem, Bunbury & Wrenbury (88%), and Crewe (86%) were most likely to agree consistent car parking charges should apply everywhere.

Respondents from Alsager (7%), Poynton & Disley (15%), Middlewich (15%), Holmes Chapel & Goostrey (19%) and Sandbach (20%) were least likely to agree consistent car parking charges should apply everywhere.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that consistent car parking charges should apply across all towns in Cheshire East? *Results by location*

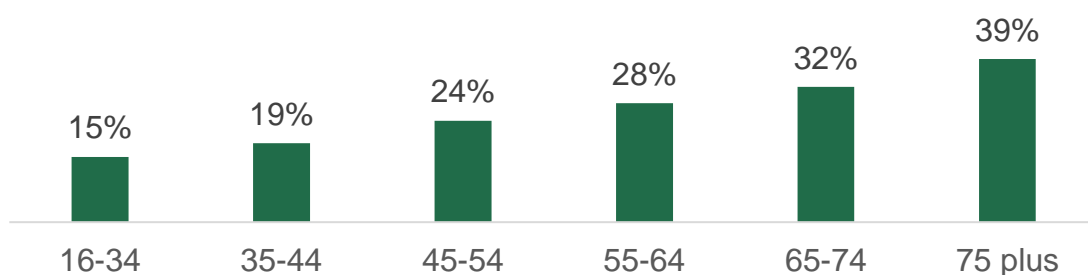


Number of responses in brackets

Views on harmonisation by age

Younger respondents were less likely to agree the council should charge for car parking as compared to older respondents. For example, 15% of those aged 16-34 agreed the council should charge for car parking, compared to 39% of those aged 75 plus.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that Cheshire East Council should charge for car parking in the car parks it manages? *Results by age, % that agree*



Number of respondents between 119 and 589

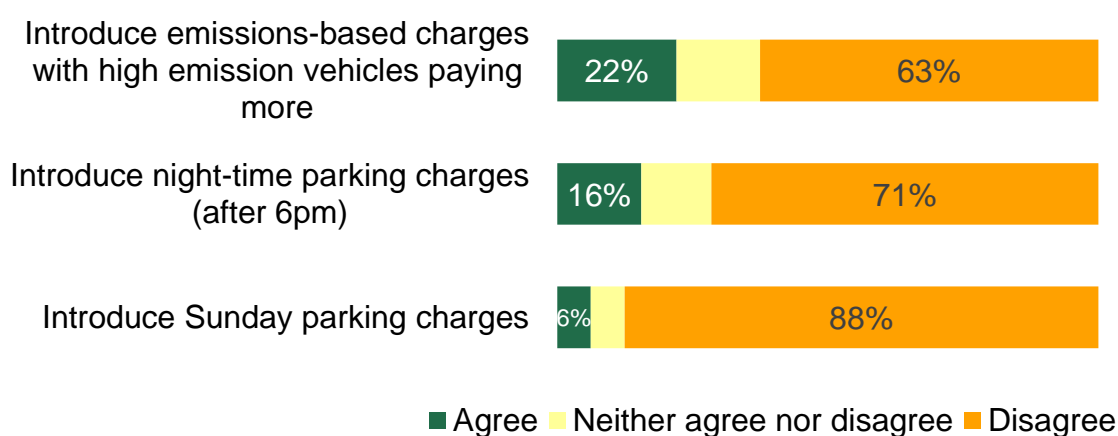
Opposition to other car parking measures

There was strong disagreement that other measures suggested in the survey should be used to make charges for parking fairer in Cheshire East.

Low proportions of respondents agreed with the introduction of:

- Emissions-based charges (22% agree, 63% disagree).
- Night-time parking charges (16% agree, 71% disagree).
- Sunday parking charges (6% agree, 88% disagree).

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following measures should be used to make charges for parking fairer in Cheshire East?



Number of responses between 3,301 and 3,307

Discussion about harmonisation of car parking charges

Survey respondents were asked if they had any comments to make about harmonisation of car parking charges across Cheshire East. A summary of responses to this question is given below, with a full list of responses given in Appendix 1.

Charges should be harmonised

Some felt that consistent parking charges should apply – “either charge for them all, or don't charge, but there should not be discordance across the area”.

They felt fairness is needed for all residents and places, and that there is currently a “postcode lottery” which is unfair and discriminatory to people living in certain areas.

Charges should not be harmonised

On the other hand, others felt consistent parking charges between different places should NOT apply. They felt that where a town needs support to attract more users, increasing charges is likely to have the opposite effect and discourage customers.

They felt charges should vary from place to place and should be set based on factors such as the:

- Size of the town or village – small places can't compete with the “offer” of large places.
- Quality of the town or village’s offer – shops, facilities, regeneration etc.
- Competition faced from neighbouring towns and retail parks.
- Supply of / demand for car parking – some suggested that where demand outstrips supply for car parking, charges could be implemented.
- Usage of car parking – some car parks supply key services such as health centres and schools, some wondered whether it would be appropriate to apply charges in such places
- Amount of traffic congestion around the town or village.
- Availability of alternative transport to cars e.g. public transport.
- Affluence of the area.
- Demographics of the area e.g. are there lots of elderly people in the area.

Consider individual location needs

They felt each town or village faces its own unique circumstances, and that when setting charging policies it is important to consider each place individually and charge as appropriate. They suggested that individual Town Councils could be given the power to decide whether to introduce parking charges or not.

Examples of the unique circumstances faced by different places in Cheshire East are given below – more detail is provided in formal consultation responses in Appendix 2.

Alsager – Parking is used to access local schools, there are very few shops left, and a large elderly population. Fairview Car park is the only major car park in the town and is a pickup and drop off point for Highfields School.

Congleton – Does not receive the same regeneration funding as Macclesfield and Crewe, limiting its potential “offer”. Congleton faces competition from Barn Road, West Heath Shopping Centre, Biddulph Sainsburys or Talke Retail – all of which offer free parking, and all of which are busy centres with high business occupancy.

Crewe – Charges are higher here in comparison to other towns, especially given the relative lack of shops and the need for regeneration. Many who live in Crewe shop in neighbouring towns that offer free parking instead.

Handforth – Inadequate parking facilities in Handforth encourages potential visitors to go to out of town alternatives or other local centres instead. Handforth faces significant competition from out of town retail parks that offer free parking.

Holmes Chapel – Faces cross-border competition from neighbouring towns – the introduction of charges could encourage more residents to travel to Northwich for goods and services, where short stay parking is plentiful and free.

Macclesfield – Charges are higher here in comparison to other towns.

Middlewich – It is felt council owned car parks are not used sufficiently to make it economic to enforce charges. The Seabank car park is well used as it serves the doctors, but it would not be ethical to charge for its use, the Civic car park is not well used during the day, and is in need of repair, the Victoria Hall / Civic Centre is currently being used as a vaccination centre for Covid-19, so to introduce charges on this car park for those awaiting and arriving for the vaccinations and the staff treating them would be inappropriate. Faces cross-border competition from neighbouring towns – the introduction of charges could encourage more residents to travel to Northwich for goods and services.

Nantwich – Charges are seen as unfairly high and affect trade. More Parking is needed as around 2,400 new dwellings have or are being built in the town, but no extra parking has been provided. There is no justification for free parking in Sandbach and some parts of Macclesfield, yet Nantwich and Crewe have the highest charges.

Poynton – The local elderly population need to shop locally, visit their GP surgery etc., and there is only the one car park. Local businesses need support. If introduced shoppers will travel by car to places with free car parks such as Handforth Dean or Asda and Sainsbury's in Hazel Grove.

Prestbury – A high car owning population which has a higher than average age profile. Springfields provides parking for parents dropping off and picking up children from the Bollin Grove Primary School, and the Shirleys provides parking for the doctors' surgery, dentist and visitors to the Shirleys senior citizens development.

Sandbach – Shops and businesses would suffer if charges were brought in. There has been a 30-40% increase in population in the town, with no new town centre parking. The legal status of Scotch Common prevents charging for car parking. The continuing vitality of Sandbach town centre is supported by free parking.

General comments on harmonisation of car parking charges

Some felt that all car park users should be charged, but that charges should be reduced to a low, minimal rate.

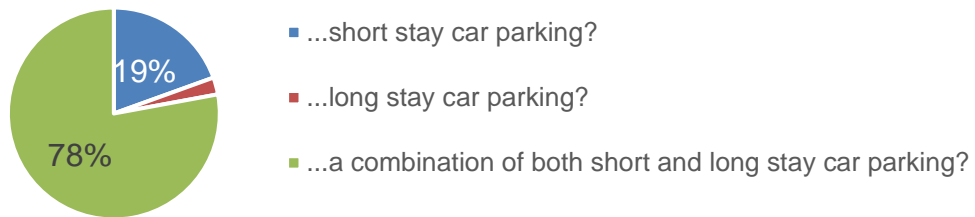
Others felt there should be no introduction of parking charges until suitable alternative transport systems (e.g. public transport) are in place.

The future role of car parking

Respondents felt there should be a balanced approach towards future town and village centre transport policies.

78% felt the council should provide a combination of both short and long stay car parking.

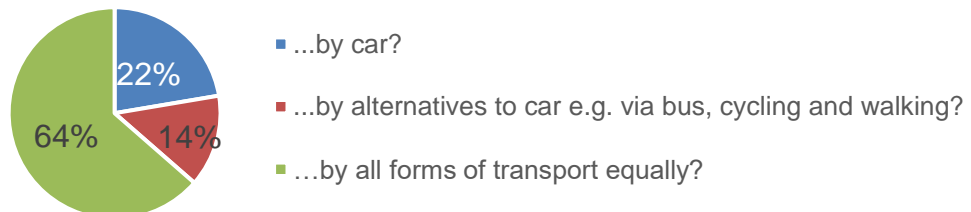
For the towns you visit frequently, do you think that the council should prioritise providing...



Number of responses = 3,720

64% felt the council should prioritise town centre access by all forms of transport equally.

For the towns you visit frequently, do you think that the council should prioritise town centre access...



Number of responses = 3,723

A large proportion of respondents (73%) disagreed that the introduction of car parking charges would mean they would use other modes of transport instead.

How strongly do you agree or disagree the introduction of car parking charges would mean you would use other modes of transport instead?



Number of responses = 3,498

Discussion about the future of car parking in Cheshire East

Survey respondents were asked if they had any comments about the future of car parking in Cheshire East. A summary of responses to this question is given below, with a full list of responses given in Appendix 1.

Mixed views on what car parking policy should be

There were mixed views and general disagreement on many aspects of future car parking policy.

Some felt current parking policy is fine as it is, others suggested waiting to see what the “new normal” post-pandemic looks like before making any decisions.

Provide more car parking, boost footfall and boost the local economy

On the one hand some felt the council has an obligation to provide more car parking, and free too, to facilitate access to local towns for shoppers, workers and visitors, to boost footfall, and to in turn support the local economy.

They felt the council must improve the overall offer of town and village centres, to attract more people to the shops there, instead of pushing them towards out of town shopping centres. They felt cheap and accessible car parking formed a critical element in a town’s overall offer.

They felt the council must make car parking as accessible and convenient for all as possible, and that it should increase car parking capacity as much as possible with multi-storey car parks, underground car parks, and on-street parking.

They felt this was also necessary to reduce congestion on local roads caused by on-street parking, which they felt will only get worse as the amount of development and new houses in the borough increases.

Reduce reliance on cars, have fewer car parks

On the other hand, respondents felt the council should reduce the number of vehicles on the road and reduce the amount of car parking spaces available. They also wanted to see a reduction on the amount of development, to help alleviate the demand on car parking spaces.

Some suggested that car parking in town and village centres should be expensive, to encourage people out of their cars and onto alternative forms of transport.

They felt this could be achieved by:

- Improving public transport to, and around, town and village centres. They felt current public transport provision is limited or too expensive, and a better service is needed.
- Providing tram links in and around towns and villages.
- Improving Park & Ride services.
- Improving walking and cycling infrastructure.
- Pedestrianising town and village centres.
- Introducing congestion charges, particularly for high emission vehicles.
- Introducing more park & stride schemes for schools.
- Having commuter / car share schemes.

Create car parks in town and village centres, or out of town?

Respondents were also split on where they felt car parks should be:

- Have car parking in town and village centres to encourage shoppers and trade.
- Have car parking outside town and village centres, to encourage "green" transport.
- Have one central car park in towns and villages with smaller car parks on the outskirts.

Improving car parking services

Managing car parking in residential areas

45% of respondents said there were areas in Cheshire East where on-street car parking restrictions need enforcing better.

Are there any areas in Cheshire East where you feel on-street parking restrictions need enforcing better?

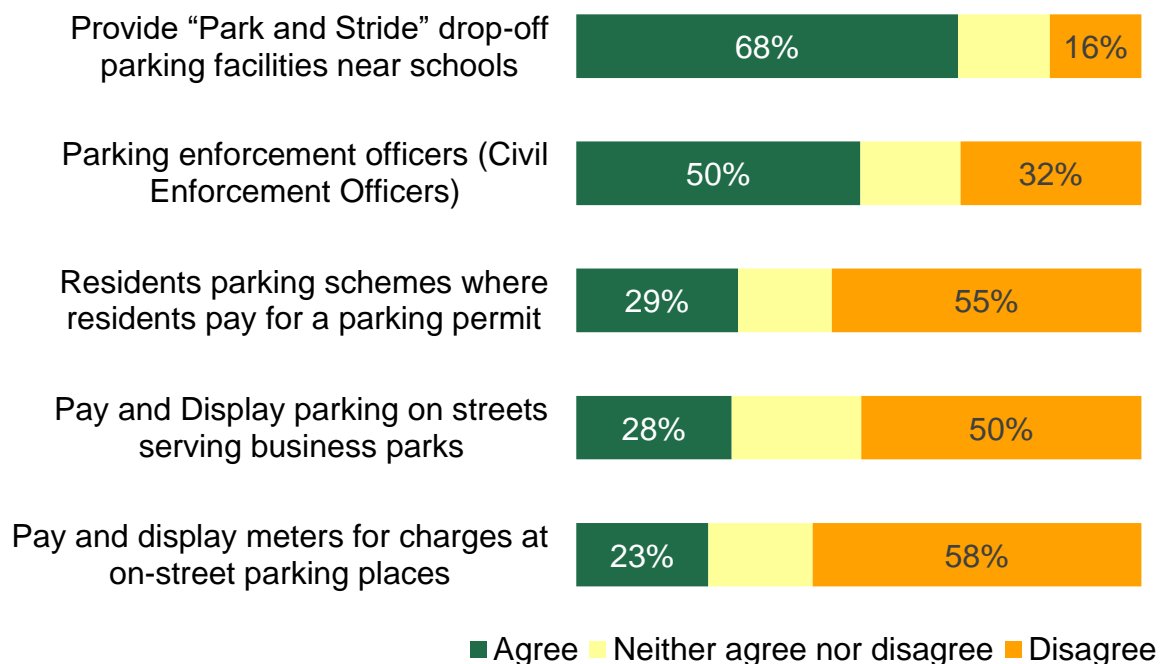


Number of responses = 3,696

There were mixed views on what measures should be used to manage parking pressures in residential areas, with “park and stride” drop off facilities near schools being popular (68% agree with these), along with parking enforcement officers (50% agree).

Less popular measures included resident parking schemes (29% agree) and pay and display parking on streets (between 23% and 28% agree).

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following measures should be used to manage parking pressures in residential areas?



Number of responses between 3,269 and 3,293

Service improvements

The top 3 things respondents would like to see introduced in Cheshire East over the next 5 years were:

- More enforcement of illegal / inconsiderate parking (58% selected this option).
- Cash-free payment options at all car parks (44% selected this option).
- More electric vehicle charging points (41% selected this option).

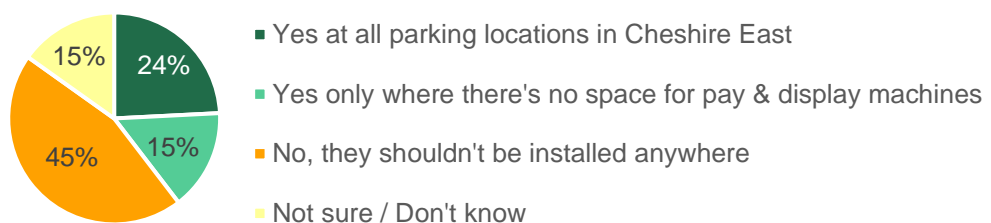
Which 3 of the following would you like to see introduced in Cheshire East over the next 5 years? *Select up to 3 only*



Number of responses = 3,064

Opinion was fairly split on whether “pay by phone” only payment systems should be used at car parking locations in Cheshire East.

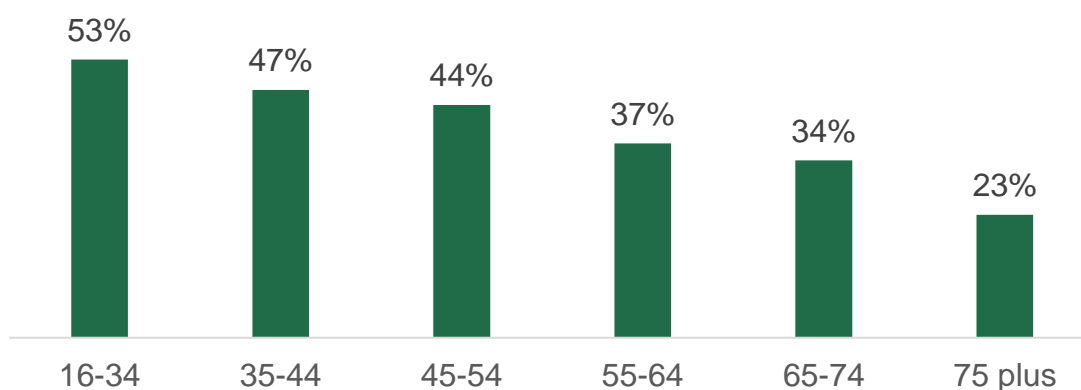
Do you think "Pay By Phone" only payment systems should be used at car parking locations in Cheshire East?



Number of responses = 3,286

Younger respondents were more likely to agree Pay by Phone payment systems should be used at parking locations across Cheshire East. For example, 53% of those aged 16-44 agreed Pay by Phone only payment systems should be used at car parking locations in Cheshire East, compared to 23% of those aged 75 plus.

Do you think "Pay By Phone" only payment systems should be used at car parking locations in Cheshire East? *Results by age, % that answered yes*



Number of respondents between 175 and 731

Discussion about improving car parking services

Survey respondents were asked if they had any comments to about how parking services could be improved. A summary of responses to this question is given below, with a full list of responses given in Appendix 1.

Paying for parking

Respondents felt that payment meters need to be made more user friendly, with more payment options, and that contactless card payment should be made available. They felt cashless payment options should have no surcharges, and that pay on exit should be an option.

Others had concerns about Pay by Phone payment meters, including that:

- Pay by Phone should not be the only payment method as not everyone can use this technology
- Contactless card and cash payment options are also needed.
- Service charges added on Pay by Phone apps were unfair and off-putting.
- Pay by Phone is difficult and slow to use.

Improve car parking infrastructure

Respondents suggested using council tax and business rates to improve car parking infrastructure:

- Fix road surfaces and potholes.
- Have better road entrances into and out of car parks.
- Improve signage and white bay lines.
- Increase the size of car parking bays, have more disabled and parent & child parking bays.
- Have better lighting and better CCTV / security.
- Have more (free) electric charge point bays.
- Provide overnight parking facilities for motorhomes.
- Have bike racks in all car parks.
- Make car parks more disabled friendly.

Improve on-street parking

To improve on-street parking respondents suggested:

- Tackling parking of cars on pavements.
- Tackling parking of cars on double yellow lines.
- Having resident parking permits with no charges for parking.
- Keeping some on-street parking for residents only.
- Improving parking outside schools.
- Improving markings of parking spaces.
- Having time limits on street parking spaces.

Improve parking enforcement

To improve parking enforcement respondents suggested:

- Better enforcement of disabled parking to prevent inappropriate use.
- Better enforcement of parent and child bays to prevent inappropriate use.
- Better enforcement of where blue badge holders can park.
- Parking enforcement officers are too strict / unfair.
- Have council-employed parking enforcement officers instead of private.

Appendix 1 – Survey open comment feedback

Harmonisation of car parking charges

Respondents were asked if they had any comments to make about harmonisation of car parking charges across Cheshire East. Responses to this question have been grouped together into the below categories and sub-categories.

Consistent parking charges should apply	404
About time! Fairness is needed for all residents / towns, all car parks should be treated the same.	131
Charge all car park users, but reduce charges to a lower, minimal rate. There should be a small nominal charge for all.	116
Charges should be fair, realistically priced and as low as possible.	79
Consistency is needed - either charge all or make it free for all.	27
Between 20p and 50 for 1 hour of parking would be fair.	22
Don't bring all lower charged parking up to the highest.	20
Charge car park users, but only if accessible and cheap public transport is available.	5
Affluent areas should not subsidise the less affluent areas.	4

Consistent parking charges should NOT apply. Charges should be set based on...	700
...the quality of local facilities and public transport, and the amount of traffic congestion.	355
...the amount, location and condition of car parking that is available.	123
...the size of the town - small towns can't compete with large towns for "offer", large towns have busy shops and more facilities so you should pay more there.	84
...how affluent the area is.	58
...the demographics of the area - older people need parking for shopping, doctors etc.	49
...how well the town has been regenerated.	23
...the cost of maintaining the individual car parks, and of wardens etc.	8

Disagreement on what town centre charging policy should be	46
Have higher parking charges in town centres, and cheaper parking outside, to encourage "green" transport such as Park and Ride etc.	27
Have free parking in town centres to encourage shoppers and trade.	19

General comments on harmonisation of car parking charges	61
Harmonisation should not be an excuse to increase charges throughout the county.	46
Let individual Town Councils decide whether to introduce parking charges.	12
There should be no introduction of parking charges until public transport system is improved.	3

Individual towns have their own needs	296
Alsager - Parking is used to access local schools, there are very few shops left, and a large elderly population.	110

Crewe - Charges are too high here in comparison to other towns, especially given the lack of shops and the need for regeneration.	71
Sandbach - Shops and businesses would suffer if charges were brought in. The Commons is not council property.	43
Nantwich - Charges are unfairly high here, and affect trade.	24
Poynton - The local elderly population need to shop locally, visit their GP surgery etc., and there is only the one car park. Local businesses need support.	23
Congleton - Parking charges have damaged local shops and discouraged visitors.	20
Macclesfield - Charges are unfairly high, should be reduced or made free to encourage shoppers.	5

Car parking should be free / abolish all charges	578
Encourage shoppers to shop local.	155
Car parks are currently free and should stay so.	131
Parking should be free in villages and small towns.	114
No charges boost local income.	66
No charges encourages visitors and tourists.	62
Parking should be free especially post-covid.	34
Parking on common land should never be charged as the land was given to the people.	10
The council has an obligation to provide free parking - Council tax and road tax should cover parking costs.	6

The introduction of parking charges would:	471
Discourage local shopping, and push shoppers to retail parks and online shopping.	193
Negatively impact small towns and businesses, and local communities.	132
Kill the High Street.	59
Discourage people from visiting town centres.	48
Lead to more on street parking, causing chaos.	34
Push people to drive further, to retail parks and free parking sites, which would be bad for environment.	5

Have discount parking initiatives such as:	166
Free short stay parking - make the first 20 minutes, 30 minutes or hour free	96
Free parking for the first 3 or 4 hours, charges should be for long stay parking	21
"Free after 3" parking.	15
Discounts or weekly passes for workers.	10
Discounts or free parking for local residents.	10
Free off-peak parking.	3
Tickets with time left on should be interchangeable with other CE car parks.	3
CE wide parking permits.	3
Blue badge holders should pay charges / should not pay charges.	5

Make improvements to car parks	34
All car parks should have modern payment machines, no need for apps.	19
Car parks should have car charging facilities.	5
Car parks should have cameras, with ANPR and fines for overstay.	4
Car parks should have good clear signage.	3

Cash and cashless charges should be the same, and no service charge for use of the app.	3
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The amount charged for car parking

Respondents were asked if they had any comments to make about the amount charged for car parking in Cheshire East. Responses to this question have been grouped together into the below categories and sub-categories.

Charges should be the same in every town	81
Charges should differ between towns	76
Charges should only apply, or be highest, in the larger towns.	32
Charges should not apply in towns in decline such as Crewe.	27
Charges should be matched to the shopping experience.	17

Charges should be free in:	121
Alsager.	82
Sandbach.	29
Crewe.	10

Charges are too high in:	71
Crewe (including at the train station).	36
Nantwich.	16
Macclesfield.	10
Knutsford.	2
Nature reserves.	7

The negative impacts of parking charges would be:	636
People would shop elsewhere, as the shopping experience is not worth the cost for parking.	314
Local shops would lose trade, local towns would decline.	178
Fewer quick trips to town or the shops, and shorter shopping trips.	37
Increased parking on residential streets.	90
Increased parking at supermarkets.	17

Charges would be unfair:	118
Because public transport and buses do not provide a suitable alternative to cars.	71
During and after the pandemic.	20
Because residents pay council tax.	19
When the machines don't give change.	6
Because car parks cost nothing to maintain.	2

Those who would be more likely affected by charges include:	91
Those living in smaller towns	35
Town centre workers who travel in by car.	21
Those on a low income.	18

Those living outside town centres.	17
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Not everyone should pay the same:	43
Town workers should pay more for parking.	8
Town workers should park free.	7
Town workers should be offered a permit scheme.	7
Residents should be offered a permit scheme.	6
Residents should park for free.	6
Permits or discounts should be offered to regular users.	5
Blue Badge holders should pay for parking.	2
Pensioners should park for free.	1
Voluntary workers should park for free.	1

Improving car parking services

Respondents were asked if there are any improvements they would like to see making to car parking services in Cheshire East. Responses to this question have been grouped together into the below categories and sub-categories.

Improve parking payment	92
Contactless card payments should be available everywhere.	53
Make payment meters more user friendly.	30
Introduce a system to negate the need to enter registration numbers.	9

Pay By Phone	325
Not everyone can use Pay by Phone or similar app technology e.g. the elderly.	158
Pay by Phone should not be the only payment method, card and cash payment options are also needed.	83
Opposed to the service charges added on Pay by Phone apps.	54
Pay by Phone is difficult and slow to use.	30

Make improvements to layout and infrastructure of car parks	167
Increase sizes of car parking bays.	44
Fix surfaces and pot holes.	40
Have clearer signage and white lines.	26
Have better lighting.	14
Have more disabled and parent & child parking bays.	18
Have better CCTV / security.	11
Have more (free) electric charge point bays.	9
Have bike racks / storage in all car parks.	5

Reduce the number of vehicles on the road and in car parks	26
Improve public transport to towns.	7
Improve Park & Ride services.	6
Have commuter / car share schemes.	5
Improve walking and cycling routes.	3
Pedestrianise town centres.	2

Introduce more park & stride for schools.	1
Charge more for higher emission vehicles.	1
Introduce congestion charges.	1

Improve street parking	77
Tackle parking of cars on pavements - give out more fines.	31
Have resident parking permits with no charges for parking.	15
Keep some on-street parking for residents only.	11
Tackle the parking of cars on double yellow lines - give out more fines.	6
Improve parking outside schools.	6
Improve markings of parking spaces.	4
Create more off-street parking spaces.	2
Have time limits on street parking spaces.	2

Improve parking enforcement	30
Better enforcement of disabled bays to prevent inappropriate use.	16
Better enforcement of parent and child bays to prevent inappropriate use.	5
Better enforcement of where blue badge holders can park.	4
Parking enforcement officers are too strict / unfair.	4
Have council-employed parking enforcement officers instead of private.	1

Changes to car park infrastructure	64
Create more car parking spaces.	33
Have better road entrances into and out of car parks.	7
Build multi storey car parks.	6
Provide overnight parking facilities for motorhomes.	5
Have fewer car parks/car park spaces.	5
Improve town centres to attract more people to the shops there instead of out of town shopping centres.	3
Stop building so many houses, thus increasing traffic and amount of traffic using car parks.	2
Use council tax and business rates to improve car parking.	2
Build car parks specifically for disabled users.	1

The future of car parking in Cheshire East

Respondents were asked if they had any comments to make on what the future of car parking in Cheshire East should look like. Responses to this question have been grouped together into the below categories and sub-categories.

Contrasting views on parking provision	124
All car parking should either be free or charged for.	67
Parking is fine as it is.	27
Consider each location individually and charge as appropriate.	27
Wait and see what the 'new normal' requirements are.	3

The council must provide car parking	851
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The council must provide access to facilities for shoppers, workers and visitors, to help support the economy.	727
Avoid congestion on local streets caused by parking.	78
Make parking accessible and convenient for all.	46

Increase parking capacity	152
Cater for increasing traffic due to new build properties in the area.	25
Provide more spaces for charging electric vehicles.	58
Have separate areas or wider bays for larger vehicles.	26
Build multi-storey car parks.	16
Consider provision for all types of vehicles and users.	14
Create out of town car parks with alternative means to access town centre	8
Create underground car parks.	3
Have one central car park in town with smaller car parks on outskirts.	2

Provide alternative transport	238
Public transport is limited or too expensive, a better service is needed. Provide tam network links between towns	94
Provide more cycle lanes and bike parking.	49
Improve pedestrian access.	38
Increase the amount of Park and Ride.	22
Have a green transport strategy to reduce pollution and congestion.	21
Provide free / low cost public transport around town centres.	7
Consider parking alongside active travel measures.	7

Parking should be cheaper	723
Have free parking only.	542
Parking charges should be affordable / lower prices for all.	82
Provide free or low cost parking in towns.	73
Have more free parking.	26

Ideas for cheaper parking schemes	257
Have free or low cost short stay parking.	106
Make the first 2 - 3 hours free.	57
Make the first 30 minutes - 1 hour free.	43
Have "Free after 3pm".	20
Have parking free on Sundays or weekends.	15
Have free parking after 5 or 6pm.	11
Make it possible to pay in 15-30 minute chunks rather than hourly.	5

Have parking permits	88
Have free or low cost parking for workers.	42
Have annual or monthly parking permits.	25
Residents should have special rates or free parking permits.	21

Long vs short stay parking	87
Have a mix of long and short term parking.	51

Provide cheaper out of town long-stay parking .	16
Offer a mix of car parks and on-street parking.	10
Provide more long stay parking in town.	7
Make private or council office car parks free at the weekends.	3

Innovations to current car park arrangements	84
Easy to use payment machines with a choice of payment methods.	24
Improve car park maintenance and security, including meters and payment machines.	20
Cashless payment options without surcharges.	13
Money back when shopping in certain stores.	7
Remove penalties for over staying the period paid for.	5
Allow motorhomes to park overnight.	4
Have pay on exit options.	4
One-way system for safety reasons.	2
Pre-booked spaces or automotive car parking charges.	2
Height restrictions.	1
Ability to use same ticket in all CE car parks on same day.	1
Add meters to on street parking bays	1

Places to enforce on-street parking restrictions

Respondents were asked to list any areas in Cheshire East where they felt on-street parking restrictions need enforcing better. Responses to this question have been grouped together into the below categories and sub-categories.

Alderley Edge	22	Middlewich	19	Poynton	143
London Road	7	Long Lane	3	Park Lane	57
Eaton Drive	2	Wheelock Street	3	Queensway	39
		Warmingham Lane	2	London Road	9
Alsager	301			School Lane	9
Crewe Road	97	Haslington	10	Anson Road	6
Audley Road	24	Crewe Road	4		
Station Road	23	The Dingle	2		
Lawton Road	21			Sandbach	82
Sandbach Road	16	Crewe	198	High Street	12
Pikemere Road	13	Nantwich Road	18	Offley Road	7
Hassall Road	10	Minshull New Road	12	Congleton Road	5
Talke Road	9	West Street	10	Green Street	4
Dunnocksfold Lane	8	Edleston Road	8	Platt Avenue	4
Shady Grove	8	Gainsborough Road	6	Welles Street	4
Church Road	7	Bedford Street	6	Hightown	3
Cranberry Lane	6			The Hill	3
Cedar Avenue	5				
Congleton	46	Knutsford	113	Macclesfield	88
		King Street	44	Victoria Road	7
		Princess Street	25	Brock Street	4

Cross Lane	4
Moody street	3
Boundary Lane	2
Canal Street	2
Daven Road	2
High Street	2

Handforth	8
Wilmslow Road	2

Holmes Chapel	11
Portree Drive	3
London Road	2
Selkirk Drive	2

Tatton Street	5
Mereheath Lane	4
Canute Place	3
Mereheath Park	3
Tabley Road	3

Nantwich	218
Pillory Street	30
Swine Market	26
Hospital Street	21
Beam Street	18
Welsh Row	17
South Crofts	8

Bryons Lane	3
Henderson Street	3
Park Lane	3
Pownall Street	3
Valley Road	3
Bond Street	2
Bridge Street	2
Kennedy Avenue	2

Wilmslow	78
Buckingham Road	8
Chapel Lane	7
Alderley Road	5
Manchester Road	5
Green Lane	4
Hawthorn Lane	4
Knutsford Road	4

Appendix 2 – Written responses

Written survey responses were received from a number of organisations, a Councillor and an MP, and these are included in this appendix for reference.

The list of responses included here are listed below – responses are published in alphabetical order:

- Alsager Town Council.
- Audlem Parish Council.
- CAMPRA Leadership Team.
- Congleton Town Council.
- Councillor Gilbert.
- Hatherton & Walgherton Parish Council.
- Handforth Parish Council.
- Holmes Chapel Parish Council.
- Kieran Mullan MP.
- Knutsford Town Council.
- Middlewich Town Council.
- Minshull Vernon and District Parish Council.
- Nantwich Civic Society.
- Poynton Town Council.
- Prestbury Parish Council.
- Sandbach Town Council Planning Committee.

Alsager Town Council

Alsager Town Council resolved to agree to their comments on the Cheshire East Council Car Park Survey at a Town Council meeting held on 12 January 2021 (Min Ref TC19/269 refers).

Alsager Town Council strongly believes that there should be no charges at Alsager car parks to enable the town centre to thrive as the Fairview Car park is the only major car park in the town and is a pickup and drop off point for Highfields School.

In Cheshire East borough should not remove the pay and display machines to only offer phone payments via a smart phone. This is unfair to members of the community without this technology.

Alsager Town Council would like to see the following actioned within the next 5 years:

- Installation of additional electric vehicle charging points in all car parks in Alsager.
- More enforcement of illegal/inconsiderate parking.

- More secure parking places / lockers for cycles.

Audlem Parish Council

In terms of car parking in Nantwich the Parish Council would support increased short-term car parking capacity.

Relating to car parking generally the Parish Council would support a uniform parking charge in all towns across the Borough.

Although not mentioned anywhere car parks in areas like Audlem are a vital part of village life as they allow residents and visitors to access local services.

Chair of Audlem Parish Council.

CAMPRA Leadership Team

Being regular visitors to Cheshire in our motorcaravan we were very disappointed to see that the survey did not include any reference to motorcaravan parking so we were unable to answer some of the questions, we hope that you will consider this large and rapidly expanding section of the market going forward.

There are over 386,000 Motorcaravans in the UK and 82% travel year-round. Mostly owned by older travellers the estimated annual spend in local shops, pubs and restaurants is over £850 million.

Cheshire towns can benefit from a share of this revenue to support your local businesses by simply encouraging touring motorcaravans to visit your towns. All they need is somewhere to park for up to 48 hours close to towns or attractions.

Modern motorcaravans are self-contained units and mainland Europe has been tapping into this revenue stream for many years, the covid pandemic has forced us to look for additional ways to rejuvenate our towns and now is the time to embrace this large sector of our tourism market and welcome them to Cheshire to spend their money with you.

And its so easy just provide overnight parking in existing car parks, or utilise unused areas like the disused car parks or areas a dedicated Aire (motorcaravan car park). Canterbury is a perfect example of providing facilities in the park and ride which prevents motorcaravans driving through the town. Ideal for Shrewsbury as an example.

An Aire is Motorcaravan parking only with no external equipment, every 3 to 4 days they need to fill up with water and empty waste tanks it would be beneficial to provide a motorcaravan service point locally to support the touring motorcaravans, this would

be an easy to add as an addition to Chester Little Rodee car park who already allow motorcaravans to stay overnight and a favourite stop of of ours.

I would welcome an opportunity to discuss these further so please feel free to contact me to discuss further or feel free to download documents from our website www.campra.org.uk.

Congleton Town Council

Congleton Town Council has considered the Parking Consultation Survey and developed its collective response to each of the questions. Our responses are consistent with the current circumstances in Congleton. If in the future, as set out in the Transport Delivery Plan, there were cheap, convenient and reliable alternatives mode of travelling to the town centre and other destinations rather than private motor car then the car parking policies be reconsidered in line with the circumstances of the day.

Future Role of Car Parking

Cheshire East Council should be providing both short and long stay parking in Congleton Town Centre. Councillors believe the biggest need is for short-stay parking for shoppers. The current balance of short stay closest to the Town Centre (Fairground and Antrobus Street) and longer stay car parks slightly further out of town seems the right approach. Princess Street started as a short-stay car park in 2011 but was amended to cater for both long and short stay car parking as this is the car park used by the Market Traders on a Tuesday and Saturday.

Accessing Town Centres

Cheshire East Council should provide parking as it does today, but in line with actions proposed in the Local Transport Plan delivery plan should also actively seek to make it easier and safer for residents and visitors to access our town in other ways.

- Congleton Town Council has requested significantly enhanced public transport services; if they are provided and maintained by Cheshire East Council we should aim to ensure there are no additional cars on our roads’.
- It should be possible to catch frequent, low-cost bus services into and out of each of our towns in Cheshire East.
- We would like to encourage non-car travel for short journeys (< 2 miles) and local transport services should support this.
- The Congleton Link Road gives us an opportunity to re-plan bus services and make them reliable and frequent in Congleton.

Comments/ Views of the Future of Parking in Congleton Town Centre

Parking in Cheshire East future ideas

- Initial free period on car parks (two hours) would really help to stimulate and encourage people to use Congleton town centre businesses and help to revitalise the Town Centre. Local people often opt to use Barn Road, West Heath Shopping Centre, Biddulph Sainsburys or Talke Retail – all of which offer free parking, and all of which in normal times are busy centres with high business occupancy.
- Congleton Town Council would like to see ‘Season Tickets’ introduced so that, for example, a Congleton resident can park all year for up to 4 hours at a time in any Congleton car park for a single annual payment. If possible, we would like to see this parking ticket linked to free bus use, to encourage car users to take the bus occasionally.
- Possibility of seeing if rather than a town-wide season ticket, Cheshire East could introduce a borough-wide ticket allow parking across Cheshire East car parks.
- Advertising/sponsorship of parking tickets with local shopping discounts
- Opportunity to provide passes for e.g., shop workers and others who are driving the local economy. Note many shop workers may work 16 hours a week, across several shifts so the current options for parking passes do not work for them.

Harmonisation of Car Parking Charges

How Strongly do you agree that there should be harmonisation of car parking charges across Cheshire East with all town paying for car parking?

- Congleton Town Council does not agree with harmonisation of parking charges as each Cheshire East town has very different characteristics, offers and needs. Where demand outstrips supply of spaces for parking, it may be possible to charge more, but this needs to be considered on a town-by-town basis.
- It would seem fairer if parking were charged in all towns across Cheshire East Borough and not just the seven towns that currently have charges. When car parking charges were introduced in Congleton in 2011 as part of ‘harmonisation’ across the former three boroughs the understanding was the parking charges would be introduced in the other towns ‘as soon as possible’. There is a cost to car parks and it seems unfair that the charging towns are subsidising the costs for the non-paying towns.

Should all Car Parks in Cheshire East with Car Parking Charges be charging the same?

- The offers of the various towns are quite different. Users may be willing to pay more where there is a strong offer. Where a town needs support to attract more users, increasing charges is likely to have the opposite effect and discourage customers. Congleton believes at the current time and post COVID-19 we need help and incentives to drive our local economy.

- Congleton will be the town likely to be most affected if Cheshire East were to harmonisation of charges across all paying car parks. If the harmonisation aimed to maintain the same overall income, it could see prices on Congleton car parks almost doubling. If Cheshire East offers other towns the same price structure as Congleton, we would not object, but believe that raising our costs at this time will have a detrimental impact on our town centre.

Chance for other comments on Harmonisation of Car Parking

It is noted that Cheshire East Council has received or allocated major funding for regeneration in both Macclesfield and Crewe and that the vast majority of regeneration resource is focused on these two towns. Congleton town centre like many of the other towns has no focused resource for regeneration, aligned to the fact that key development sites in the town, some owned by Cheshire East Council, have no plans for development. Congleton, and other key service towns should not be viewed in the same way as Crewe and Macclesfield when it comes to car parking charges.

How much should be charged for one-hour parking.

Congleton Town Council believes that Cheshire East should be giving one hour – and ideally two hours – free of charge to encourage people into our Town Centres.

How much should be charged for 6 hours to 10 hours parking?

- Congleton Town Council was disappointed to see that scale starts at £3.50 - £4.00 when the current charge in Congleton is £1.60.
- Congleton Town Council believes that if there were two hours free parking then the longer-stay parking of 6 – 10 hours could increase by a maximum of 25% eg £2 for 6-10 hours.

How much do you agree that CEC should charge for car parking in the car parks that it owns? Would car parking charges encourage you to change your mode of transport

- Congleton Town Council accepts that there is a real cost to managing car parks and understand that CEC needs to cover this cost, however pricing needs to be strategic. Ease of parking and parking charges affect where people choose to shop and their dwell time in the town centre. Many town centre shops rely on people browsing. The future of towns is a social place where people can meet. When people are paying to park, they will be more focussed on what they must get done and the opportunity to browse and socialise is reduced.
- Currently there is very little option to choose a different form of transport when coming into Congleton town so parking charges are unlikely to affect mode of transport.

Views on General Principles of Parking

- Congleton Town Council would like to see two hours free parking to encourage use of the town centre businesses.
- We do not believe it is possible to encourage a modal shift to bus use by charging more for car parks. First there is a need to introduce regular and reliable bus services
- We need to be aware of the needs and demographics of our population as well as the physical features of the town. Car Park charges is not the only factor in deciding whether to drive into town. However, car parking charges may help to determine where a person chooses to drive to. Once a person is in a car, in many cases it is as easy to drive 20 minutes as it is 10 minutes – you are probably most likely to travel to a destination where there is a good chance that you can achieve what you are setting out to do.
- Consider parking in proportion to spend. If you are popping into town for a paper, you will not pay 80p to purchase a 70p paper - you will go to somewhere where you can park for free. This is an opportunity lost to other shops that the person picking up their weekly paper may have also spent money with.

Are there areas where on-street parking enforcement could be better.

- Cross Lane / around Congleton Station area. Commuters should park at the station not on the road. Station parking should be easier and more affordable
- Swan Bank – parking on double yellow lines
- Lawton Street – overstay, especially near the traffic lights at Park Lane
- Sandy Lane – Astbury Mere
- West Street - near to Top Nosh – overstay the 30-minute limit.

Views on Parking in residential areas and how the parking pressures could be managed.

- More use of Parking Enforcement Officers in residential areas - This would be welcomed particularly in areas around the train station and roads adjacent to town centres, especially if visitors could park for two hours free of charge in CEC Car Parks.
- Pay and Display at Business Parks - Not sure this would be possible in Congleton, Business Parks are not owned by CEC and are largely out of town and self-managing. Encouragement of car sharing schemes could be worth exploring as mentioned in the Transport Plan Delivery actions
- Pay and Display on residential streets - This would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and is likely to have a big impact on town centre residents without private parking spaces. Not appropriate in Congleton
- Park and Stride near Schools - This sounds like an excellent scheme that could help with safety, congestion and pollution around schools if adequate space can be found. Consultation would need to be carried out with parents.

Questionable if parents would be prepared to pay to park when walking their child for the last part of the journey.

- Resident Parking Permit - Can be a good solution where there is problem near an attraction – however needs full consultation with the residents involved and consideration needs to be made for carers who may need to park close to the housing.

Comments on suggested options for CEC Car Parks

- Congleton Town Council welcomes opportunities to encourage greener use of transport and would welcome cheaper parking for low emission cars.
- Congleton Town Council disagrees with Sunday and night-time parking charges. However, if the choice were between two free hours of parking or free Sunday parking the preference would be for two free hours parking.
- Congleton Town Council believes charging for evening parking could affect our evening economy in a negative way and result in more people parking on side roads. Currently we understand the main usage of the car parks in the evenings is from people living in the town centre who have no parking space near their house

Which suggestions would we most like to see introduced in Cheshire East Car Parks

- Season ticket for residents to purchase a year's parking with a Congleton Travel Ticket (which could also include bus use)
- Congleton Car Park tickets being transferrable across all Congleton Car Parks Consider use across other Cheshire East Towns
- More electric charging points, cycle parking and cash-free payment.
- More secure parking / lockers for cycles
- Premium spaces for large vehicles
- Congleton Town Council does not agree that cash free parking is acceptable as the only alternative to pay for parking. We believe this discriminates against the elderly and anyone who struggles with accessing technology.

Yours sincerely, Communities and Marketing Manager/Deputy Chief Officer,
Congleton Town Council.

Councillor Gilbert

Please see my comments below:

1. An earlier study in which I was involved concluded that a one size fits all approach would not work and that each town should be considered individually. Holmes Chapel is a good example of this. We have two town centre unregulated car parks providing 47 spaces between them. All other parking is owned by local businesses or the Precinct owners and are for customers' short-term use. If we were to impose

restrictions on our spaces we would drive long stay parkers such as Village centre workers onto the surrounding residential streets which would be very unpopular with residents. A long stay perimeter car park is therefore a pre-requisite to regulation and even then, we would probably have to consider restricting on-street parking to force parkers into the perimeter car park. This would not be universally popular as it would affect residents' visitors as well as commuters. It would therefore create more problems than it would solve. Furthermore, charging is likely to be unproductive having regard to the low number of spaces split between two small car parks.

2. The introduction of charging where parking is currently free could further undermine the viability of our high streets which are already in decline and encourage more of us to shop at out-of-town retail parks. Internet shopping has increased dramatically during the pandemic and parking charges would give further impetus to this trend. We have recently seen the failure of a number of high-profile retailers and shopping centres which lose anchor stores such as Debenhams could become unviable. The introduction of charging could diminish the appeal of high street shopping and fuel the downward spiral of our high streets, thereby reducing the yield from business rates.

3. We need to be mindful of the cross-border implications in areas such as my Dane Valley Ward, Middlewich and the surrounding rural areas. The introduction of charging could encourage more of our residents to travel to Northwich for access to goods and services where short stay parking is plentiful and free. Do we really want to drive trade out of Cheshire East?

4. The timing of this survey is inappropriate and will produce atypical data which does not reflect the post-pandemic new normality, whenever that may be. Before February, it was difficult and sometimes impossible to park in Holmes Chapel. Since then, there have usually been empty spaces in most of our car parks and it has been much easier to park in other centres I have visited.

Hatherton & Walgherton Parish Council

Please see the comments below from Hatherton & Walgherton Parish Council where we had a discussion at our meeting on Monday 25th January 2021.

1. The Parish felt the fees were unfair across the 74 car parks that you have and that Crewe had one of the highest fees and is one of the least affluent areas.
2. Rural areas shouldn't be penalised with Car Parking charges due to being unable to walk/cycle into towns and some villages don't have a bus service.
3. There is a fear that local businesses are already struggling and hefty car park fees could kill the small business owner. The Parish would like to see an incentive to visit the urban towns and use the businesses and facilities
4. Councillors felt that all car parks should be free to help the economy get going after the next lockdown. It would also help if Cheshire East want to offer incentives then they should publicise it better.

5. Parish residents find it difficult to make use of shops, or be able to go 'for that coffee' for fear of going over of time and risk a car park fine.

Yours sincerely, Hatherton & Walgherton Parish Clerk.

Handforth Parish Council

For the town(s) you visit frequently (at least once a month), do you think that the council should prioritise...

The council should prioritise a combination of short and long-term* parking. However, since visitors and local workers contribute more to the prosperity of our village centre than commuters, the needs of these groups should be prioritised over those of commuters. (* defined as the working day + rail travel time of commuters - approximately 10 hours)

For the town(s) you visit frequently (at least once a month), do you think that the council should prioritise...

The council should treat access by all forms of transport equally. The differing circumstances (e.g. distance from home to village centre, age, physical fitness) of individual residents mean that they require the use of differing means of transport.

The council should note that, for commuters, driving to the station may have higher priority than driving to the town/village centre.

Do you have any comments to make on what the future of car parking in Cheshire East should look like?

The amount of available car parking in Handforth should be sufficient to ensure that visitors (who make a significant contribution to the prosperity of the village) are not deterred from visiting the businesses in the village centre. Inadequate parking facilities in Handforth prompts intending visitors to, instead, patronise out of town alternatives or other local centres.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that consistent car parking charges should apply across all towns in Cheshire East?

We strongly disagree. Some centres (e.g. Handforth village centre) have much greater competition from out of town retail parks that offer free parking. Pay parking in village centres such as ours would drive the very people who generate prosperity away from Handforth centre.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that where charged, the same hourly-rate car parking charges should apply across the whole of Cheshire East?

We strongly disagree. Differential parking charges are essential for encouraging parking at certain locations rather than others - and for distinguishing between different customer groups depending on their contribution to the prosperity of the village centre. For example workers and shoppers make a high contribution but commuters make very little contribution to the prosperity of the village centre.

Do you have any comments to make about harmonisation of car parking charges across Cheshire East?

We believe that this idea has no merit whatsoever. The town/village centres of Cheshire East cannot be regarded as identical as far as car parking is concerned. Their different circumstances require different charging schedules. Charging for car parks needs to beware the possibility that high prices will promote street parking in areas where it is not desirable.

What is the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay to park for up to 1 hour in the car parks you use regularly (at least once a month)?

Parking for up to two hours should be free of charge for shoppers and visitors - the people who contribute to the prosperity of the town/village centre. In Handforth persons, suspected of being commuters, indulge in all-day parking thus reducing access (particularly that of passing trade) to local retailers. Parking enforcement measures are required to reduce this deleterious effect on the profitability of village centre businesses.

What is the maximum amount you would be prepared to pay to park for between 6 - 10 hours in the car parks you use regularly (at least once a month)?

Again, this needs to differentiate between workers and shoppers who contribute to the prosperity of the town/village centre and commuters who do not. For a full time worker even the minimum quoted £3.50 is about £800 pa (or £1000 pa earnings before tax). This is a huge amount for a low paid shop worker who would be tempted to move to a job at an out of town shopping centre with free parking. This would be a factor in reducing the prosperity of the town/village centre. For a commuter, parity with station car parking facilities in neighbouring towns/villages is important - to avoid commuters being attracted from one centre to another by price differences. For example Wilmslow station car park is currently charges £5, is often full and has no free parking available. We believe that these factors induce some Wilmslow commuters to drive to Handforth in order to obtain better, cheaper car parking facilities. However prices should not be set so high in station car parks that commuters tend to occupy parking meant for workers or visitors. This may well prove to be the case in Handforth where free parking is available on nearby streets and car parks.

Those who live in Handforth and support or work in Handforth businesses should receive preferential treatment as far as parking is concerned. This could be achieved by a badge or token scheme that either guarantees a parking space or gives entitlement to a discounted parking charge. The technology for monitoring badge or token schemes already exists.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that Cheshire East Council should charge for car parking in the car parks it manages?

We agree that CEC should charge for car parking, providing that charges are designed to ensure use by the target groups – e.g. if a car park is designated for shoppers/visitors a high turnover can be achieved by parking being free for 2 hours but subject to a charge thereafter. Parking charges for the local workforce should involve a flat rate charge at a price affordable by low paid workers

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the introduction of car parking charges would mean you would use other modes of transport instead?

Will the introduction of car parking charges mean the use of alternative means of transport? This is not an easy question to answer. Charging for car park use is only one of several factors that may determine the choice of transport type by residents of Handforth. The weather, plans to visit several different locations, the amount of shopping to transport may all determine transport choice. Some Handforth residents may have little choice but to use their cars. Examples include those with health issues not severe enough for a blue badge and those living beyond walking distance to a bus stop or the station.

Do you have any comments to make about the amount charged for car parking in Cheshire East?

Different centres will have different circumstances and charging is only one of the tools available to regulate the use of scarce parking facilities that might discriminate against low paid workers living beyond walking distance from their place of work. Such persons have no choice but to pay from their post-tax income.

Are there any areas in Cheshire East where you feel on-street parking restrictions need enforcing better?

Yes – all those towns/villages that charge for car parking facilities by commuters.

Please give location details of the first area where you feel parking restrictions need enforcing better:

Handforth – all those streets within reasonable walking distance of the station – a no parking period between hours of e.g. 2.00 - 3.00pm would prevent all day parking.

The specific streets for this limitation should be determined as part of a comprehensive parking strategy for the village centre to include all street parking, public car parks, pay and display station car park and including engagement of the owners of private car parks

For the towns you regularly go into or visit (at least once a month), how often are car parking spaces available when you go?

There are rarely car parking spaces available in the centre of Handforth village. Please see the results of the WYG survey on car parking in Handforth. They demonstrate almost 100% occupancy of village centre car parks for much of the working day. WYG estimated that, by 2023, there would be a shortfall of 168 car parking spaces though this might fall to a shortfall of 60 spaces following construction of the station car park.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following measures should be used to manage parking pressures in residential areas?

We strongly agree with the provision of more effective civil enforcement in Handforth (the current system is ineffective).

We strongly disagree any pay and display street parking. We believe that free, time limited parking encourages turnover of spaces. This can be monitored by a disc system (as used very effectively in Carlisle amongst other centres) without incurring the cost of erecting and servicing parking meters.

We strongly agree with the provision of free park and stride parking near schools - again with time limits monitored by discs.

We strongly agree with the introduction of a residents' parking permit scheme (street parking and a reserved block of spaces in public car parks where appropriate) but this should be free, not charged.

Our comments here should not form part of a general policy because there is a need to address village/town-specific problems identified by a comprehensive parking review and a strategic plan.

How strongly do you agree or disagree that the following measures should be used to make charges for parking fairer in Cheshire East?

We strongly disagree with the introduction of emission charges. It would be premature and too cumbersome to enforce.

For most town/village centres we strongly disagree with the introduction Sunday parking charges in Handforth. However, in special circumstances it may be appropriate in other town/village centres. Even then it may be worth considering parking regulation by time limiting or means other than charging.

Our comments for Sunday parking charges extend also to night-time parking charges.

We recommend that, in any particular situation CEC seriously consider all alternative means of parking regulation before resorting to charging.

Which 3 of the following would you like to see introduced in Cheshire East over the next 5 years?

Why have we been asked to choose three options thus implying that the other 6 are not important? All 9 options represent improvements that should be introduced wherever possible. The provision of parking spaces for the disabled should be added to the list.

In Handforth more effective enforcement of parking regulations is an urgent requirement. Handforth currently has no electric vehicle charging points - though these are planned for the station car park. This proposed car park will no doubt have a cash free payment system, season tickets and secure cycle/motorcycle parking.

Do you think "Pay By Phone" only payment systems should be used at car parking locations in Cheshire East?

Why is a card payment system is not mentioned? More people can easily use a free card payment than a pay by phone which incurs a cost, takes longer and requires a phone with sufficient charge. Pay by phone discriminates against those without such a phone. We are aware of people who refuse to have a mobile phone thereby disqualifying them from parking their car. However, these people regularly use credit/debit cards.

Are there any other improvements you would like to see making to car parking services in Cheshire East?

Yes, CEC should consider

1. stopping concentrating on payment solutions - parking is a service not a cash cow
2. stopping concentrating on consistency- each centre has individual challenges and circumstances which need individual solutions
3. practicalities- at present an enforcement officer turning up to enforce a 2 hour time limit has to note all car numbers and times, wait 2 hours then deal with transgressions - but requiring all users to display a disc (issued free at most retailers) would clearly establish the time of arrival, allowing enforcement officers to see immediately on arrival where the transgressors are and deal with them.
4. arranging a professional car parking survey (where none already exists) for each centre followed by a strategy designed to deal with the issues identified and, after a

brief period of consultation, implement and enforce it - this should consider among other matters:

where residents parking permits should be introduced

which areas of street parking or car parks should be reserved or directed to full time workers

where short term shoppers and where time limited parking should be, where commuters are encouraged to park and any additional areas of no parking (e.g. street parking across cycle lanes)

5. including engagement with owners of private car parks to follow the strategy and enforcement cost parking spaces for larger vehicles (pay more for larger spaces)

6. We are aware of the outline car park management scheme included with the Station car park planning application 20/2211M. Whilst we appreciate that this is in outline and will be subject to refinement, we are concerned at the practicalities of some of the proposals, in particular those reserving a set number of spaces exclusively for residents of the Garden village by permit, and the preliminary proposed charging arrangements. The consultants (WYG) recommend (Garden Village at Handforth- Handforth - Park and Ride-Technical Note 13 - Outline car Park Management Plan 25/09/20, para 7.2) that the detailed management scheme will be subject to consultation with the parish council before final proposals are determined.

7. We particularly wish to endorse the consultants (WYG) final sentence of para 7.2 (Garden Village at Handforth- Handforth - Park and Ride-Technical Note 13 - Outline car Park Management Plan 25/09/20) recommending that “the detailed plan should be part of an overall strategy for parking in the district centre.” We urge Cheshire East Council to work with Handforth Parish Council, without delay, to devise a recommended overall strategy.

Holmes Chapel Parish Council

Holmes Chapel Parish Council (HCPC) considers it is appropriate to respond to this consultation as two car parks in the village centre that provide 40 car parking spaces are owned by Cheshire East Council (CEC), although Holmes Chapel is not included in the list of towns referenced in the study. Holmes Chapel as a Local Service Centre attracts many Cheshire East residents from outside the parish and with limited free and time-limited car parking in the village centre, this is often an issue for these visitors to use the facilities such as shops, Health Centre and other services.

HCPC does not consider more uniformity in provision is either necessary or desirable. The history of car park provision across the Borough reflects the needs and priorities of the previous constituent authorities and these remain substantially the same.

Rationalisation of provision to provide a corporate uniformity is not an adequate basis to impose change.

The two CEC car parks in Holmes Chapel are small, with a total capacity of 40 public spaces, including 3 disabled bays at the Library car park. These two car parks provide the only time-unlimited spaces in the village centre and in practice provide an all-day parking facility for those working in the village. The remaining parking facilities are private and provided by the retail sector and are all time limited, managed through external parking companies. These provide short-term parking for shoppers.

The other significant issue to highlight is the very substantial increase in new housing in Holmes Chapel which has clearly created a significant increase in demand for the limited parking facilities in the village, Covid impact excepted. As has been pointed out on many occasions, there has been no consideration within planning approvals for new homes, of the need for additional infrastructure and facilities, including car park provision to meet growing demands.

HCPC considers that the focus of any review of car parking in the village should be on the need for additional facilities – perhaps a long-stay car park on the edge of the village as there is no land available in the village centre.

This Council is of the view that introducing parking charges for the small number of parking spaces on the CEC owned land would be highly undesirable. It would not help with increasing turn-over of spaces and all users would be subject to large costs if charges were imposed, with the inevitable consequence that parking would be displaced onto residential roads. This would in turn create problems for residents on those roads and present potential safety hazards. It is also unlikely that reducing all-day use would lead to more short stay usage, as motorists would gravitate to the free car parks in the village centre. The net result would be a low income stream from charging and increased congestion elsewhere in the village.

The old adage of “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” is particularly apt in this case and we urge CEC to leave the existing arrangements in Holmes Chapel in place, whilst giving consideration to improving future provision.

Kieran Mullan MP

I am writing today with my response to the Council’s car parking consultation, which I understand is running until the end of this month having begun in November.

I have based my response on a survey run on my website for constituents to share their views. I encouraged all those who filled out the survey to also complete the Council’s more comprehensive survey and provided them with a link. Below is my response to the consultation which I have put together based on the responses of 276 constituents.

Of the 276 constituents who completed my survey, 90% agreed that across the whole Cheshire East region, there should be consistency to car parking charges. I agree with them. Users of car parks in Nantwich and Crewe are currently charged for car parking, whereas users of car parks in Alsager, Bollington, Handforth, Holmes Chapel, Middlewich, Poynton, Prestbury and Sandbach are not currently charged for car parking; Crewe and Nantwich pay the highest rates in the Borough. A consistent approach of no charges across all areas of Cheshire East would be of great benefit to our independent retailers and high streets, particularly as they look to emerge from these difficult times in the future.

On the subject of consistency between areas, many constituents highlighted the importance of having equal charges across Cheshire East in their suggestions, often referring to present situation as 'unfair'. One constituent wrote: "My biggest grievance is the inequality from town to town in Cheshire East. Cheshire East should adopt an equal policy across all the towns." A level playing field would encourage more people back into Crewe, as many who live in Crewe shop in the towns that offer free parking.

Some constituents, whilst welcoming of free parking, were not opposed to very small charges, but as long as these were consistent across all areas of Cheshire East. Fairness in fees/no fees across Cheshire East was a recurring theme across my constituents' comments.

Regarding the introduction of additional free short-stay parking options, of the 276 constituents, 97% agreed with such an expansion. In towns like Nantwich and Crewe where most shops and amenities in the town centres are within a short distance of each other, free short-stay parking is a desirable local option. The increasing number of 'click and collect' services is equally relevant to this case; people are more likely to visit the town to collect an ordered item if they know they can park for free, rather than paying for home delivery. This would in turn help footfall in the town centres, as the spaces would be occupied by shoppers. Many of my constituents suggested their desired lengths of short-stay free parking periods, which ranged from thirty minutes to four hours. Periods of free parking, for example before or after a set time, or at weekends, were also popular suggestions.

Several constituents said that without free short-stay parking in the town centre, they utilise short-stay on retail parks, which discourages them from visiting town centre shops. For centralised and decentralised retail to work in tandem and provide the best outcomes for our towns, a consistent approach to parking fees is essential; this way shoppers are encouraged to use both the town centre and retail parks rather than one or the other.

In response to my question about whether they would like to see more or less car parking in our towns, 71% of the 276 constituents wanted to see more, with 5% wanting to see less. From the 24% who were unsure about this question, the valid

point was made that there may not be any need for additional parking, but a need to make the existing parking free of charge.

There were also suggestions of a park and ride near serving the railway station and outskirts to help reduce traffic congestion in and around the city centre, as well as encourage visitors into the area. One constituent said: “In Crewe we could have a large free ‘park and ride’ car park near the station which would keep some traffic out of the town and encourage drivers and train passengers to get the free bus into town to enjoy and support our shops and cafes etc.”

From these findings, there is foremost clear emphasis from my constituents on the consistency of Council car parking policy across the whole Cheshire East region. An overwhelming majority agree that the charges/free parking should be consistent. Further to this, an overwhelming majority agree that there should be more short-stay options available in town centres, and there is wide consensus that this will help improve the prospects of our town centres, particularly Crewe. It is also clear that a majority of my constituents agree there should be more parking on offer, or at least more free parking, in Crewe and Nantwich.

I have attached the raw data which supplements my response as a spreadsheet to this email, downloaded directly from my website.

I know you will give my constituents’ views full consideration and look forward to hearing the outcomes of this consultation that I can share with those who kindly took the time to fill in my survey.

Knutsford Town Council

The Town Council is pleased that Cheshire East Council is bringing forward a new parking strategy and undertaking a pre-consultation survey to help develop its proposals. The Town Council has reviewed the contents of the parking survey and sets out its position on the topics raised below.

The Town Council wishes to have further detailed dialogue with Cheshire East Council to assist in the development of proposals for public consultation and we will be writing to the Portfolio Holder to specifically request this takes place.

In 2020 the Town Council prepared and consulted on the first stage of a Town Centre Masterplan and published the From Top to Bottom Street report which outlines a series of proposals for changes to parking and traffic flow in Knutsford. The Town Council has previously formally requested that this be given thorough consideration as part of any reviews into parking and a copy is enclosed for ease of reference.

79% of respondents to the consultation on the report indicated support for increased parking provision within the town centre. It should be noted that parking provision is generally insufficient at peak times i.e. weekends and event days, but that otherwise

turnover of parking spaces is acceptable. However, it must be noted that like other towns Knutsford is set to grow considerably over the coming years and therefore the Town Council considers that additional parking spaces should be provided in the town centre. Specific proposals are detailed in the From Top to Bottom Street report and include providing additional on-street parking, the development of at least one multi-storey car park, the introduction of long-stay parking spaces at the Booths supermarket car park and, in the short-term, a redesign of Tatton Street car park.

The Town Council's views on the specifics of the survey are:

- Cheshire East Council should provide a combination of both short and long stay car parking in Knutsford.
- Access by all forms of transport should be promoted equally but that there is currently an inequality due to poor access/facilities/services for non-car users.
- Parking charges and tariffs should be tailored for each town following careful consideration of the nature of individual towns. This will include consideration of the parking issues in that town, the competition the town centre faces from neighbouring towns and the challenges faced by the town centre.
- On street parking charges should not be introduced on streets nor at business parks as this will displace vehicles to surrounding residential areas.
- Park and stride drop off facilities (or other similar measures designed to reduce congestion around schools) should be developed.
- Cheshire East Council should introduce emissions-based charges to discourage these vehicles from town centres and reduce air pollution.
- Parking charges should not be introduced on Sundays.
- Night-time charges should only be introduced with the consent of the Town Council for the area concerned.
- Pay-by-phone only systems should not be introduced.

The Town Council's top priority from the provided list of improvements is for better enforcement of illegal/inconsiderate parking as the current enforcement is severely inadequate and under resourced. Cheshire East Council should reintroduce the abandoned scheme introduced a few years ago where Town Councils provide local direction to priority areas for parking enforcement officers, including targeting specific places at specific times. Dedicated enforcement officers for each town would provide the best informed locally responsive service.

The Town Council wishes to see cash-free payment options at all car parks including the provision of contactless payment options on pay and display machines. The Town Council also wishes to see suitable provision for covered cycle parking at all car parks and will work with Cheshire East Council to deliver this.

The Town Council urges Cheshire East Council to remove the coach parking bays at Tatton Street car park which are inaccessible and would be better used as car parking

spaces. In its place, the parking spaces at the Bus Station on Bexton Road should be reserved for coach parking to enable the Town Council to promote Knutsford as a Coach Friendly Town and promote greater tourism by this means.

Yours sincerely, Town Clerk.

Middlewich Town Council

Wheelock St., our high street, is already suffering from lack of footfall, despite an increase of local shoppers during lockdown. Shop owners do not want metered parking as this tends to be used by office workers and discourages shoppers.

The CEC owned car parks do not get sufficient use to make it economic to enforce charges. Jack's car park is free, and the CEC strip is tiny. The Seabank car park is well used as it serves the doctors, but it would not be ethical to charge for its use. Also, it is a very small car park. The Civic car park is not well used during the day, it is in dire need of repairs and so again it would not be economic for CEC to enforce charges. Middlewich needs to stay 'free.'

The Victoria Hall/Civic Centre is currently being used as a vaccination centre for Covid 19 to introduce charges on this car park for those awaiting and arriving for the vaccinations and the staff treating them is wholly inappropriate. Even without the Vaccination Centre in place, this car park services the Town Council and their staff, the Wych Centre, Middlewich High School, a GPs Surgery and pharmacy. Charging for access to these public services is wrong and would simply result in the people parking on residential streets and causing traffic issues.

Issuing parking charges on Middlewich car parks will have a negative effect on the following:

- Negative effect on attracting new businesses to the town
- Negative effect on attracting shoppers to the town
- Negative effect on people using bars restaurants etc
- Elderly and people on benefits may not be able to afford charges
- Force illegal parking on to side streets, grass verges and similar
- From illegal parking comes greater risks of public fallout, accidents and anti-social behaviour
- Illegal parking could result in blocking routes for emergency vehicles like fire, police or ambulance.
- More work/effort should be made on offering free parking to attract people back to town centres and small retailers/businesses.
- Free parking will help businesses recoup lost trade from Covid
- In towns where there is limited town centre parking, people are being held to ransom if they want to shop locally.

- Installing parking charges will force people away from town centre shopping and increase online shopping.
- Goes against many points raised in the Middlewich Transport Plan
- Car Parks need to include electric charging points

The simple fact is that Middlewich cannot support car parks which charge. Residents will simply drive to Northwich where they can get free parking and use the shops and services there. Car park and on street parking charging really could be the death knell for Middlewich Town Centre.

Minshall Vernon and District Parish Council

It was suggested that the Borough Council should be consistent with its car parking pricing policies across Cheshire East as Crewe had the most expensive parking charges whilst seven towns had free parking. Removal of car parking charges would remove many of the cars park on the roads thus improving road and pedestrian safety. Following the demolition of the Royal Arcade, this site should be used for parking prior to the commencement of the redevelopment. There was also concern about the reduction in disabled parking spaces in Crewe town centre.

Nantwich Civic Society

Parking and traffic issues in Nantwich.

We welcome the Review currently underway.

Despite the Covid related reduction in vehicle usage, the time will come when we will be back to the “normal” numbers. The Society has over many years communicated with Senior Officers, Cabinet Members and Leaders about the need for a review of both Traffic and Parking in Nantwich.

Our points for your consideration are:

More Parking needed – With new housing developments in and around the town over the past five years, with more to follow, there is a need to review the circulation of traffic as well as parking provision. Around 2400 new dwellings have been - or are in the course of being - built. No extra parking has been provided.

Many existing and new residents can walk to the centre but many will need to drive in for bulky shops – and to park.

Parking – convenient, value and available – is vital for the renewal needed for the Post Covid revival of retailing and business in town centres.

In Nantwich, in normal times there is a lack of spaces in peak times on market days - Thursday and Tuesday - and on Saturdays. The deterrent effect of a lack of availability will be exaggerated in the recovery.

The council is selling or has sold the St. Anne's Lane former gasworks site for redevelopment.

Whilst it was never an official council car park, there are/were about 180 vehicles using the site daily. With these being displaced once development occurs, new provision needs to be made. These vehicles are mostly used by low paid retail and office workers, so their ability to park cheaply is very important.

Displaced parking has increased enormously on streets - with attendant complaints to Councillors and Officers. Yet, no new spaces have been provided.

We have written to former Leaders, Cabinet Members, Councillors and Senior Officers over several years about those issues and opportunities, with one promising that a Review was imminent, (four years ago).

We have suggested how to make some more spaces in and around the existing car parks to senior Highways officers (now left the council, unfortunately). This would create c. 50 extra spaces cost effectively.

We would be pleased to engage once again with your officers to explain and demonstrate the details.

Not to increase parking spaces would be to neglect the reality of maintaining business and retail futures. Despite the increases in online buying, there will still be a need to "go to town". Councils have an obligation to keep the town centres thriving.

Charging equality – As well as increasing the number of parking spaces, there is a clear need to bring equality of charging across the Borough. Equality is a key CEC theme, so, please, let us have it with parking charges. There is no justification for free parking in Sandbach and some parts of Macclesfield yet Nantwich and Crewe have the highest charges. With charges equalled out across the borough, the receipts will increase as will the sense of fairness.

Cycling – More cycling is occurring but better and more cycle parking facilities are needed to augment the small number of racks and posts in town.

Pavement surfaces – Similarly, many of the walking surfaces need better maintenance. Path surfaces, for example, in Beam Street always flood in wet weather outside big stores. We have written on occasions to officers as well as the former Leader, with promises of some repairs, at least.

Good repairs have been carried out about 6 years ago to the High Street and Town Square, which made them safer to walk upon. Many other surfaces still need to be made safer from cracks, high edges and depressions. It is imperative for the health and safety of people in town.

We can supply examples for you if you wish – or will gladly show you around the town.

Railway station parking needs to be addressed. The car park fills up every day (normally) and it is worsened because Wrenbury does not have a commuter train service. Commuters from Wrenbury for instance and its feed-in settlements also try to park in the small parking area at the station or have to park on street with attendant problems for circulation and access. There is room for more land to be leased or purchased by the council at the rear of the former sidings.

Traffic circulation.

With the significant growth in new residents (2k new houses – so c. 5k new residents) in and surrounding Nantwich, more traffic is inevitable.

In an historic town like Nantwich the case for more pedestrianisation is extremely high. Narrow streets like Pillory Street and Hospital Street are dangerous for pedestrians with traffic free flowing along them. Some reduction is needed.

Similarly, vehicular access to High Street and Town Square is still authorised by traffic regulations. Consequently, deliver lorries and vans are constant problems for shoppers and visitors.

Their large size is often unnecessary and the times of deliveries should be limited to before 9am and after 4.30, to stop the pollution – air and noise – physical conflict and deterring of trade. A new traffic regulation order will be needed but it is something our Society has been asking for over many years.

As always Nantwich Civic Society has the success of the town at its heart and we believe it lies in great part in the efficient, fair and plentiful parking, safe pavements and cycle access and storage. We offer to meet to discuss our suggestions in more detail at your offices, in town or online.

Chair, Nantwich Civic Society.

Poynton Town Council

The Town Council strongly objects to parking charges being imposed in Poynton. Although the Town Council would urge consistency, this would be to make Town Centre parking free across the Borough.

In Poynton the imposition of parking charges would lead to:

- Shoppers travelling by car to places with free car parks such as Handforth Dean or Asda and Sainsbury's in Hazel Grove.
- Business will be taken out of Poynton (and Cheshire East) causing local shops to close.
- Increased traffic on the roads causing congestion and air pollution.
- Cars will park on residential streets, endangering Highway Safety.

The Town Council does not believe that there should be parking charges at amenity locations which people park in to undertake exercise.

As set out above, the Town Council is opposed to parking charges. However, if charges are levied the Council believes that the two hours parking should be free to encourage residents into towns and villages to increase footfall for businesses. The maximum charge per hour after the first two hours should be 50p per hour. The maximum amount that should be paid for daily parking is £5.00. The Town Council does not believe that the introduction of parking charges would increase the modes of other transport used instead. In particular, the public transport connection in Poynton are too infrequent to make this a viable option.

The Town Council can confirm that at peak times it can be difficult to find parking spaces at the Civic Hall, although this hasn't been an issue during covid-19.

On street parking restrictions including inconsiderate parking should be better enforced. Streets that have problem on street parking include Anson Road, Shrigley Road North, South Park Drive, Hazelbadge Road and Parklands Way. Civil enforcement officers should be used to manage parking pressures in residential areas. The Town Council would also support "Park and Stride" drop off parking facilities near schools. The Town Council would not support resident parking schemes where residents pay for parking.

The Town Council would strongly disagree with the introduction of emissions-based charges, Sunday parking charges or night time parking charges.

The Town Council would support more electric charging points, more enforcement of illegal or inconsiderate parking and more secure parking places or lockers for bikes.

The Town Council does not support car parking charges but in response to question 19 the Town Council does not believe that pay by phone only is appropriate. Many elderly residents would not be able to pay by smart phone, cash or card payments should be supported by pay and display machines.

Prestbury Parish Council

Prestbury Parish Council notes that the survey attached to this consultation is aimed at individuals and is therefore choosing to respond to it by means of this submission.

Although we have a railway station, most visitors arrive in Prestbury by car and we have a high car owning population which has a higher than average age profile. We recently provided our own short stay (free to use) surface car park for 20 vehicles near the Bridge Hotel and are currently discussing improving the car park at the railway station with Network Rail and the train operating company. Hence, car parking is of some considerable interest to us. Also, we were involved in discussions around on-street parking in the Village at the time of the village improvement scheme (which introduced the 20 mph speed limit). Subsequently, we were approached by Cheshire East Council and asked to discuss car parking but our attempts to respond to that approach were never taken up by Cheshire East. We therefore never bottomed out what it was that CEC wished to say to us.

There have been intermittent proposals over the years for the two CEC-owned car parks in Prestbury – Springfields and the Shirleys – to have charges imposed on them. When this prospect has arisen, the reaction from the Prestbury businesses and residents has been fury and disbelief. Fury because Springfields provides parking for parents dropping off and picking up children from the Bollin Grove Primary School and the Shirleys provides parking for the doctors' surgery, dentist and visitors to the Shirleys senior citizens development. And disbelief because, if those car parks had charges imposed on them, that would remove a key advantage which the village's restaurants, pubs and retail outlets have over town centre shopping and hospitality. There would also be displacement parking issues.

The consultation makes clear that the current process of reviewing car parking is not Covid-related. It was promised in the Local Transport Plan. But the fact of the matter is that it is taking place during the Covid pandemic and it is looking to a post-Covid world where the popularity of on-line shopping will certainly continue and where many people will be nervous for a long time to come about shopping and socialising in the traditional manner. Hence the continued availability of free car parks will, undoubtedly, be crucial to encouraging visitors to return to the village's retail, commercial and hospitality offer. We cannot stress enough how our local businesses would be impaired if charges were imposed on the car parks. We earnestly hope that this is not likely to happen. Following the lockdowns and social distancing requirements, our local businesses need all the help they can get.

Please see our related response to the Town Delivery Plans consultation. Thank you.

Yours sincerely, Chairman.

Sandbach Town Council Planning Committee

Please find below comments made by the Sandbach Town Council Planning Committee in regard to the CEC Car Parking Survey.

What has changed since 2009:

- A decline/consolidation of the Charter Market on Thursdays away from Scotch Common
- 30-40% increase in population – newbuild, no new town centre parking
- Government targets to halt the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles, increasing the need for electric vehicle charging facilities for residential areas with no off-street parking facility.
- Lack of infrastructure to support Electric Car charging within the town due to underground power supply being at limit for additional circuit.
- Unknown impact of COVID on vitality of town centres shops and offices, click and collect.
- Chapel Street car park now opened - still 75 spaces, tarmac surface following the Coppenhall Way development.
- Parking charges were introduced at Sandbach Station, this took place without consultation and caused major continuing disruption for local residents as rail travellers parked on the adjacent narrow streets to avoid the charges.
- Introduction of parking charges on small private areas including Iceland & Wheelock Wharf and these
- Recently planning permission for development opposite Waitrose will put further pressure on parking without additional capacity which could be provided by the Prime council when applications are granted.

What hasn't changed

- The continuing vitality of Sandbach town centre supported by free parking
- The legal status of Scotch Common, preventing charging for car parking
- Still have a requirement for car parking linked to the residential areas surrounding the town centre - this will be complicated by the lack of facilities for electric vehicle charging as petrol/diesel cars are phased out.

Councillors personal comments.

- Car Parks should not be seen as a source of general revenue for CEC, if they wish to avoid the maintenance costs then STC should look to take them over as part of the asset transfer scheme.
- Business rates payers occupying offices and retail premises in Sandbach do not see much in return for their expenditure, the continued provision of free parking for their town centre based staff and customers
- Charging for some of the car parks will divert parking to residential areas and side streets
- We do need to see residents protected and the charges for parking in the Train Station car park have seen pressure on roads nearby such as Marsh Green become intolerable.
- In future please make this part of a co-ordinated response to transport so we can feel that if Sandbach loses in one way that it gains in another.

- The provision of parking was addressed in the town parking strategy document has Cheshire East commented on this and included this in their deliberations.

Summary

The Town of Sandbach is a growing Key Service centre with a notable presence being the CEC building at Westfields and a growing pressure on all infrastructure across the town. Many new residential areas have been added to the Town such as the Abbey fields development and we want to encourage the use of the town by all new residents and the addition of parking charges will not make the town more attractive.

In summary response to Parking charges from the Councillors are that without evidence that it benefits our town the case for harmonisation does not stand up to scrutiny and we cannot support parking charges being introduced in Sandbach especially during this most difficult period of COVID restrictions.

