



ETHOS

CAR PARKING CHARGES INVESTIGATION STUDY

FOR NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ethos, formally 2020 Consultancy, have been commissioned by North Northamptonshire Council to carry out an investigation study into the introduction of parking charges within additional town centre council owned car parks within the North Northamptonshire region. Currently, there are only two towns within North Northamptonshire that have parking charges in place within council owned car parks. These two towns are Corby, which has three car parks that have charges in place, and Kettering, which has six car parks that have charges in place.

Across North Northamptonshire, there are eight towns that differ in size, facilities, and trip generators, which will have a clear and obvious impact on how many visitors will travel to the towns. This impacts the parking supply within the towns. The number of car parks, and parking spaces should be related to the towns offering. The three largest towns in North Northamptonshire are Corby, Kettering, and Wellingborough. These towns should have more parking spaces than the smaller towns such as Desborough, and Burton Latimer. Reviewing the number of parking spaces confirms this is the case with 80% of the parking spaces located in the three largest towns.

Whilst there are parking charges in place in Corby and Kettering, there isn't parking charges in place across any of the other towns. There isn't always a need for parking charges in town car parks. Parking charges serve many functions including controlling parking, preventing unnecessary long-stay parking, and generating revenue that can enable the parking service to be delivered to a high standard. However, a visitor is unlikely to pay for parking if there isn't a benefit for doing so. Limited trip generators in a town will unlikely provide that benefit, and will result in visitors travelling elsewhere.

Therefore, understanding the locations where parking charges can be implemented, and the locations that should remain free to park isn't a straightforward process. This investigation study sets out the narrative for parking charges, the difference options that can be considered within North Northamptonshire, the suitability for parking charges across the towns that don't have parking charges, identifies and tests a series of options for parking charges in council owned car parks to demonstrate the impact it may have on revenue for the council, and sets out the conclusions from the study.

2.0 THE CONTEXT OF PARKING CHARGES IN TOWN CENTRES

Town centre vitality is a key issue across many of the towns in the UK, including large towns, and smaller market towns. Various studies have been undertaken into the economic impacts of town centres, and the future of high streets, with the evidence clearly suggesting that vibrant town centres are core to a healthy and prosperous economy. However, a number of factors make it difficult to maintain the vitality of some town centres, and to enable previously vibrant centres to regain their vitality.

The role of car parks has been changing in recent years, before, during and after the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, there was a subtle change occurring in the usage of car parks, from the traditional town centre trips, shifting towards a greater mixture of retail and leisure. This change was exacerbated significantly due to the Covid-19 pandemic where retail facilities were closed for several months over a period of 14 months between March 2020, and May 2021. The shift away from car parking trips for retail purposes has been largely a result of the increase in online shopping.

In addition to this, out of town shopping centres that provide a more concentrated level of retail, and leisure facilities has reduced the demand for trips into traditional town centre environments. Within the North Northamptonshire region, Rushden Lakes is a clear example of this as a major shopping and leisure complex. There are approximately 40 retail shops, along with 12 restaurants and cafes. Although there will be a cost for parking integrated into the facility, having no parking charges in place in the car park will make this attractive to residents, and visitors to the area.

Due to the increase in investment into out of town shopping centres, it's expected that the value of property owned out of town has now overtaken that held in town centres. There has been a continued increase in out of town retail floor space, whilst at the same time, there has been a continued reduction in-town retail floor space. Furthermore, the economic downturn have added further pressures to household budgets, and so to consumer spending. The economic downturn has also resulted in pressure on local authorities revenue streams that can include car parking charges.

In more recent time, the introduction of car parking spaces has been relatively piecemeal, and focused on regeneration and redevelopment of areas. Historically, car parks were sited in the most desirable locations to be as close as possible to town

centre environments. Corby, and Kettering provide two good examples of this. In Kettering, the car parks are focused around serving the high street, which is the key trip generator in the town. In Corby, the redevelopment of the town has seen a shift away from the traditional Kettering model, with parking supplying the International Pool and gym, cinema, and restaurants as much as it serves the main shopping street (Corporation Street).

While plenty of commentary and reporting is available in relation to car parking charges, it is currently unclear how much of it goes beyond anecdote, or the aggregated recollections of members of the business community. As a consequence, it's difficult to provide a justification for the introduction of parking charges, or provide a justification for retaining free parking through data alone.

Therefore, as part of this study, a number of factors have been considered to provide the opportunity for Ethos to provide recommendations for North Northamptonshire Council to consider. It should be noted that the evidence base between the relationship of car parking charges and town centre footfall is limited. To mitigate this, it's important that this study identifies the potential approaches to car parking charges, examines the relationships between the different approaches to car parking charges and the different user types, and outlines a qualitative assessment of the impact of varying car parking charges on overall town centre footfall and on different town centre users. This will enable Ethos to provide some high-level recommendations on how car parking charges can be used to influence town centre footfall.

It's worth noting that there are two key aspects of why parking charges can be introduced in town centre car parks. Firstly, car parks are not free to provide regardless of whether the operator is public or private. Town centres have high density of use and a short supply of available land. This makes space in the town centre relatively expensive. Land owners who decide to provide car parking have to calculate the opportunity costs of not having an alternative use. Furthermore, car parks have a limited lifespan meaning the costs of depreciation must be recovered to enable reinvestment. Finally, the general costs of management, maintenance and enforcement must be taken into account.

Secondly, the introduction of parking charges will change driver behaviour. Due to the increasing levels of car ownership, parking pressures in town centres can be extreme,

especially during peak periods. Unrestricted parking will lead to congestion, obstructions, pollution and spaces being occupied by the wrong users at inappropriate times.

Parking charges can be utilised to manage demand, targeting specific types of users at different times of the day. For example, parking charges can be introduced to prevent long-stay parking i.e. free parking for a three hour period. This prevents all-day parking, which will be most likely commuter and business parking. This type of car park user isn't likely to spend as much as visitors travelling into the town centre. This can have a negative impact on the town centre, and if this is frequently occurring across town centre car parks, can have a noticeable impact on the local economy.

Parking charges can also manage the distribution of traffic within town centre car parks. Introducing short-stay and long-stay parking tariffs can direct vehicles to the most appropriate car park. Short-stay car parks should generally be closest to the most in-demand key trip generators such as high streets. Long-stay car parks are more likely to be used by users seeking all-day parking. These car parks often work more efficiently away from the core area to ensure visitors can access this area. This is likely to increase spending, and boost the local economy. Providing different parking tariffs based on whether the car park is short-stay or long-stay will manage parking behaviour. A long-stay parking user is unlikely to pay a higher rate to park in a short-stay car park.

Parking charges can also be used to manage demand in car parks. Concessions or lower rates can be introduced in car parks that have issues with under utilisation for specific reasons such as location. It's also possible to introduce a higher parking tariff for the most desirable car parks. Likewise, a local authority may make the decision to introduce car parking charges in the more desirable car parks, but provide free parking in less desirable car parks.

Alongside the distribution and management of parking behaviour in car parks, parking charges can also provide a useful platform to encourage modal shift to more sustainable transport. If there are no parking charges in town centre car parks, the likelihood of a resident, commuter, or visitor using sustainable transport is much lower than it would be if there were parking charges in place. Unless the sustainable transport option is also useable without charge, there will be a financial incentive to travel by car.

There is a much greater emphasis on parking strategies and action plans focusing on carbon reduction, and modal shift to resolve parking capacity issues as opposed to seeking to provide additional parking spaces in town centres.

An effective example of the impact parking charges can have on the capacity within town centre car parks is the comparison between the towns of Kettering and Rushden. In Kettering, there are 675 car parking spaces in the town centre, and a population of approximately 73,500. This represents a 0.92% of parking spaces to the population. In Rushden, there are 451 car parking spaces in the town centre, and a population of approximately 41,500, which represents a 1.09% of parking spaces to the population. This means there should be more parking availability in Rushden compared to Kettering.

However, when analysing the parking surveys undertaken as part of the North Northamptonshire parking strategy development, it's clear that the demand for parking in Rushden is significantly higher than Kettering. In addition, the parking demand is reaching excessive levels across the town centre. Kettering demonstrates an average occupancy rate of 72%, which is a sufficient level of demand, whereas Rushden demonstrates an average occupancy rate of 85%. This is the threshold when it's considered potentially challenging to locate a parking space.

Reviewing the forecasting future parking demand chapter of the parking strategy highlights that the demand for parking in Kettering is only likely to reach the existing baseline level of parking in Rushden in 2038. The demand for parking in Rushden at the same time is 100%. This means that across the town centre, there will be no parking spaces available.

The most notable difference between car parks in the two town centres is parking charges. All council owned car parks in Kettering have parking charges in place, whereas there are no parking charges in place for any council owned car park in Rushden. It's unknown whether demand in Kettering would increase without parking charges in place, or whether parking demand would reduce in Rushden with the introduction of parking charges. However, there is a likelihood that both these scenarios could occur.

Two research based reports have concluded that footfall and car parking charges are, at best, only weakly related, and that a number of other factors may be more important. For example, the British Parking Association showed that car parking charges are not very strongly related to footfall, or to the quality of a town's retail offering. The following chart indicates their findings.

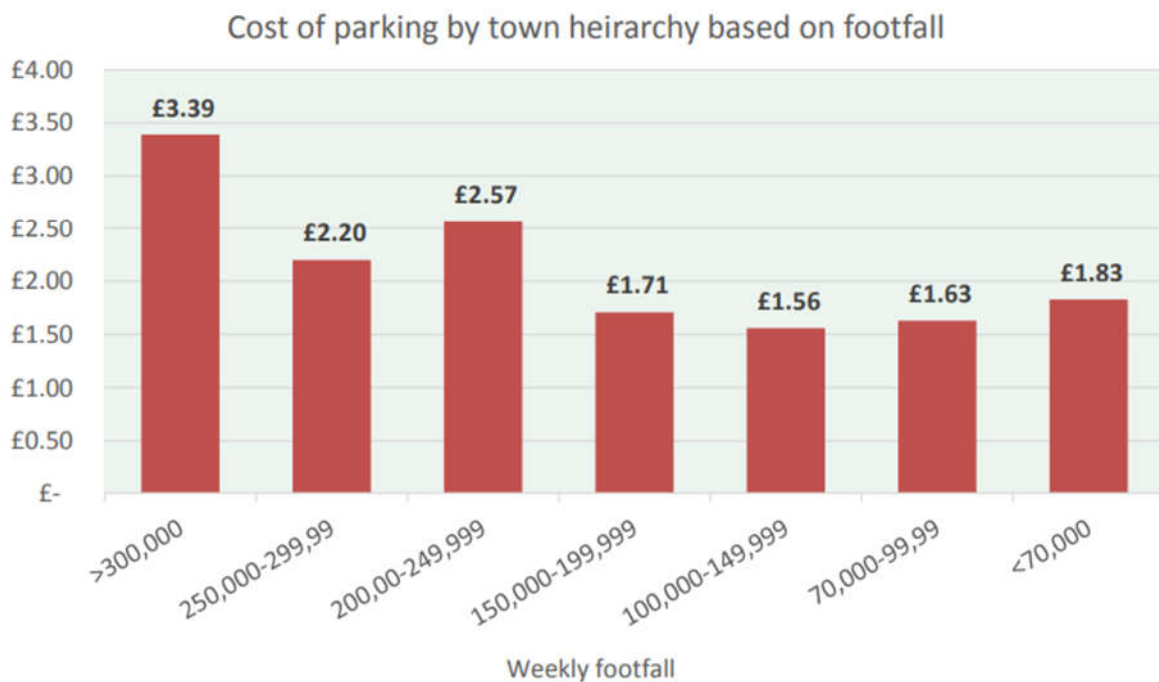


Figure 1 – Cost of parking by town hierarchy based on footfall

Furthermore, Yorkshire Forward, a regional development agency, concluded that the key factor affecting the economic vitality of towns is what the town has to offer, rather than parking. They also concluded that several aspects of parking are more important to customers than price, availability of spaces being the most important factor.

For business owners and the public, charging is a key, contentious issue. The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has published a number of reports on local trade and town centre vitality. While these repeatedly make the point that there is a link between increasing car parking charges and dwindling footfall and revenue, little is provided in the way of evidence beyond anecdote. They do recognise the need for an integrated approach to town centre transport and parking and that charges can be used to help manage daily demand.

However, formal research by Sustrans found that traders over-estimated car use and under-estimate pedestrians, potentially skewing their view on these issues. Furthermore, pedestrians have been shown to spend more per month than bus users and car users; they spend less per individual visit, but make more visits, further indicating a bias in the views of business owners.

Vale of White Horse District Council carried out some research into the impact that the provision of 2 hours free parking had in the towns of Abingdon, Faringdon, Wantage and in the settlement of Botley. This indicated that 16 local businesses reported an increase in custom after the introduction of free parking, but this increase occurred in only 35% of the businesses surveyed.

There are currently very few strategies in place for directly measuring the impact of car parking charging on footfall. That said, some councils have measures in place to monitor car park revenue against car park usage. Carmarthenshire County Council, for example, does this, particularly in relation to increases in car park charges. Each time they have increased the charges, they notice an immediate decrease in usage and revenue. However, over the course of a year, usage tended to return to what it was before the price increase, resulting in higher revenue.

Based on the investigations and research undertaken as part of this study, it appears that there are more important factors that will determine behaviour in relation to parking in town centres. These are likely to include the following:

- Availability of spaces;
- Restrictions on parking (i.e. how long people can park for);
- Proximity of parking to intended destination;
- Traffic flow;
- Signage;
- Overall retail offering;
- Out of town retail offering;
- Security of car park;
- Incentives for parking.

3.0 JUSTIFYING PARKING CHARGES

Local Authorities may feel they can justify the implementation of parking charges in town centre car parks because there is a perception that everywhere does it. However, introducing parking charges is not as straightforward as this. Introducing parking charges will be a highly political and contentious issue, which will require a full justification. If a local authority cannot demonstrate suitable reasons for introducing parking charges, it's almost certain that local members and committee meetings will not provide sufficient support to enable the implementation to progress.

Considering the introduction of parking charges is generally a two-stage process, with both stages having a number of steps involved in the process. Stage one is to determine whether the introduction of parking charges in an individual town is justifiable. Under no circumstances should a local authority ever consider a blanket approach across multiple towns. Each town should be considered individually as the offering of a town will change considerably.

If the outcome of stage one is that one or more specific town centres justify parking charges, it will be possible to move onto stage two. As highlighted across the country, there is a multitude of different payment tariffs, and pricing structures in place in town centre environments. Stage two of the process provides the opportunity for the local authority to consider the most suitable parking tariff and structure for implementation.

There is a misconception that when parking charges are introduced, the negative impact on town centre economies, and the reduction of visitors to the town is related to stage one of the process. This isn't the case, as otherwise all town centre locations where there are parking charges in place would experience this downturn, in which there is evidence to suggest isn't the case. If the introduction of parking charges is to create a negative impact on the town centre, this will be directly related to stage 2.

Failure to set the appropriate parking tariff structure will increase the potential for parking charges to create a negative impact on the town significantly. The most common reason this will occur is if the parking tariff is excessively high in relation to the town's offering. For example, if the cost of parking in Kettering was the same as Birmingham, this would likely result in a reduction in the town centre economy, and

visitors travelling to Kettering. This is because there isn't enough trip generators, to justify the high parking tariff structure.

A huge array of individual factors have an impact on the town centre (as shown to the right). However, the relative influence and the degree of causality of the relationship between each of these individual variables has yet to be determined.

A more in-depth review of the two-stage process a local authority should work through to determine the suitability of introducing parking charges in a town is summarised below.



3.1 STAGE 1 – TOWN ASSESSMENT

The first step for stage 1 should be determine the towns that may be considered for parking charges. This step is simply removing any locations where it may be obvious that parking charges wouldn't be suitable i.e. limited offering, limited parking available etc. The following steps will result in the exclusion of locations so this should be considered as a quick, easy task.

In North Northamptonshire the most likely town locations that may be removed from consideration at this stage is Irthlingborough, and Desborough. Both these towns are small with limited trip generators. Irthlingborough only has one car park. However, this car park is subject to high demand, which means there could be benefit in providing additional parking within the town, which would then provide further justification for parking charges. Whilst Desborough has two small car parks, these are designed to serve residents, removing the potential for parking charges.

The second step should focus on collating robust data on parking within the towns where the introduction of parking charges are under consideration. This data should include collecting occupancy data across different days of the week, and multiple

Saturdays to identify parking patterns and trends that may influence recommendations. Alongside the occupancy of car parks, the data collection should involve the duration of stay. Understanding how long vehicles are parking in car parks is arguably the most important crucial data to collect to support parking charges. For example, if a town has a clear trend with long-stay parking (at least four hours) in multiple car parks, this would provide good evidence to support parking charges.

This step is likely to highlight towns that may not be suitable for parking charges, especially when considered in conjunction with step 1. In North Northamptonshire the smaller towns of Burton Latimer, and Thrapston are likely to be highlighted as potentially not being suitable. Reviewing the data collected as part of the development of the parking strategy demonstrates that both towns have one car park that is subject to much higher demand than the other. Generally speaking, for a small town, there should be more than two car parks, and more than one car park with demand to justify parking charges.

Although the parking data is critical, it shouldn't be relied upon as the only consideration at this stage. For example, based on the parking surveys undertaken during the parking strategy, Wellingborough highlights low demand. There are also only two council owned car parks. However, the number of spaces is significant, which means that the demand for parking isn't an issue despite a high number of vehicles parking on a daily basis. In addition, the town is one of the largest in North Northamptonshire, with a number of trip generators likely to bring in visitors to the town.

Whilst it wouldn't be recommended to rule the town out at this point, the locations should be highlighted as potential locations where parking charges shouldn't be introduced. This will allow greater attention to be given to the locations for step three.

Step three should consider the offering of the town in greater detail. Whilst this would form part of the first step when locations are initially assessed, and will naturally form part of the second step, as the more trip generators within a town, the greater the parking demand will be. However, at this point, more attention should be given to understanding what trip generators are in place, how many visitors will the trip generator attract, how frequently, and at what times will the trip generator attract visitors, and what type of demographic will visit the trip generator.

For example, a busy high street will contain a number of trip generators i.e. coffee shops, retail, restaurants, gyms, and public transport hubs / stations. These trip generators will attract virtually all residents, employees who work in the area, and visitors to the region. Due to the number, and variety of the trip generators usage is likely to be frequent, and consistent across all days of the week. All ages are likely to be attracted to the area. In this situation, the town centre offering would justify parking charges due to the number of and attraction of the trip generators.

In North Northamptonshire this step is likely to provide sufficient justification for the smaller towns of Burton Latimer, and Thrapston to be excluded from the thought process. This is due to the limited offering within the towns, as well as the size. In addition to this, step three is likely to highlight towns where parking charges are potentially justifiable. For North Northamptonshire, Wellingborough is most likely to be the town that would provide this justification based on the offering. Rushden may also provide some rationalisation.

There are hundreds of towns across the country where parking charges have been implemented, for many years in many cases. This provides an ideal opportunity to investigate how effective this has been for the town. Step four should include a benchmarking exercise to better understand neighbouring towns, and towns with similar offerings to those within North Northamptonshire. It's vital this process does include both neighbouring towns and towns with a similar offering to provide a robust evidence base. Neighbouring towns will be helpful as the closer alternative locations are, the more convenient this will be to residents, and businesses. However, the neighbouring towns may be different in context. For example, Milton Keynes provides a completely different environment to Wellingborough. Therefore, towns similar to Wellingborough should also be reviewed, regardless of the location in the country.

The benchmarking exercise should take account of both the town, the population, the number of car parks, and the total number of parking spaces, as well as the parking charges in place. The larger the town, or the more trip generators in place, the greater the justification for a higher tariff. This should all be captured to support the process of introducing parking charges in additional town centre car parks in North Northamptonshire.

3.2 BRITISH PARKING ASSOCIATION STUDY

The British Parking Association have undertaken an exercise where they have investigated the links between a town, and the associated parking charges in place. This involved selecting a number of towns for comparison. Consideration was given to the availability of data on footfall, spend, centre quality, quantity of car parks, and cost of parking in identifying the towns for this task. Combining the capabilities of Springboard's National High Street Index, GMAP Consulting's Retail Vision Spend Model, Javelin's National Ranking and PDRI, a wide range of towns and cities met the criteria for inclusion.

Towns were carefully selected to provide a representative sample of the town centre landscape in the UK. Towns in each region are included that span the entire retail hierarchy from major city to district centre level. A hierarchy of town centres based on levels of footfall was established (Table 1). Towns range from those with an average footfall of more than 300,000 per week (in the location with the highest level of footfall) to those with an average footfall level of less than 70,000.

Weekly footfall 2011	Examples
>300,000	Liverpool, Birmingham
250,000-299,999	Sheffield, Plymouth
200,000-249,999	Northampton, York
150,000-199,999	Ipswich, Stafford
100,000-149,999	Blackpool, Swindon
70,000-99,999	Stratford-Upon-Avon, Bridgend
<70,000	Guisborough, Barnet

Table 1 – Examples of levels of footfall

Exploring the Relationship between Footfall, Spend and Centre Quality Before the relationship between car parking and prosperity is examined, it is important to understand the extent to which the selected performance measures are meaningful. To this end, the relationship between footfall and spend, and between footfall and centre quality, has to be examined using the selected sample of town centres.

The charts below show the relationship between footfall and spend (Figure 2) and footfall and quality of offer (Figure 3).

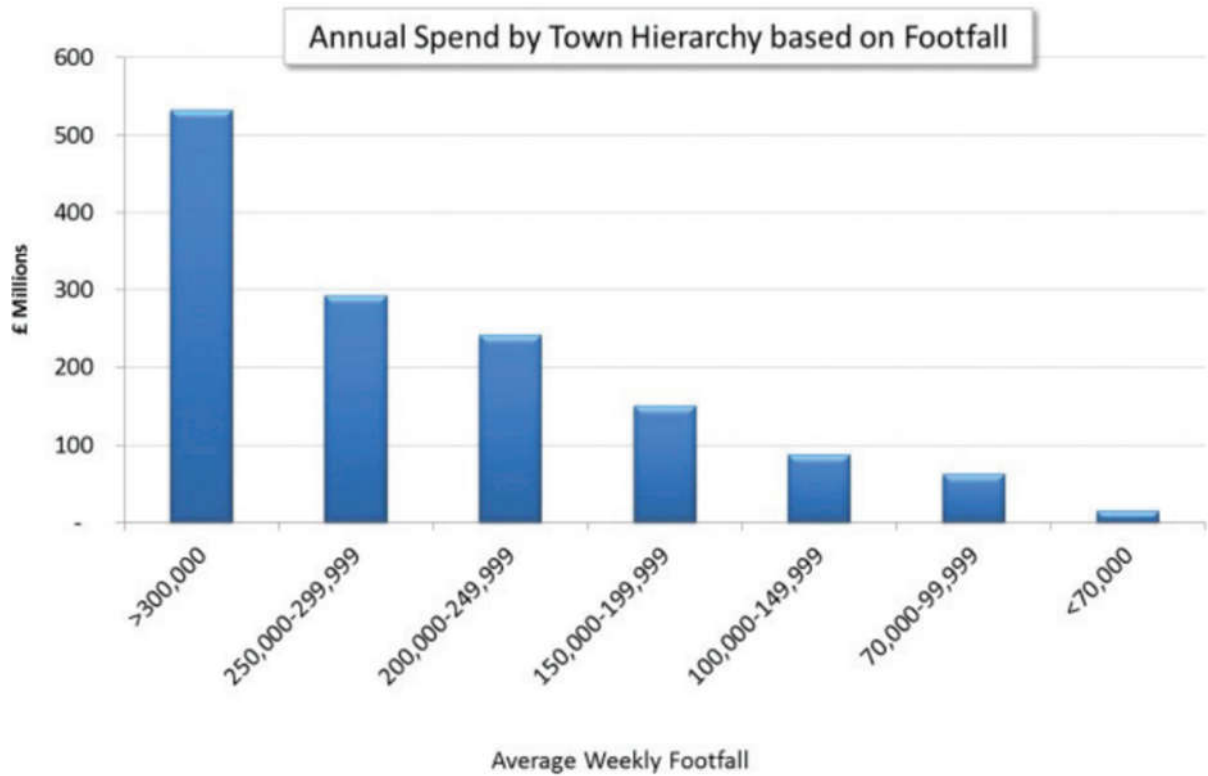


Figure 2 – Annual spend by town based on footfall



Figure 3 – Retail offer by town based on footfall

They demonstrate that footfall does appear to reflect town centre performance in that towns with higher footfall levels generate a higher spend and have a better quality of retail offer. For example, in towns with an average footfall of over 300,000 per week, annual spend is over £500 million and the average Venuescore is 483. This compares to towns with footfall of between 150,000 and 200,000 per week in which annual spend is around £150 million and the average Venuescore is 201.

3.2.1 KEY FINDINGS

There is a clear relationship between the quantity of car parking and footfall. Towns with higher footfall (and therefore a higher spend and better quality of offer) have more parking spaces.

Weekly footfall 2011	No of Parking Spaces
>300,000	14,159
250,000-299,999	8,155
200,000-249,999	7,048
150,000-199,999	4,824
100,000-149,999	3,615
70,000-99,999	2,873
<70,000	1,149

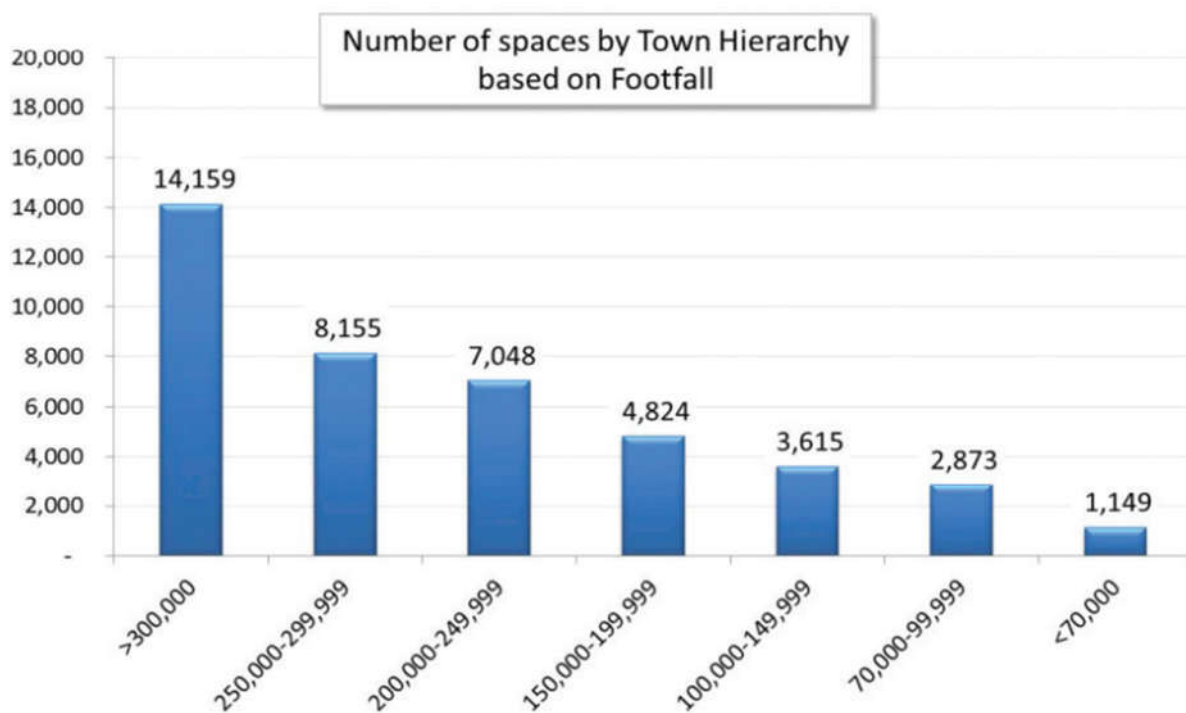


Figure 4 – Number of spaces by town based on footfall

Figure 4 clearly demonstrates that parking operators are providing parking provision that equates to the footfall levels achieved by their location.

As we have already established a relationship between footfall and spend as well as footfall and centre quality, this suggests that those locations with a greater number car parking spaces are more prosperous. However, this by no means implies there is a causal relationship between the quantity of car parking spaces and footfall and it is important that the wrong conclusions are not drawn. Many smaller centres would be expected to have less available space for car parking and attract less visitors. Simply increasing the quantity of car park spaces would not necessarily have a positive impact on footfall. It does suggest that the quantity of car parks is well considered and planned in accordance with the performance of the location.

However, the relationship between footfall and the cost of parking is not so clear-cut. The cost of parking is higher in some towns with lower footfall levels. For example, in towns with footfall of between 200,000 and 250,000 per week, the first two hours of parking is an average of £2.57 compared an average of £2.20 in towns with a greater volume of footfall, of between 250,000 and 300,000 per week.

The relationship is even less regular in the smallest towns with the lowest levels of footfall. In towns with a footfall of less than 100,000 per week the cost of parking is more than that in towns with weekly footfall of up to 150,000. Towns with an average footfall of under 70,000 a week have an even higher cost than those between 70,000 and 200,000.



Figure 5 – Cost of parking by town hierarchy based on footfall

The cost of parking in towns with footfall of between 200,000 and 250,000 per week and in towns with footfall of less than 100,000 per week does not reflect either the level of local spend or the quality of the retail offer in comparison with the national average.

There is no clear relationship between car parking charges (set by parking owners/operators) and the quality offer of a location with some mid-range and smaller centres potentially overcharging.

3.3 STAGE 2 – COST OF PARKING

Upon completion of stage 1, the local authority should have a clear understanding of what towns are suitable for the introduction of parking charges, and those towns that are not suitable. Based on the high-level assessments, reviews, and data analysis carried out as part of this investigation study, in conjunction with the development of the parking strategy, it's the view of Ethos that two towns appear suitable for the consideration of parking charges.

Wellingborough appears to be the most suitable based on following the process summarised in the above pages. Additionally, Rushden provides sufficient town centre offering to justify parking charges, especially when reviewing the car park survey data.

Although the introduction of parking charges shouldn't be seen as a tool to reduce demand in car parks, the baseline data collected from the council owned car parks illustrated both parking demand, and vehicles parking for long periods of time. These factors could eventually cause a negative impact to the local economy, which is highlighted in the future forecasting chapter of the parking strategy study report.

Despite Wellingborough and Rushden being within close proximity to one another, North Northamptonshire Council shouldn't necessarily take the approach that the parking tariff should be the same. Wellingborough broadly speaking scores higher in all aspects of the consideration on the charges in place in the town centres. The town is larger, there are more parking spaces, which are located in a more desirable location (multi-storey), and the town provides a greater offering.

This means that based on theory, there should be a higher parking charge in place in Wellingborough. The cost difference should be minimal, if indeed the council take the approach to provide a different cost. Although Wellingborough may be more attractive if the parking charges are equal, it's unlikely that residents, businesses, or visitors will travel further to access Wellingborough if the parking charges are the same. Due to the difference in towns, it's also unlikely that many residents, businesses, or visitors would travel further to Rushden if the cost was slightly lower.

Within North Northamptonshire, there are two towns where council owned car parks have parking charges in place. This should be considered the most crucial benchmark to work from. However, both towns have a different parking charge structure and tariff. Corby (three council owned car parks that charge) has an initial £0.60 charge that provides two hours parking, before increasing each hour from £1.00 for up to three hours, through to £10 for over six hours. In Kettering (all council owned car parks charge) there is a more linear charge in place. A £2.00 charge is the minimum charge that provides up to two hours parking, after which the tariff increases a £1.00 for each hour.

This means that whilst 0-2 hours of parking in Corby is cheaper than the equivalent amount of time in Kettering, parking all day is cheaper in Kettering than it is in Corby. This would suggest that North Northamptonshire Council are trying to avoid longer-stay parking in Corby.

Corby and Kettering are the two largest towns in the North Northamptonshire region, and provide a greater offer within the towns. Based on this, it wouldn't be considered sensible to introduce a parking charge in Wellingborough or Rushden that is higher than these tariffs. Whilst it may encourage residents, businesses, and visitors to travel to Corby or Kettering, it will have a negative impact on Wellingborough and Rushden. It may also encourage travelling outside North Northamptonshire.

Section 4 of this report demonstrates different options that North Northamptonshire Council can consider when determining the costs for parking. Once an officers have agreed a structure they would like to progress, it will be necessary to produce a committee report in a bid to seek approval from local members.

4.0 PARKING CHARGE OPTIONS

There are a number of different approaches that can be considered when introducing parking charges. Some options wouldn't be relevant for North Northamptonshire Council to consider as they are designed for more larger towns and cities, with far greater parking provisions. For example, in Milton Keynes there is a large car park that serves The Centre MK shopping centre. Due to the size of the car park there is a premium parking tariff in place that is closer to the shopping centre. The further away from the shopping centre, the lower the parking tariff.

For North Northamptonshire Council, six parking charge tariff options have been considered. These are summarised below, and include the following:

- Linear parking charge tariff;
- Hourly rate parking charge tariff;
- Grouped hours parking charge tariff;
- Short-stay / long-stay parking charge tariff;
- Two hour initial free parking charge tariff;
- Three hour initial free parking charge tariff.

4.1 LINEAR PARKING CHARGE TARIFF

A linear parking charge is where a set parking charge per hour is developed, and utilised for the entire parking duration. For example, if the hourly rate was £1.00, two hours would be £2.00, three hours would be £3.00 etc. This option can be considered a more neutral option where there isn't a preference for short-stay or long-stay parking. Examples of where this option would be used include leisure centres, rail stations, and popular outdoor spaces. This is likely to be an effective option if the parking data is inconclusive on parking trends. If there is a mixture of short-stay and long-stay parking, this isn't likely to cause too much disruption for users.

4.2 HOURLY RATE PARKING CHARGE TARIFF

A hourly rate parking charge tariff is where a car park user can pay for each hour of parking. This is broadly similar to a linear parking charge tariff, although the costs per hour can vary. For example, one hour of parking could be £0.60, two hours of parking could be £1.00, and three hours of parking could be £1.50. There is no link to the previous hourly rate. This option would be effective in town centre environments where there is a mixture of trip generators that will impact time spent in the town. For example, retail facilities, restaurants, and cinemas. One of the main benefits of this option is the opportunity to target parking trends, and create spatial zoning of car parks.

4.3 GROUPED HOURS PARKING CHARGE TARIFF

A grouped hours parking charge tariff is where the parking charge covers one or more periods of time. For example, 0-2 hours. Whilst it's possible to have multiple sets of hours, it's most common to cover the first two hours only. The benefit of this option is the potential opportunity for visitors to stay in the town centre longer. Car park users may feel if they pay for two hours of parking, they will stay for the full duration. This increases the likelihood of spending more money. The drawback of this option is the turnover of spaces can reduce, which makes this problematic in some more car parks that are in more desirable locations. This option will be more common, and will be more effective in short-stay car parks.

4.4 SHORT-STAY / LONG-STAY PARKING CHARGE TARIFF

A short-stay / long-stay parking charge tariff is where the car park designation dictates the parking charge. There will be a different parking charge in operation in short-stay car parks, and long-stay car parks. In short-stay car parks the tariff structure will promote short-stay parking, and will discourage longer-stay parking by increasing the tariff. For example, the tariff may be £0.50 for each hour up to four hours, when it then becomes £6.00 for five hours. In long-stay car parks, the short-stay tariff will be discouraged i.e. £2.00 for a two hour period as opposed to the £1.00 it would be in the short-stay car park.

The benefit of this option is the control the local authority can have on where users park. Discouraging long-stay parking acts in short-stay car parks is likely to have a positive impact on the local economy as there will be more parking spaces for visitors. The drawback to this option will be the difficulties encountered if it's difficult to identify an appropriate split of short-stay and long-stay car parks. This would be difficult to implement if a town doesn't have many car parks. In the instance of North Northamptonshire, this option would work well in Rushden, but wouldn't work in Wellingborough.

4.5 INITIAL FREE PARKING CHARGE TARIFF

An initial free parking charge tariff is exactly that. A local authority can provide a certain amount of free parking for car park users. This can traditionally range from 30 minutes to three hours. There are benefits and drawbacks for different lengths of time. For example, if one hour free parking is provided, it may result in users deciding to only stay in the town for that length of time to avoid paying for parking. This will reduce spending in the town centre. However, for users that need to stay in the car park for longer than one hour, the parking charges are required sooner than a longer period.

If two or more hours of free parking were provided, this is likely to increase the spending in the town, as visitors can remain in the town for longer for free. However, it reduces the number of visitors that will need to pay for parking, which will reduce the income generated from parking charges.

5.0 IMPACT OF PARKING CHARGES IN WELLINGBOROUGH & RUSHDEN

As identified in this study, Wellingborough, and Rushden appear to be the most suitable locations for parking charges across the towns that currently do have charges in place. Burton Latimer, and Thrapston demonstrate parking pressure in one car park, but this doesn't appear to be sufficient enough to justify charges.

If North Northamptonshire Council decide to progress parking charges in Wellingborough, and Rushden, one of the first tasks that will be required is to confirm the car parks where charges are introduced. It wouldn't be recommended to introduce charges in all car parks, as the car parks serve different functions. Therefore, a closer inspection has been carried out in both Wellingborough, and Rushden to develop a list of car parks that would be suitable for parking charges, and those that would most likely be better without parking charges.

5.1 WELLINGBOROUGH CAR PARKS

In Wellingborough, there are only two council owned car parks in the town centre. These include:

- Commerical Way multi-storey car park;
- Jacksons Lane car park.

These are the two largest council owned car parks within the authority. Commercial Way multi-storey car park has approximately 1,000 spaces across several levels. A multi-storey car park has considerable maintenance costs in comparison to surface car parks. From investigations carried out as part of this study, and the development of the parking strategy, it appears that this is one of the only, if only multi-storey car park in the country that doesn't have parking charges in place. This is most likely due to the funding required to keep the car park operational.

The council has invested several million into improving the multi-storey car park. Whilst this has improved the appearance, and the condition, there are still some issues that have been identified with the car park. For example, during rainfall, areas of the car park flood, despite being enclosed. During site visits, up to an inch of surface water was experienced in some locations, such as within the parent / child priority spaces.

This suggests that additional repairs may be required. Alongside this, there will be ongoing maintenance, and operational costs that require funding for. This will be at a cost for the council. Based on this, Commercial Way multi-storey car park is considered the highest priority car park for the introduction of parking charges.

Due to the location of the car park, and the surrounding trip generators, it's considered unlikely that there would be much, if any reduction in usage if parking charges were introduced. In fact, during the parking surveys undertaken by Ethos in the car park as part of the development of the parking strategy, several visitors approached the survey team seeking clarification on where the payment machines were. This is likely due to the expectation that a multi-storey car park would have parking charges in operation.

Reviewing several town centres across the country, highlights that often there is a higher tariff in operation in multi-storey car parks, regardless of whether this is under the ownership and operation of the local authority, or a private parking operator. This is due to the costs associated with running the multi-storey car park, and the usual premium location that multi-storey car parks have in town centres. Whilst this isn't recommended for Commercial Way multi-storey car park, it provides greater justification for the introduction of parking charges.

Multi-storey car parks are often more appropriate for the introduction of pay on exit systems compared to surface car parks. This is due to the existing infrastructure, and the higher likelihood of additional space being available for the equipment needed such as barriers, and car park entry terminals. Therefore, if parking charges are introduced in Wellingborough car parks, it would be logical to progress the Commercial Way multi-storey car park as a pay on exit car park.

This would likely be more supported by stakeholders compared to the standard Pay & Display operation. This is due to the consistent preference shown by stakeholders for this option of payment. During the recent stage 1 stakeholder engagement exercise carried out as part of the parking strategy development, 79% of respondents stated their preference would be to pay for parking upon leaving the car park as opposed to upon entry.

Jacksons Lane car park is the second largest council owned car park within the North Northamptonshire region, providing 419 spaces. It is the largest surface car park.

Although the occupancy rates are relatively low within the car park, during peak periods, there is a high-volume of vehicles parking in the car park. Due to the location of the car park, it's likely that users of this car park are not visiting the town centre, as the car park is located further away than the multi-storey car park.

There are nearby trip generators that are further away from the town centre, and much closer to Jacksons Lane car park, which may be where users of the car park are travelling. There is a mixture of short-stay, and long-stay parking acts, suggesting the parking could be business employees, as well as visitors. Examples of these trip generators include restaurants, local businesses, and religious buildings.

In addition to the above, there are a number of nearby residential streets that have limited off-street parking available. As a result of this, the demand for on-street parking is high, with several streets demonstrating vehicles parking inappropriately, and in potentially dangerous positions.

This means that if parking charges were introduced in Jacksons Lane car park, it would be critical that parking restrictions were implemented to avoid displacement occurring. There is sufficient reasoning for a residents permit scheme to be considered in this area, with the opportunity for residents to utilise the car park. This will reduce the on-street parking pressure. This could be pursued with or without the introduction of parking charges in the car park.

Whilst ordinarily the recommendation would be to avoid introducing parking charges in a town if only one car park had parking charges in place, Wellingborough is a unique situation due to the size of the multi-storey car park. The council could generate more income from Commercial Way multi-storey car park than all car parks in other towns such as Kettering due to the number of spaces provided.

This means that the council could decide whether there is benefit in introducing parking charges in Jacksons Lane car park. The benefit would include additional revenue generated, which can be redistributed into the parking service, as well as providing a consistent approach to the town. The drawback could involve a negative impact on the local businesses nearby, and the extra parking pressure that may be experienced elsewhere (if parking restrictions were not implemented).

The likelihood of users accepting the introduction of parking charges in the multi-storey car park is much higher than users of Jacksons Lane car park, based on the profile of the car parks, and the nearby trip generators. If parking charges were introduced in the multi-storey car park but not Jacksons Lane car park, the council could promote Jacksons Lane as an alternative town centre car park for users that do not want to pay for parking. This reduces the likelihood of some visitors travelling elsewhere outside the town.

Although the decision on whether parking charges are introduced in Jacksons Lane car park is the responsibility of North Northamptonshire Council, it should be noted that there is sufficient reasoning to not introduce parking charges in this car park.

5.2 RUSHDEN CAR PARKS

In Rushden, there are eight council owned car parks in the town. These include:

- Crabb Street car park;
- Duck Street car park;
- John Street car park;
- North Street car park;
- Rectory Road car park;
- Rectory Road (corner of Portland Road) car park;
- Station Road car park;
- Station Road (Splash Pool) car park.

It should be noted that several of these car parks are outside the main town centre environment, and serve different trip generators. Station Road car park appears to primarily serve St Peter's church. There are also car parks that appear to act as residential car parks, such as Crabb Street, although this is a very small car park.

This means that only a handful of car parks will be suitable for parking charges within Rushden. From the list above, four car parks have been identified as being suitable for consideration on the introduction of parking charges. This is based on the size of the car park, the location, the nearby trip generators, and the data collected from the parking surveys. These four car parks include:

- Duck Street car park;

- John Street car park;
- Rectory Road car park;
- Station Road (Splash Pool) car park.

Whilst the remaining four car parks may not be suitable / or may not require parking charges, North Northamptonshire Council will need to consider some type of provision to prevent displacement occurring, if the four car parks shown above have parking charges introduced. For example, if parking charges were introduced in Rectory Road car park, visitors would immediately consider Rectory Road (corner of Portland Road) car park as an alternative location. Due to the size, and profile of the car park, parking charges wouldn't be appropriate. An example of a provision that could be introduced is permit parking, which would enable only visitors with a permit (residents, businesses etc) the option to use the car park.

The four car parks that have been highlighted as being potentially suitable for parking charges are all relatively close to the High Street, which can be considered the primary trip generator within the town.

Duck Street car park provides 86 parking spaces, and is located less than 175 metres away from the High Street. This will make the car park desirable to visitors wishing to access the shops, cafés, and restaurants within the town. John Street car park provides 102 parking spaces, and is even closer to the High Street, which is approximately 150 metres away.

Rectory Road car park provides 78 parking spaces, and can probably be considered the most desirable location for visitors accessing the town centre. The High Street is approximately 50 metres away from the car park. Station Road (Splash Pool) car park provides 97 parking spaces, and whilst it's slightly further away from the core town centre (which has deemed to be in the region near Iceland / HSBC), the High Street is only approximately 100 metres away.

Reviewing the duration of stay data from the parking surveys undertaken as part of the parking strategy development illustrates that there is a high percentage of long-stay parking acts in Rushden. 40% of parking acts in Rushden were six hours or more. In comparison, Kettering, and Wellingborough both only had 16% of parking acts that were six hours or more.

This data would provide support for parking charges. It's highly unlikely the users to the car parks in Rushden are spending the same amount of money per hour in comparison to those undertaking short-stay parking acts. In addition to this, the occupancy data illustrates that the demand in Rushden is much higher than other towns across North Northamptonshire.

When reviewing the three primary town centre car parks of Duck Street, John Street, and Rectory Road, the average occupancy rate during the peak period is 90%. It's widely considered that when parking occupancy reaches a 85% threshold, it can become challenging to locate a parking space, which can cause negative impacts on a town centre. Based on these three car parks, it's likely that parking demand could cause a negative impact on Rushden town centre.

Based on this, it's the opinion of Ethos that there is sufficient evidence to justify parking charges in these three car parks. It's felt that based on the location, and size of Station Road (Splash Pool) car park, this car park would need including as well to avoid the risk of displacement, which would almost certainly occur if parking charges were not progressed.

Station Road (Splash Pool) car park primary aim is to serve the leisure centre. However, as the car park is located near the High Street, many visitors may decided to use this car park if parking charges were not introduced to avoid paying a fee. This may then cause the car park to experience parking pressure, which may impact customers to the Leisure Centre.

In the case of Station Road (Splash Pool) car park, the council may wish to consider a subsidy for customers of the leisure centre. For example, if parking charges are introduced, there would be an expectation that all users would pay. Customers for the leisure centre could then be reimbursed for the parking ticket if presented to reception. This is common practice in many leisure centre car parks across the country when the buildings are located in town centre environments.

6.0 SCENARIO TESTING OF PARKING CHARGES IN CAR PARKS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As outlined in section 4 of this investigation study report, there are broadly speaking six options available when considering parking charges for North Northamptonshire car parks. These include the following:

- Linear parking charge tariff;
- Hourly rate parking charge tariff;
- Grouped hours parking charge tariff;
- Short-stay / long-stay parking charge tariff;
- Two hour initial free parking charge tariff;
- Three hour initial free parking charge tariff.

Although these are all viable options to consider, in some instances there are subtle differences, which will not make much, if any difference when undertaking scenario testing of the parking charge options. This means that in some instances it's helpful to consider the combination of options. For example, one option that is subject to the scenario testing involves combining the linear parking charge tariff, and hourly rate parking charge tariff. There is a consistent hourly rate applied in conjunction to the consistent hour interval. Two alternative payment fees are utilised for this test.

Currently there are two alternative parking charge tariffs in operation for council owned town centre car parks in North Northamptonshire. Both these parking charges involve a grouped hours parking charge with a grouping of the first two hours. In Corby this two hour grouping is £0.60. In Kettering the two hour grouping is £2.00. There are also differences with the hours that follow i.e. in Corby 2-3 hours of parking will cost £1.00, whereas in Kettering this same timeframe will cost £3.00. Based on this, two options have been tested for the grouped hours tariff a "Corby" option, and a "Kettering" option.

In addition to this, the feasibility of short-stay / long-stay parking charge tariff cannot be tested until the parking charges have been agreed. This is due to the numerous assumptions that would need to be made to extract relevant data from this scenario.

Taking the above into consideration, there are six options that have been utilised for the scenario testing. Table 2 provides a breakdown of these six options.

Option	Scenario Tested
Option 1	Combined linear parking tariff and hourly rate tariff - £1.00 intervals
Option 2	Combined linear parking tariff and hourly rate tariff - £0.50 intervals
Option 3	Grouped hours parking tariff “Corby” option
Option 4	Grouped hours parking tariff “Kettering” option
Option 5	Initial free parking charge tariff – two hours free
Option 6	Initial free parking charge tariff – three hours free

Table 2 – Parking charge scenario testing options for North Northamptonshire car parks

6.2 BASELINE DATA

Prior to testing different parking charge tariff scenarios, there is a need to have baseline data available that can be used to calculate income that can be generated with parking charges. Whilst occupancy survey data would demonstrate how many tickets would need to be purchased, this doesn’t provide the length of stay. Therefore, the duration of stay surveys undertaken as part of the parking strategy have been used as the baseline data. This data provides a breakdown of how long each visitor remained in the car park. For example, if they were present between 10am and 12pm, they would need to pay for a two hour parking ticket.

Table 3 provides the baseline data for Commercial Way multi-storey car park, and Jacksons Lane car park in Wellingborough.

Car Park	Spaces	Acts	0-1 Hour	1-2 Hour	2-3 Hour	3-4 Hour	4-5 Hour
Commercial Way	1000	1287	670	431	39	56	32
Jacksons Lane	419	274	78	27	16	36	26

Table 3 – Duration of stay data for Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 4 provides the baseline data for the four town centre car parks in Rushden that have been considered potentially suitable for parking charges.

Car Park	Spaces	Acts	0-1 Hour	1-2 Hour	2-3 Hour	3-4 Hour	4-5 Hour
Duck Street	86	125	32	26	14	9	5
John Street	102	227	97	52	21	23	17
Rectory Road	78	315	184	105	21	5	0
Station Road (Splash Pool)	97	180	88	48	5	9	8

Table 4 – Duration of stay data for Rushden town centre car parks

6.3 OPTION 1 – COMBINED LINEAR AND HOURLY RATE TARIFF - £1.00 INTERVALS

The first option tested is the combined linear parking tariff and hourly rate tariff that is subject to £1.00 intervals. This can broadly be considered the most traditional parking charge tariff in operation within local authority car parks. There is a flat rate £1.00 per hour, with each hour providing the same charge. As highlighted in section 4, this will be an effective tariff option if there is ambiguity around the short-stay and long-stay parking acts.

Table 5 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the two Wellingborough car parks if the above parking charge tariff was introduced. Table 5 provides two projections; a lower annual revenue; and a higher annual revenue. The lower annual revenue takes into account the possibility of a reduction in usage in the car park as a result of parking charges being introduced. This reduction has been calculated at 20%. It's highly unlikely the reduction would be this severe. The higher annual revenue is based on the usage remaining consistent to the baseline data highlighted in tables 3 and 4.

Car Park	1 Hour £1.00	2 Hour £2.00	3 Hour £3.00	4 Hour £4.00	5 Hour £5.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Commercial Way	£670	£862	£117	£224	£160	£546,470.40	£683,088.00
Jacksons Lane	£78	£54	£48	£144	£130	£122,035.20	£152,544.00
Total	£748	£916	£165	£368	£290	£668,505.60	£835,632.00

Table 5 – Potential income generated from Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 5 illustrates that across both car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £668,505.60 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £835,632.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. As expected, significantly more revenue is generated from the multi-storey car park. Nearly 82% of the annual revenue generated from Wellingborough car parks is from the multi-storey car park.

This means that Commercial Way multi-storey car park can generate sufficient revenue to justify being the only council owned car park in the town centre that has parking charges in place. Retaining Jacksons Lane as a free car park would likely result in some users choosing to park in this car park as oppose to the multi-storey car park. This option is more likely to result in the low projected annual revenue being

experienced. This would still generate nearly £670,000 based on this parking tariff option.

Table 6 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the four Rushden town centre car parks that have been deemed suitable if the above parking charge tariff was introduced.

Car Park	1 Hour £1.00	2 Hour £2.00	3 Hour £3.00	4 Hour £4.00	5 Hour £5.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Duck Street	£32	£52	£42	£36	£25	£50,265.60	£62,832.00
John Street	£97	£104	£63	£92	£85	£118,540.80	£148,176.00
Rectory Road	£184	£210	£63	£20	£0	£128,217.60	£160,272.00
Station Road (Splash Pool)	£88	£96	£15	£36	£40	£73,920.00	£92,400.00
Total	£401	£462	£183	£184	£150	£370,944.00	£463,680.00

Table 6 – Potential income generated from Rushden town centre car parks

Table 6 illustrates that across the four town centre car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £370,944.00 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £463,680.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. John Street, and Rectory Road are the car parks that would generate most revenue from the four car parks. Duck Street is the car park that would generate the least revenue from the car parks.

Although Station Road (Splash Pool) could generate between £73,920.00 and £92,400.00 per annum based on the baseline data, it's likely that this car park would require subsidising to allow customers of the leisure centre to be refunded when using the leisure centre. This means the revenue generated would be much lower, although it's not possible to determine this figure.

Based on tables 5, and 6, significantly more revenue can be generated from introducing parking charges in Wellingborough car parks as oppose to Rushden car parks based on this parking tariff option. Therefore, if the council wish to pursue this parking tariff option, the priority for introducing parking charges should be in Wellingborough town centre. Even if Jacksons Lane car park is retained as a free car park, more revenue will be generated in Wellingborough town centre.

6.4 OPTION 2 – COMBINED LINEAR AND HOURLY RATE TARIFF - £0.50 INTERVALS

The second option tested is the combined linear parking tariff and hourly rate tariff that is subject to £0.50 intervals. Similar to the option 1 tariff option, this can be considered as a traditional parking charge tariff in local authority car parks. There is a flat rate £0.50 per hour, with each hour providing the same charge. As with option 1, this will be an effective tariff option if there is ambiguity around the short-stay and long-stay parking acts.

Table 7 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the two Wellingborough car parks if the above parking charge tariff was introduced. Table 7 provides two projections; a lower annual revenue; and a higher annual revenue. The lower annual revenue takes into account the possibility of a reduction in usage in the car park as a result of parking charges being introduced. This reduction has been calculated at 20%. As this is a cheaper tariff compared to option 1, it's even more unlikely the reduction would be close to 20%. In reality, based on this parking tariff charge, it's unlikely there would be much reduction, if at all.

Car Park	1 Hour £0.50	2 Hour £1.00	3 Hour £1.50	4 Hour £2.00	5 Hour £2.50	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Commercial Way	£335	£431	£59	£112	£80	£273,235.20	£341,544.00
Jacksons Lane	£39	£27	£24	£72	£65	£61,017.60	£76,272.00
Total	£374	£458	£83	£184	£145	£334,252.80	£417,816.00

Table 7 – Potential income generated from Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 7 illustrates that across both car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £334,252.80 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £417,816.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. As expected, significantly more revenue is generated from the multi-storey car park. Nearly 82% of the annual revenue generated from Wellingborough car parks is from the multi-storey car park.

This means that Commercial Way multi-storey car park can generate sufficient revenue to justify being the only council owned car park in the town centre that has parking charges in place. Retaining Jacksons Lane as a free car park would likely result in some users choosing to park in this car park as oppose to the multi-storey car park. This option is more likely to result in the low projected annual revenue being

experienced. This would still generate nearly £335,000 based on this parking tariff option.

Table 8 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the four Rushden town centre car parks that have been deemed suitable if the above parking charge tariff was introduced.

Car Park	1 Hour £1.00	2 Hour £2.00	3 Hour £3.00	4 Hour £4.00	5 Hour £5.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Duck Street	£16	£26	£21	£18	£13	£25,132.80	£31,416.00
John Street	£49	£52	£32	£46	£43	£59,270.40	£74,088.00
Rectory Road	£92	£105	£32	£10	£0	£64,108.80	£80,136.00
Station Road (Splash Pool)	£44	£48	£8	£18	£20	£36,960.00	£46,200.00
Total	£201	£231	£92	£92	£75	£185,472.00	£231,840.00

Table 8 – Potential income generated from Rushden town centre car parks

Table 8 illustrates that across the four town centre car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £185,472.00 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £231,840.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. John Street, and Rectory Road are the car parks that would generate most revenue from the four car parks. Duck Street is the car park that would generate the least revenue from the car parks.

Although Station Road (Splash Pool) could generate between £36,960.00 and £46,200.00 per annum based on the baseline data, it's likely that this car park would require subsidising to allow customers of the leisure centre to be refunded when using the leisure centre. This means the revenue generated would be much lower, although it's not possible to determine this figure.

Based on tables 7, and 8, significantly more revenue can be generated from introducing parking charges in Wellingborough car parks as oppose to Rushden car parks based on this parking tariff option. Therefore, if the council wish to pursue this parking tariff option, the priority for introducing parking charges should be in Wellingborough town centre. Even if Jacksons Lane car park is retained as a free car park, more revenue will be generated in Wellingborough town centre.

6.5 OPTION 3 – GROUPED HOURS PARKING TARIFF “CORBY” OPTION

The third option tested is the grouped hours “Corby” option that is subject to mixed intervals. The first tariff charge is 0.60p, which is a low fee overall. This is subsequently followed by a linear £1.00 per subsequent hour tariff. The final tariff that is for 6 hours or above is subject to £10.00 fee. This option is a good option for short-stay car parks based on the low initial tariffs, especially one hour parking acts. The steep increase between the 4-6 parking charge tariff is clearly designed to discourage parking acts above six hours. This approach is generally taken for short-stay car parks. If this option was progressed, it would be sensible to have an alternative tariff in place in some car parks (designed to be long-stay) to avoid negative implications for business workers.

Table 9 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the two Wellingborough car parks if the above parking charge tariff was introduced. Table 9 provides two projections; a lower annual revenue; and a higher annual revenue. The lower annual revenue takes into account the possibility of a reduction in usage in the car park as a result of parking charges being introduced. This reduction has been calculated at 20%. As this is a cheaper tariff compared to option 1, it’s even more unlikely the reduction would be close to 20%. In reality, based on this parking tariff charge, it’s unlikely there would be much reduction, if at all.

Car Park	0-2 Hours £0.60	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	>6 Hours £10.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Commercial Way	£661	£39	£78	£180	£630	£426,746.88	£533,433.60
Jacksons Lane	£63	£28	£32	£212	£720	£283,584.00	£354,480.00
Total	£724	£67	£110	£392	£1,350	£710,330.88	£887,913.60

Table 9 – Potential income generated from Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 9 illustrates that across both car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £710,330.88 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £887,913.60 based on the high projected revenue scenario. As expected, more revenue is generated from the multi-storey car park. Approximately 60% of the annual revenue generated from Wellingborough car parks is from the multi-storey car park. This is noticeably less than the previous two options, which was in excess of 80%.

Although the ratio of revenue generated from the Commercial Way multi-storey car is less for this option than options 1 and 2, there still seems to be sufficient revenue generated to justify being the only council owned car park in the town centre that has parking charges in place. Retaining Jacksons Lane as a free car park would likely result in some users choosing to park in this car park as opposed to the multi-storey car park. This option is more likely to result in the low projected annual revenue being experienced. This would still generate £710,330.88 based on this parking tariff option.

Table 10 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the four Rushden town centre car parks that have been deemed suitable if the above parking charge tariff was introduced.

Car Park	0-2 Hours £0.60	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	>6 Hours £10.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Duck Street	£31	£4	£8	£24	£200	£71,823.36	£89,779.20
John Street	£86	£16	£32	£76	£320	£142,571.52	£178,214.40
Rectory Road	£173	£13	£24	£4	£0	£57,630.32	£72,038.40
Station Road (Splash Pool)	£82	£23	£10	£64	£40	£58,759.68	£73,449.60
Total	£372.60	£56.00	£74.00	£168.00	£560.00	£330,784.88	£413,481.60

Table 10 – Potential income generated from Rushden town centre car parks

Table 10 illustrates that across the four town centre car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £330,784.88 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £413,481.60 based on the high projected revenue scenario. John Street is the car park that would generate the most revenue from the four car parks. Rectory Road is the car park that would generate the least revenue from the car parks.

Although Station Road (Splash Pool) could generate between £58,759.68 and £73,449.60 per annum based on the baseline data, it's likely that this car park would require subsidising to allow customers of the leisure centre to be refunded when using the leisure centre. This means the revenue generated would be much lower, although it's not possible to determine this figure.

Based on tables 9, and 10, significantly more revenue can be generated from introducing parking charges in Wellingborough car parks as opposed to Rushden car parks based on this parking tariff option. Therefore, if the council wish to pursue this parking tariff option, the priority for introducing parking charges should be in

Wellingborough town centre. Even if Jacksons Lane car park is retained as a free car park, more revenue will be generated in Wellingborough town centre.

6.6 OPTION 4 – GROUPED HOURS PARKING TARIFF “KETTERING” OPTION

The fourth option tested is the grouped hours “Kettering” option that is subject to £1.00 intervals. The first tariff charge is £2.00 and covers the user for a 2 hour period from time of stay. There on, the charges go up incrementally in £1.00 intervals per separate time interval. This charge although higher for a 2 hour stay is evenly distributed across all time parameters which makes this option fair to both short and long-term stays. As the tariff groups 0-2 hour parking acts together under one charge, there is a higher likelihood that visitors that may stay for only one hour, would choose to stay for two hours as this is covered in the tariff charge.

Table 11 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the two Wellingborough car parks if the above parking charge tariff was introduced. Table 11 provides two projections; a lower annual revenue; and a higher annual revenue. The lower annual revenue considers the possibility of a reduction in usage in the car park as a result of parking charges being introduced. This reduction has been calculated at 20%. As the tariff carries a moderate cost this reduction is likely to occur within an estimated 0-20% threshold.

Car Park	0-2 Hours £2.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	>6 Hours £6.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Commercial Way	£2,202.00	£39.00	£156.00	£225.00	£378.00	£806,400.00	£1,008,000.00
Jacksons Lane	£210.00	£84.00	£64.00	£265.00	£432.00	£283,584.00	£354,480.00
Total	£2,412.00	£123.00	£220.00	£490.00	£810.00	£1,089,984.00	£1,362,480.00

Table 11 – Potential income generated from Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 11 illustrates that across both car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £1,089,984.00 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £1,362,480.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. As expected, significantly more revenue is generated from the multi-storey car park. This option is

in line with options 1 and 2, where the multi-storey car park is responsible for 82% of the annual revenue generated from Wellingborough car parks.

This option generates the highest level of revenue from all six options tested as part of this scenario testing exercise. The multi-storey car park has the potential to make over £1 million per year, if there was no reduction in usage based on this charge.

This means that in line with the previous three options, Commercial Way multi-storey car park can generate sufficient revenue to justify being the only council owned car park in the town centre that has parking charges in place. Retaining Jacksons Lane as a free car park would likely result in some users choosing to park in this car park as opposed to the multi-storey car park. This option is more likely to result in the low projected annual revenue being experienced. This would still generate nearly £1,089,984.00 based on this parking tariff option.

Table 12 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the four Rushden town centre car parks that have been deemed suitable if the above parking charge tariff was introduced.

Car Park	0-2 Hours £2.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	>6 Hours £6.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Duck Street	£104.00	£12.00	£16.00	£30.00	£120.00	£75,801.60	£94,752.00
John Street	£288.00	£48.00	£64.00	£95.00	£192.00	£184,665.60	£230,832.00
Rectory Road	£578.00	£39.00	£48.00	£5.00	£0.00	£180,096.00	£225,120.00
Station Road (Splash Pool)	£272.00	£69.00	£20.00	£80.00	£24.00	£124,992.00	£156,240.00
Total	£1,242.00	£168.00	£148.00	£210.00	£336.00	£565,555.20	£706,944.00

Table 12 – Potential income generated from Rushden town centre car parks

Table 12 illustrates that across the four town centre car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £565,555.20 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £706,944.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. John Street and Rectory Road are the car parks that would generate the most revenue from all listed car parks. Duck Street is the car park that would generate the least revenue from the car parks.

As previously discussed, Station Road (Splash Pool) could generate between £124,992.00 and £156,240.00 per annum based on the baseline data, it's likely that this car park would require subsidising to allow customers of the leisure centre to be

refunded when using the leisure centre. This means the revenue generated would be much lower, although it's not possible to determine this figure.

Based on tables 11, and 12, more revenue can be generated from introducing parking charges in Wellingborough car parks as opposed to Rushden car parks based on this parking tariff option. The pursuit of charges being applied to car parks in both Wellingborough and Rushden has its financial benefits. The annual revenue that will be accrued by both locations on the low option would be £1,655,539.20 and the high option would be £2,069,424.00, which is a considerable income that can be utilised to improve the parking service, and deliver many interventions from the parking strategy.

6.7 OPTION 5 – INITIAL FREE PARKING CHARGE TARIFF: TWO HOURS FREE

The fifth option tested is the 2-hour initial free parking tariff option that is subject to the first two hours being free. This is followed by the next three time intervals being charged linearly at £1.00 increments, and finally the over 6-hour option is priced at £6.00. This tariff option is often more welcomed by users of a car park due to the free period at the start of a stay. The final charge of £6.00 ensures that any long stay users are charged, what is perceived as an adequate rate for their stay.

Table 13 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the two Wellingborough car parks if the above parking charge tariff was introduced. Table 13 provides two projections; a lower annual revenue; and a higher annual revenue. The lower annual revenue considers the possibility of a reduction in usage in the car park as a result of parking charges being introduced. This reduction has been calculated at 20%. As the tariff carries a moderate cost this reduction is likely to occur within an estimated 0-20% threshold.

Car Park	0-2 Hours £0.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	>6 Hours £6.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Commercial Way	£0	£39.00	£78.00	£135.00	£378.00	£169,344.00	£211,680.00
Jacksons Lane	£0	£28.00	£32.00	£159.00	£432.00	£174,988.80	£218,736.00
Total	£0	£67.00	£110.00	£294.00	£810.00	£344,332.80	£430,416.00

Table 13 – Potential income generated from Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 13 illustrates that across both car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £344,332.80 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £430,416.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. Interestingly, Jackson Lane car park has the higher annual revenue within Wellingborough, whereas in previous scenarios it was the Commercial Way multi-storey. This highlights the large volume of users that will stay for up to 2 hours in the multi-storey car park, and the longer stay visitors to Jacksons Lane. Most significantly, this option highlights the potential loss of revenue on a tariff plan that does not charge within the first two hours.

Based on this, it's not deemed effective to only introduce parking charges in the multi-storey car park when more revenue can be generated from Jacksons Lane car park. The previous four options had justification for not Jacksons Lane, with an appropriate level of revenue generated from parking charges, whereas option 5 has much more limited justification for not including parking charges, and the revenue generated is lower. Therefore, if the council wished to pursue this option, both car parks would need parking charges introduced to make the operation efficient.

Table 14 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the four Rushden town centre car parks that have been deemed suitable if the above parking charge tariff was introduced.

Car Park	0-2 Hours £0.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	>6 Hours £6.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Duck Street	£0	£4.00	£8.00	£18.00	£120.00	£40,320.00	£50,400.00
John Street	£0	£16.00	£32.00	£57.00	£192.00	£79,833.60	£99,792.00
Rectory Road	£0	£13.00	£24.00	£3.00	£0	£10,752.00	£13,440.00
Station Road (Splash Pool)	£0	£23.00	£10.00	£48.00	£24.00	£28,224.00	£35,280.00
Total	£0	£56.00	£74.00	£126.00	£336.00	£159,129.60	£198,912.00

Table 14 – Potential income generated from Rushden town centre car parks

Table 14 illustrates that across the four town centre car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £159,129.60 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £198,912.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. John Street is the car park that generates the most revenue from all listed car parks. Rectory Road is the car park that would generate the least revenue from the car parks. This is because the car park has a high number of parking acts within the first 2 hours, for which this tariff is free.

As previously discussed, Station Road (Splash Pool) could generate between £28,224.00 and £35,280.00 per annum based on the baseline data, it's likely that this car park would require subsidising to allow customers of the leisure centre to be refunded when using the leisure centre. This means the revenue generated would be much lower, although it's not possible to determine this figure.

The revenue generated within Rushden car parks is low compared to the other options tested as part of this exercise. With the costs involved in enforcement, staff resource, and the back-office function, the revenue generated in these car parks isn't likely to be effective. However, as many of these costs will be already in place due to parking charges in Corby and Kettering, there is still scope for including these four car parks in the parking charge operation.

6.8 OPTION 6 – INITIAL FREE PARKING CHARGE TARIFF: THREE HOURS FREE

The sixth option tested is the 3-hour initial free parking tariff option that is subject to the first three hours being free from the point of arrival. This is followed by the next three-time intervals being charged linearly at £1.00 increments. And finally the over 6-hour option is priced at £6.00. This tariff option is often more welcomed by users of a car park due to the free period at the start of a stay, which at 3 hours is the longest free period analysed as part of this study. The final charge of £6.00 ensures that any long stay users are charged, what is perceived as an adequate rate for their stay.

Table 15 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the two Wellingborough car parks if the above parking charge tariff was introduced. Table 15 provides two projections; a lower annual revenue; and a higher annual revenue. The lower annual revenue considers the possibility of a reduction in usage in the car park as a result of parking charges being introduced. This reduction has been calculated at 20%. As the tariff carries a moderate cost this reduction is likely to occur within an estimated 0-20% threshold.

Car Park	0-3 Hours £0.00	3-4 Hours £1.00	4-5 Hours £2.00	5-6 Hours £3.00	>6 Hours £6.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Commercial Way	£0	£39.00	£78.00	£135.00	£378.00	£160,419.00	£192,502.80
Jacksons Lane	£0	£28.00	£32.00	£159.00	£432.00	£166,239.36	£199,487.23
Total	£0	£67.00	£110.00	£294.00	£810.00	£326,658.36	£391,990.03

Table 15 – Potential income generated from Wellingborough town centre car parks

Table 15 illustrates that across both car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £326,658.36 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £391,990.03 based on the high projected revenue scenario. Interestingly as previously for option 5, Jackson Lane car park has the higher annual revenue within Wellingborough, whereas in previous scenarios it was the Commercial Way multi-storey. This highlights the large volume of users that will stay for up to 3 hours and the potential loss of possible revenue on a tariff plan that does not charge within the first three hours of a stay.

As stated for option 5 above, it's not deemed effective to only introduce parking charges in the multi-storey car park when more revenue can be generated from Jacksons Lane car park. The previous four options had justification for not Jacksons Lane, with an appropriate level of revenue generated from parking charges, whereas option 6 has much more limited justification for not including parking charges, and the revenue generated is lower. Therefore, if the council wished to pursue this option, both car parks would need parking charges introduced to make the operation efficient.

Table 16 illustrates the potential income that can be generated in the four Rushden town centre car parks that have been deemed suitable if the above parking charge tariff was introduced.

Car Park	0-3 Hours £0.00	3-4 Hours £1.00	4-5 Hours £2.00	5-6 Hours £3.00	>6 Hours £6.00	Projected Annual Revenue (Low)	Projected Annual Revenue (High)
Duck Street	£0	£4.00	£8.00	£18.00	£120.00	£38,200.12	£45,964.80
John Street	£0	£16.00	£32.00	£57.00	£192.00	£79,833.60	£99,792.00
Rectory Road	£0	£13.00	£24.00	£3.00	£0.00	£10,310.00	£12,372.00
Station Road (Splash Pool)	£0	£23.00	£10.00	£48.00	£24.00	£26,206.00	£31,447.20
Total	£0	£56.00	£74.00	£126.00	£336.00	£154,549.72	£189,576.00

Table 16 – Potential income generated from Rushden town centre car parks

Table 16 illustrates that across the four town centre car parks this potential parking tariff would generate £154,549.72 per annum based on the low projected revenue scenario, and £189,576.00 based on the high projected revenue scenario. John Street is the car park that generates the most revenue from all listed car parks. Rectory Road is the car park that would generate the least revenue from the car parks, this is because the car park has a high act number within the first 2-3 hours, for which this tariff is free.

As previously discussed, Station Road (Splash Pool) could generate between £26,206.00 and £31,447.20 per annum based on the baseline data, it's likely that this car park would require subsidising to allow customers of the leisure centre to be refunded when using the leisure centre. This means the revenue generated would be much lower, although it's not possible to determine this figure.

In line with option 5, the revenue generated within Rushden car parks is low compared to the first four options tested as part of this exercise. With the costs involved in enforcement, staff resource, and the back-office function, the revenue generated in these car parks isn't likely to be effective. However, as many of these costs will be already in place due to parking charges in Corby and Kettering, there is still scope for including these four car parks in the parking charge operation.

6.9 IMPACT OF THE REMOVAL OF PARKING CHARGES

As part of the overall parking charge investigation and forecasting it was felt prudent to explore the removal of parking charges from car parks that currently charge. In North Northamptonshire the following car parks charge a tariff at the current time:

- Parkway Gateway, Corby
- Victoria Place, Corby
- Corby Train Station, Corby
- School Lane, Kettering
- Queen Street, Kettering
- London Road, Kettering
- Municipal Offices, Kettering
- Commercial Way, Kettering
- Wadcroft, Kettering

Parking charges contribute to the funds required to help keep car parks to an acceptable standard. Town centre land has a high density of use and a relatively short supply of availability, which makes space within a town centre relatively expensive. The different costs that a car park incur include maintenance, management, and enforcement. Whilst these costs are often supplemented by revenue obtained from charging car parks, there are several examples where vibrancy within a town centre economy can occur when no charges are in place.

Within North Northamptonshire there are some car parks that currently charge and others that don't. This can often lead to conflict between locations as some residents will feel aggrieved at having to pay for parking in their location. The removal of parking charges in the above car parks would lead to a blanket no charge in council operated car parks across the district. Although many stakeholders would welcome this approach, the consideration on the loss of revenue must be considered in addition.

Table 17 details the current revenue generated from each council owned car park that currently has parking charges. Across all locations there would be a daily loss of £3,925.00 and an annual loss of £1,106,485.00, which is a noticeable amount of revenue that can be redistributed into the car park service, improving the operation, and supporting the implementation of policies contained in the parking strategy.

Location	Location	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Annually
Parkland Gateway	Corby	£500.80	£3,004.80	£12,720.32	£152,744.00
Victoria Place	Corby	£321.20	£1,927.20	£8,158.48	£97,966.00
Corby Train Station	Corby	£441.00	£2,646.00	£11,201.40	£134,505.00
Total		£1,263.00	£7,578.00	£32,080.20	£385,215.00
School Lane	Kettering	£480.00	£2,880.00	£12,192.00	£146,400.00
Queen Street	Kettering	£126.00	£756.00	£3,200.40	£38,430.00
London Road	Kettering	£847.00	£5,082.00	£21,513.80	£258,335.00
Municipal Offices	Kettering	£416.00	£2,496.00	£10,566.40	£36,240.00
Commerical Road	Kettering	£135.00	£810.00	£3,429.00	£41,175.00
Wadcroft	Kettering	£658.00	£3,948.00	£16,713.20	£200,690.00
Total		£2,662.00	£15,972.00	£67,614.80	£721,270.00

Table 17 – Income received from car park charges based on survey data

All car park locations require funding to operate whether they are public or private locations. Often this means if a location is free to the public that the costs for management, enforcement, and maintenance need to be obtained from alternate funds.

Parking charges can also provide a useful platform to encourage modal shift to more sustainable transport. If there are no parking charges in town centre car parks, the likelihood of a resident, commuter, or visitor using sustainable transport is much lower than it would be if there were parking charges in place. Unless the sustainable transport option is also useable without charge, there will be a financial incentive to travel by car. Although it would be hard to determine if there is any correlation between charging in car parks and the vitality of a town centre.

6.10 SUMMARY OF PARKING CHARGE SCENARIO TESTING

Having considered all the potential options for parking charges in Wellingborough, and Rushden, there are a number of headlines that can be summarised. The ultimate headline from this exercise is that there is sufficient justification for consideration of parking charges in the two towns.

For Wellingborough town centre, four of the options demonstrate that it can be effective to only introduce parking charges in Commercial Way multi-storey car park. For options 5 and 6, Jacksons Lane car park may generate more income than the multi-storey car park. This is because the vast majority of parking acts in the multi-storey car park are no more than two hours. By providing the first two or three hours free of charge, the car park will not generate much income. In addition to this, Jacksons Lane car park is subject to higher levels of longer stay parking acts, which means additional revenue can be generated.

Although the first four options demonstrate that the council could decide to implement parking charges in the multi-storey car park alone in Wellingborough, there is still sufficient justification for including parking charges in Jacksons Lane. However, whilst this may generate more income, it could have a negative impact on nearby businesses. There is also likely to be a significant level of displacement into nearby residential streets, meaning the introduction of permit parking schemes will be required to mitigate against this displacement.

For Rushden town centre car parks, all six options demonstrate that parking charges can be implemented effectively. Options 5 and 6 do result in limited revenue generated from the four car parks. If there were no parking charges in place across the authority, the recommendation would be to not progress option 5 or 6 (specifically to Rushden) due to the costs of running the operation. However, as there are existing parking charges in place, there should be a slight surplus generated, which can be reinvested into the parking service.

The Station Road (Splash pool) car park demonstrates adequate revenue generation across all six options considered as part of this exercise. However, as outlined above, the council will need to consider offering a rebate to customers of the Leisure Centre

to avoid any negative impacts to the business. Therefore, the income generated from this car park is likely to be limited.

Option 4, which is the grouped hours parking tariff “Kettering” option is likely to generate the most revenue across both town centres. This option is likely to generate between £1.65 million and £2.07 million per annum if parking charges are introduced in all car parks, and between £1.37 and £1.71 million if parking charges are not introduced in Jacksons Lane car park in Wellingborough.

Breaking this down into the individual towns, option 4 will generate between £1.09 million and £1.36 million in Wellingborough if both car parks are included in the tariff, and between £806,400 and £1.01 million if parking charges are introduced in the multi-storey car park only. In Rushden, implementing the option 4 parking charge tariff will generate between £565,555 and £706,944 based on the inclusion of all car parks, and no rebates for the Splash pool car park.

Options 5 and 6, which involve the two or three hour free period allocation will generate the lowest level of revenue across all the options tested. As this involves free parking for the period most parking acts are occurring this isn’t considered a surprise. For options 5 and 6, Jacksons Lane car park generates more income than the multi-storey car park in Wellingborough, due to the high level of short-stay parking acts in the multi-storey car park, and the higher number of long-stay parking acts in Jacksons Lane. Based on this, it’s felt that if option 5 or 6 is progressed, both car parks should have charges introduced.

Option 3 also demonstrates a low level of revenue generated, which is within a similar amount to options 5 and 6, despite parking charges covering all time periods. Across all car parks, option 3 is only likely to generate between £505,478 and £631,848. This is because the tariff structure is low, with each hourly only costing £0.50. In comparison, the Kettering tariff will be £1.50 more for one hour of parking.

Table 18 provides a summary of the tariff options, and table 19 provides the expected revenue generation for each of the car parks within Wellingborough, and Rushden where parking charges are being considered. For confirmation, this includes both car parks in Wellingborough, and four car parks in Rushden.

Town	Car Park	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5	Option 6
Wellingborough	Commercial Way multi-storey	0-1 Hours £1.00	0-1 Hours £0.50	0-2 Hours £0.60	0-2 Hours £2.00	0-2 Hours Free	0-3 Hours Free
		1-2 Hours £2.00	1-2 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £1.00
		2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.50	3-4 Hours £2.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-5 Hours £2.00
		3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	5-6 Hours £3.00
		5-6 Hours £5.00	5-6 Hours £2.50	6+ Hours £10.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00
	Jacksons Lane	0-1 Hours £1.00	0-1 Hours £0.50	0-2 Hours £0.60	0-2 Hours £2.00	0-2 Hours Free	0-3 Hours Free
		1-2 Hours £2.00	1-2 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £1.00
		2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.50	3-4 Hours £2.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-5 Hours £2.00
		3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	5-6 Hours £3.00
		5-6 Hours £5.00	5-6 Hours £2.50	6+ Hours £10.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00
Rushden	Splash Pool	0-1 Hours £1.00	0-1 Hours £0.50	0-2 Hours £0.60	0-2 Hours £2.00	0-2 Hours Free	0-3 Hours Free
		1-2 Hours £2.00	1-2 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £1.00
		2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.50	3-4 Hours £2.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-5 Hours £2.00
		3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	5-6 Hours £3.00
		5-6 Hours £5.00	5-6 Hours £2.50	6+ Hours £10.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00
	Duck Street	0-1 Hours £1.00	0-1 Hours £0.50	0-2 Hours £0.60	0-2 Hours £2.00	0-2 Hours Free	0-3 Hours Free
		1-2 Hours £2.00	1-2 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £1.00
		2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.50	3-4 Hours £2.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-5 Hours £2.00
		3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	5-6 Hours £3.00
		5-6 Hours £5.00	5-6 Hours £2.50	6+ Hours £10.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00
	John Street	0-1 Hours £1.00	0-1 Hours £0.50	0-2 Hours £0.60	0-2 Hours £2.00	0-2 Hours Free	0-3 Hours Free
		1-2 Hours £2.00	1-2 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £1.00
		2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.50	3-4 Hours £2.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-5 Hours £2.00
		3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	5-6 Hours £3.00
		5-6 Hours £5.00	5-6 Hours £2.50	6+ Hours £10.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00
	Rectory Road	0-1 Hours £1.00	0-1 Hours £0.50	0-2 Hours £0.60	0-2 Hours £2.00	0-2 Hours Free	0-3 Hours Free
		1-2 Hours £2.00	1-2 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.00	3-4 Hours £1.00
		2-3 Hours £3.00	2-3 Hours £1.50	3-4 Hours £2.00	3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-5 Hours £2.00
		3-4 Hours £4.00	3-4 Hours £2.00	4-6 Hours £4.00	4-6 Hours £5.00	4-6 Hours £3.00	5-6 Hours £3.00
		5-6 Hours £5.00	5-6 Hours £2.50	6+ Hours £10.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00	6+ Hours £6.00

Table 18 – Summary of tariff structure options for North Northamptonshire car parks

Town	Car Park	Projected Annual Revenue O1 Low	Projected Annual Revenue O1 High	Projected Annual Revenue O2 Low	Projected Annual Revenue O1 High	Projected Annual Revenue O3 Low	Projected Annual Revenue O3 High	Projected Annual Revenue O4 Low	Projected Annual Revenue O4 High	Projected Annual Revenue O5/06 Low	Projected Annual Revenue O5/06 High
Wellingborough	Commercial Way multi-storey	£546,470	£683,088	£273,235	£341,544	£426,747	£553,434	£806,400	£1.01m	£169,344	£211,680
	Jacksons Lane	£122,035	£152,544	£61,018	£76,272	£283,584	£354,480	£283,584	£354,480	£174,989	£218,736
Rushden	Splash Pool	£73,920	£92,400	£36,960	£46,200	£58,760	£73,450	£124,992	£156,240	£28,224	£35,280
	Duck Street	£40,051	£50,064	£20,025	£25,032	£71,823	£89,779	£75,802	£94,752	£40,320	£50,400
	John Street	£111,821	£139,776	£55,910	£69,888	£142,572	£178,214	£184,666	£230,832	£79,834	£99,792
	Rectory Road	£116,659	£145,824	£58,330	£72,912	£57,631	£72,038	£180,096	£225,120	£10,752	£13,440

Table 19 – Summary of revenue generation for North Northamptonshire car parks

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The impact of car parking charging on town centre footfall is clearly a contentious topic. Much of the debate is rooted in the fact that car parking charging is a complex issue and one that is part of a mix of factors that affect the impact of car parking more generally, as well as the health of local economies at a more macro level. For example, issues around sustainability, town or city centre offering and location, and government and Local Authority budgets to name a few.

The literature review and primary research indicated that car parking charges are only one of a number of factors at play in influencing footfall and town centre vitality. It showed that organisations with agendas as diverse as the Federation for Small Businesses and Sustrans share the view that an integrated approach to transport policy is needed, and which is tailored to the needs of local economies. Overall, this research has indicated that the following parking related factors are important determinants of people's behaviour in relation to town centres.

- Availability of spaces;
- Restrictions on parking (i.e. how long people can park for);
- Proximity of parking to intended destination;
- Traffic flow;
- Signage;
- Overall retail offering;
- Out of town retail offering;
- Price of car parking;
- Security of car park;
- Incentives for parking.

These factors are subject to ongoing changes, making it difficult to determine the extent to which they are responsible for changes in behaviour. Car park charging should not be viewed in isolation from other factors (availability of parking, signage, traffic flow) which affect willingness to drive in town centres. An overall systemic approach could be taken to future research which examines this complex interplay, rather than one aspect of it.

Whilst there is not much existing quantitative evidence on the impact that car parking charging has on footfall, it is possible to identify clear examples, at least anecdotally, of where charges have had either a positive or negative impact on footfall and business custom. For example, whilst a 'blanket' free parking strategy has been suggested to encourage more car park users, these were generally found not to benefit target visitors (for example town centre workers who were taking up the spaces all day, rather than shoppers) and consequently had a negative impact on footfall.

As the examples above suggest, the impact that similar charging strategies can have in different town or city centres emphasises the point that charging must be tailored to the demographic and retail/ business offering nuances of the local area, in order to optimise the positive impact that charging has on footfall and the overall health of the local economy. Remaining engaged with the key stakeholders involved in the local economy, for example business owners, shoppers, council members etc., is also key to ensuring the optimum charging strategies are adopted.

After reviewing the towns across the North Northamptonshire region that have council owned car parks in place, there are only two towns considered suitable for parking charges. Burton Latimer, Desborough, Irthlingborough, and Thrapston are not considered large enough towns to justify the costs. Although all these car parks demonstrate high parking demand, the towns have no more than two car parks, all of which are relatively small in size. Introducing parking charges would likely result in displacement, and negative impacts on the town as the offerings are limited.

Wellingborough, and Rushden towns demonstrate sufficient justification for parking charges to be considered. This is based on either the number of parking spaces, or the number of car parks, in addition to the town centre offering, which would attract visitors to the town. Having insufficient of these aspects will result in visitors travelling elsewhere if parking charges are introduced in the town centre car parks.

From the six parking charge tariff structures considered as part of this study, all options have benefits and drawbacks. It is for the council officers, and elected members to make the decision on the option progressed, if parking charges are introduced in Wellingborough and/or Rushden. As highlighted in section 6, the revenue generated differs based on the option. As expected, the greater the revenue generated, the higher the tariff costs, which may have a negative impact on local economies.

As highlighted with the towns of Corby and Kettering, both of which have parking charges in operation currently, the council may choose to implement a different tariff structure for Wellingborough and Rushden towns. It's also possible to provide different tariff structures within the same town, although generally speaking this should be restricted to short-stay, and long-stay parking car parks, or premium car parks having a higher tariff based on the location, facilities, or regular excessive demand.

Having undertaken the investigation study, it is the view of Ethos that both Wellingborough and Rushden council owned car parks should have parking charges in operation. There are differing reasons for both towns. For Wellingborough, the size, and the town offering is in line with Corby and Kettering, which both have charges currently. The town also has a multi-storey car park in an prime location. Benchmarking hasn't been able to identify another council owned multi-storey without charges.

Although there isn't a compelling case for or against the inclusion of Jacksons Lane into car parks that charge, based on the potential issues that may arise if charges are introduced in the car park, such as a negative impact on local businesses, and on-street parking along nearby residential streets, it's felt that introducing parking charges shouldn't be a priority for this car park. The multi-storey car park will generate sufficient income to justify its sole inclusion for the town centre. This then provides an alternative location to park for any visitors who do not wish to pay for their car parking.

Based on this suggestion, setting the most appropriate tariff structure will become a more straightforward process. It wouldn't seem appropriate to have different parking charges for only two car parks. The multi-storey car park and Jacksons Lane car park serve different users, which would make the tariff structure a greater challenge. The multi-storey car park is clearly a short-stay car park. Therefore, a tariff structure focused on short-stay parking acts would be the most appropriate to implement.

This rules out option 5 and option 6. As both these options provides two or three hours of free parking, it wouldn't be beneficial for the council to implement. It would also likely result in visitors avoiding staying longer than the free period. Considering the overall attractiveness of the town, the council are unlikely to see much if any reduction in demand if the other four options were progressed. Option 2 would clearly be the preference from users due to the low tariff. However, this would restrict the revenue generated, which may limit the amount of reinvestment back into the parking service.

As the car park is clearly a short-stay car park, option 3 or option 4 would most likely be more effective for the town. Although some car parks demonstrate little difference between the these two options (which is related to the breakdown of short-stay parking acts, and those lasting all day), there is a significant difference for the multi-storey car park. Option 4 would raise nearly twice the revenue as option 1. However, when considering the 0-2 hour parking charge, there is a £1.40 difference between the two options. This is considerable when most parking acts fall within this timeframe.

Therefore, option 3, which is the grouped hours parking tariff “Corby” option appears to be the most suitable for Wellingborough based on the overall assessment. There is justification for the other options, but as there is currently no parking charges in place, it seems that option 3 provides a good starting point to implement charges.

For Rushden town centre, although the town offering isn’t as large or as complete as Wellingborough, there are sufficient trip generators, and enough car parks in the town to justify parking charges. In addition to this, there is already noticeable parking demand in the car parks, and based on forecasting growth in the town, the demand for parking will continue to grow to levels that will impact the local economy over the next 15-20 years. The parking surveys undertaken as part of the parking strategy also demonstrate that there is a higher rate of longer stay parking acts, which may be due to car parks not having parking charges in place. This could impact local economies.

Whilst the multi-storey car park in Wellingborough is a clear short-stay car park, in Rushden the car parks are providing a wider number of customers, some of which are seeking short-stay parking, whereas others are seeking long-stay parking. This means that there is benefit in pursuing a different tariff structure for the town.

The overall justification for introducing parking charges is weaker in Rushden compared to Wellingborough, even if there is sufficient justification to introduce charges. Based on this, it’s recommended that a lower tariff structure is chosen, if the council approve parking charges in the town. As there is a mixture of short-stay, and long-stay parking acts occurring, the council should decide to either include two different tariff structures in the town (short-stay, and long-stay) or to choose a parking charge tariff that doesn’t prioritise either short-stay or long-stay parking acts.

Option 1, and option 4 can be considered the higher charge tariff structures, which means they should be avoided for Rushden car parks. Option 3 is a tariff structure that appears to discourage all-day parking, which is more common in Rushden. Although this may be due to the town not having parking charges in place, it should be avoided in case this creates a negative impact on the local economy.

This means that option 2, option 5, or option 6 are the most logical options to consider for Rushden town centre unless the short-stay / long-stay parking tariff is introduced. As the data collected during the development of the parking strategy illustrates existing parking pressure, and the potential for considerable parking pressure in the future, there may be benefit in progressing an option that seeks to limit the parking pressure.

Option 2 is unlikely to discourage parking much, if at all, due to the low costs involved in the tariff. 4-5 hours of parking as part of the option 2 tariff is only £0.50 more than the minimum payment for option 4. Therefore, option 5 or option 6 may be the most appropriate to consider. There is limited difference between the revenue generated based on the baseline data. However, in reality if three hours of free parking was available before charges were introduced, this is likely to encourage visitors to stay no more than three hours. This may impact the spending in the town centre.

Therefore, option 5, which is the initial two hours free parking charge tariff option appears to be a workable solution for Rushden based on the overall assessment. Option 2 is a viable alternative option, if the council are not concerned by the potential for parking pressure to continue to increase across the town centre over the next 15-20 years. Option 6 could be progressed, but this may result in limited numbers of parking acts that require a charge being realised. This may restrict the likelihood of the council making a surplus, meaning there would be no income to reinvest in the service.

If the council wished to have a short and long-stay tariff in operation, option 4 would be an effective option to consider, with minor tweaks made based on whether the car park was short-stay or long-stay i.e. higher longer-stay charge in short-stay car parks.

Section 6.9 illustrates that the council generate a noticeable amount of revenue from parking charges. There doesn't appear to be much opposition to the charges and keeping these in place can support the parking service operation, and the implementation of new policies contained in the parking strategy that's in production.

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