

## For publication

### Chesterfield Car Parking Study (TV250)

<b>Meeting:</b>	Chesterfield Borough Council Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Cabinet portfolio:</b>	Town Centre and Visitor Economy Climate Change, Planning and Environment Economic Growth
<b>Directorate:</b>	Economic Growth Leisure, Culture and Community Wellbeing Corporate
<b>For publication</b>	

#### 1.0 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the findings of the Chesterfield Car Parking Study that was undertaken by Ove Arup and Partners in 2023.
- 1.2 To ensure the Council is aware of opportunities to improve provision of car parking in Chesterfield Town Centre.
- 1.3 To ensure the Council is better informed around car parking demand and the potential for land disposal and reuse for regeneration is understood.

#### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To endorse the findings made in the Chesterfield Car Parking Study.
- 2.2 To consider the following suggestions made in the Chesterfield Car Parking Study:
  - That officers develop further recommendations for investment in car parking provision, and the reuse of excess parking to support the regeneration of the town centre.
  - That the suggested annual price review in the Chesterfield Car Parking Study is adopted along with an in-year appraisal to assess performance against budgetary targets.

#### 3.0 Reason for recommendations

3.1 To enable Chesterfield Borough Council to implement appropriate changes to the management and delivery of Chesterfield Borough Council owned car parking provision to support the vitality and viability of Chesterfield Town Centre.

#### **4.0 Background**

4.1 Chesterfield Car Parking Study was commissioned in January 2023 to inform the Council on four key areas related to car parking in Chesterfield Town Centre. The key areas are:

1. Car parking income.
2. Car parking usage.
3. Climate change opportunities across the car parking estate.
4. Regeneration opportunities on Chesterfield Borough Council owned car parks.

4.2 In addition, through the study the Council sought to better understand how car parking facilities in Chesterfield Town Centre are aligned and contribute to the council's strategic priorities of climate change, value for money, income generation, operational efficiency and support of the wider town centre economy.

4.3 Chesterfield Brough Council undertook a procurement exercise to seek suitably qualified expertise to undertake the study. The study was openly procured with Ove Arup and Partners selected as the successful tenderer. They delivered the study on time and within budget.

4.4 The study provides short, medium and long term recommendations for the future provision of public off-street parking in Chesterfield Borough Council's ownership. As part of the development of the study there has been consideration of local regional and national strategies.

4.5 The study sets out the local context with an overview of the existing parking provision, demand and income and the future developments that are planned. The study analyses potential future car parking demand using modelling and local and national data. This data has been used to set out methods for adapting the car parks to meet future regeneration opportunities along with climate change and income aspirations.

#### **4.6 Car Parking Income and Usage**

The income generated from the car parks is significant to the Local Authority and supports the Council to deliver essential services for the people of

Chesterfield. How this income generation is structured in the future to encourage shoppers and users of the town centre was integral to the study to ensure that the car parks are used to their maximum potential in the future.

- 4.7 A number of methods were used to collate the data to generate the findings of the study. Ove Arup analysed the income structure of the car parks and provided comparison data on other similar sized towns. Information from the Association of Town Centre Management and the British Parking Association along with other research platforms were used gain an understanding of car parking tariffs to help understand the relationship between footfall and parking prices. They also used the Department for Transport's 'National Trip end Model' to illustrate how demand for the car parks may change between now and 2035. This data was then used to project future demand for the car parks.
- 4.8 Ove Arup analysed the usage of the car parks over a set periods of time in 2022 and 2023 (primarily between August and December 2022). The number of spaces in each car park were analysed and the level of which they were used over those set periods of time.
- 4.9 Climate Change  
Carbon reduction targets, the way in which we use vehicles, and the growth in electric vehicles (EV) means that car parks will need to adapt to meet these changing requirements. The study provides key information to understand the capabilities on existing sites and ways in which the car parks can adapt to this changing demand.
- 4.10 Arup analysed the anticipated growth in demand for EV charging and the wider policy context to predict the future demand of EV charging. Solar charging and greening principles were also considered to support the climate change recommendations.
- 4.11 Regeneration  
Chesterfield Town Centre is an important sub-regional service centre and as such is a key location for a range of uses such as retail, tourism, hospitality and employment. Increasingly there is a trend for residential uses within the town centre. The Chesterfield Town Centre Masterplan (2015) sets out the vision and ambition for the Town Centre. Some of the projects identified as part of this vision such as 'Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield' are underway. Other opportunities such as the creation of a residential community in 'Spire Neighbourhood' are yet to be realised. To bring forward regeneration opportunities it might require the repurposing of Council land that is currently

used for car parking. It has not been possible to progress on such initiatives without robust data on car parking use and demand.

4.12 The study informs whether there are any excess car parking sites within the town centre that have the potential to be repurposed. In addition, well managed car parking with modern facilities set within quality sustainable environments will also contribute to the viability and vitality of Chesterfield Town Centre. This will help ensure that visitors to the town centre have a quality experience, directly contributing to the attractiveness of the location as a place to live, visit and invest.

4.13 Planning policy and analysis of the Chesterfield Masterplans and Growth plans were considered as part of the research into the regeneration potential on car parks. This along with the research into the use of the car parks helped to inform the recommendations on potential car parks to designate for regeneration.

#### 4.14 **Findings of the Study**

##### 4.15 Income:

The study found that the income generated by the car parks is not sufficient to meet current budget targets. The following issues were highlighted:

- With current parking demand, to reach the income targets, in the short term, charges will need to increase.
- The council car parks are more expensive than privately operated sites but have a different offer.
- The UK government's National Trip End Model assumes 9% growth in trips to central Chesterfield in the central case, or 13% growth in a high growth scenario. There is a low correlation between increasing charges and losing custom - for each 10% increase in cost there is the potential to lose 1-4% of users.

The following suggestions were made:

1. Recommend a review of car parking charges at least once a year with an in-year review to assess performance against targets.
2. Recommend that flexibility is built into the charging structure so that charge increases can be facilitated as seamlessly as possible, if more frequent increases are needed.

##### 4.16 Usage:

The study found that there is considerable spare capacity across council owned car parks. During the study period the following occupancy rates were found:

- New Beetwell Street Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) only reached 50% occupancy.
- On 90% of days New Beetwell Street, Soresby and Rosehill didn't exceed 58% overall occupancy and on 95% of days they didn't exceed 62% occupancy.
- Saltergate capacity didn't exceed 40% occupancy.
- Estimates show that there is sufficient spare capacity to remove the car parks initially proposed for regeneration (New Beetwell Street and 'Spire Neighbourhood') under current demand levels.
- If demand were to grow in line with the National Trip End Model (in a 13% high growth scenario), there would still be spare capacity even if these car parks were removed. There would be a small shortfall at peak times (of 20-80 spaces) in 2035, if all car parks proposed for regeneration were removed.
- The mobile cashless app accounted for 46% of purchases for council operated car parks.

The following suggestions were made:

1. Recommend sticking with a mainstream cashless app provider and try to change as little as possible.
2. Constraining supply is seen as a more viable method of controlling demand.

#### 4.17 Climate change:

To meet the Council's climate change ambitions amendments to existing car parks could be made. The following issues were raised in relation to climate change:

- With the increase in demand for electric vehicles, there will be an increase in demand for electric vehicle charging points.
- Extreme weather conditions leads to a need to adapt car parks to build resilience from flood, heat and drought.
- With increased residential development there will be increases in people locally using parking sites without EV charging at home. There is the opportunity to look at season ticket pricing to provide these people with overnight EV charging and provide an overnight income stream.

The following suggestions were made:

1. Recommend EV capacity is scaled up across sites in stages to satisfy future demand whilst reacting to any changes in technological landscape. Current EV bays should react to the increase in EV demand by gradually becoming EV only bays.

2. By greening the car parks there is the opportunity to improve the ecosystem for people and wildlife and to build resilience against extreme weathers.
3. Further investigation into Solar charging potential on car parks. Solar charging with solar canopies gives the potential to produce power for EV charging / street lighting / power to buildings.

#### 4.18 Regeneration

As stated above, opportunities for regeneration have been highlighted in Town Centre Masterplans. The Car Parking study acknowledges that large scale projects such as Northern Gateway and Chesterfield Waterside have been in part implemented. Other projects such as 'Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield' are on site. The Town Centre Masterplans have highlighted Spire Neighbourhood as a potential site for regeneration, however, this has yet to come to fruition.

The key findings in understanding the potential regeneration opportunities were:

- There is an oversupply of car parking. This means that some car parking sites could be suitable for redevelopment.
- The Study shows that the car parks that sit within the 'Spire Neighbourhood' area as highlighted in Chesterfield Town Centre Masterplan that are made up of car parks in St Mary's Gate, Spa Lane, Hollis Lane and the former Derbyshire Times could be repurposed subject to planning.
- Car parking sites have potential to supply both employment and residential development opportunities across the Town Centre.
- The study suggests that with the central location of the majority of the car parks, higher density development would be the most viable. As appropriate, a minimum level of undercroft parking could allow the retention of some parking capacity on these sites -for example, for accessible users. However, this may result in a loss of active frontage to developments.
- The study shows that there is potential to remove New Beetwell Street MSCP. This car park is ageing and requires substantial capital investment into its physical fabric. From a regeneration perspective its demolition could facilitate the creation of a key development plot offering substantial regeneration opportunity. Analysis of car parking demand and usage shows that should New Beetwell Street MSCP be redeveloped Saltergate MSCP has the capacity to facilitate the additional demand. Vicar Lane also has capacity for those unable to travel as far as Saltergate MSCP.

- The Car Parking Study shows that 'Spire Neighbourhood' and New Beetwell MSCP are the most suitable sites for redevelopment.

The following suggestions were made:

1. Further investigations are carried out into the opportunities for redevelopment at the 'Spire Neighbourhood' and New Beetwell Street MSCP are investigated.
2. Both residential and commercial development could be considered for car parking sites.

## **5.0 Alternative options**

- 5.1 Do not take forward recommendations made in the study. This would have the following implications:
- If car parking fees and charges were not increased annually the council would continue to see a shortfall in income leading to further budgetary issues.
  - Opportunities to adapt car parks to changing requirements as a result of climate change would be lost.
  - Opportunities to redevelop prime town centre land for commercial or residential purposes would be lost.

## **6.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money**

- 6.1 A tariff usage survey has been undertaken to establish which tariffs are most popular to inform the overall approach regarding fees and charges. The 'up to 2 hours tariff' on Short Stay car parks is the predominant tariff at around 40% of total volume, with the Long Stay car parks indicating a relatively even split of 30% over the 1 hour to 3 hour's tariffs.
- 6.2 Consequently, in light of the range of use it would be prudent to increase the rates charged sensitively, across all tariffs, rather than target specific individual tariff periods so as to maintain the current pricing differential across the various tariffs to help the consumer select the tariff most appropriate to their reason for parking.
- 6.3 The Chesterfield Car Parking Study highlights opportunities to improve the car parking estate from a sustainability and regeneration perspective. The costs of developing the proposals to improve the sustainability of the car parking estate have not been developed at this stage. It is likely that external funding

will be sought to deliver on some of the highlighted opportunities in due course. For the regeneration opportunities, further exploration is needed into the viability of commercial opportunities that might come forward on sites. External funding will be sought to progress opportunities as appropriate.

## **7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal**

7.1 The Chesterfield Car Parking Study is presenting opportunities to improve the viability of the car parks. Any legal implications will be considered as recommendations in this report are progressed.

## **8.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources**

8.1 There are no Human Resource implications.

## **9.0 Implications for consideration – Council plan**

9.1 The Council Plan highlights our priorities to make Chesterfield a thriving borough, improve the quality of life for local people and build a resilient Council.

9.2 A key priority is to ensure we provide value for money services, our car parks should be easy to access and use, deliver savings where possible, achieve a reasonable return from a valuable asset, and look to reduce our environmental impact through the use of technology.

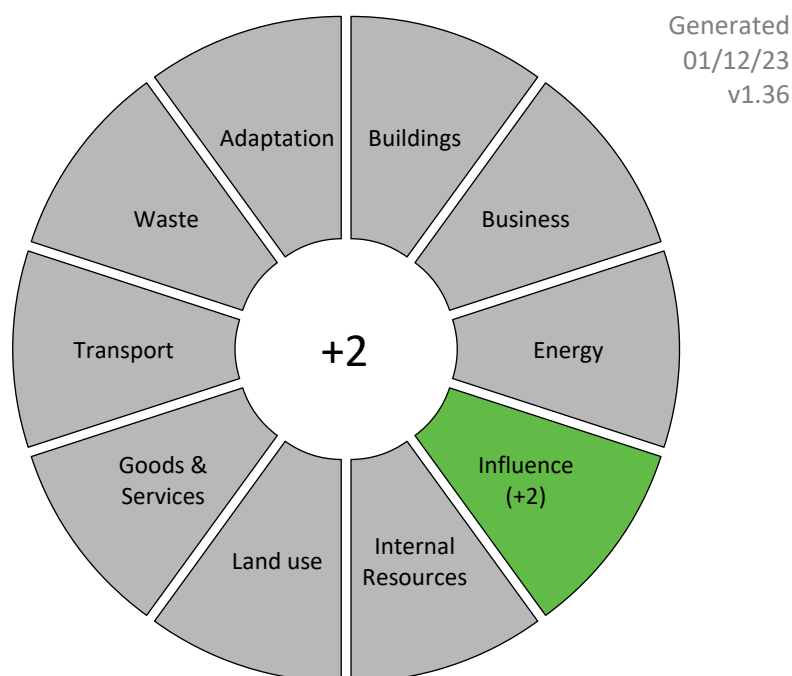
9.3 It is the Council's aspiration to strengthen the distinctive character and vibrancy of our town centre. By improving the car parking facilities in the town there is the opportunity to contribute to this aspiration.

9.4 The Council Plan states that The Council will increase the number of residents living and working in our town centres by enabling and facilitating quality residential conversions and developing town centre sites which will reduce commuter carbon emissions. The plan is to achieve 923 new homes by 2027. Regeneration at 'Spire Neighbourhood' would directly contribute to this. The Council Plan states that the Council will ensure the effective co-ordination and delivery of town centre services including pro-active engagement with town centre businesses. Understanding the usage of the car parking in the town centre will help contribute towards this.

## **10.0 Implications for consideration – Climate change**



- 10.1 It is not anticipated that the Chesterfield Car Parking Study itself will have any direct impact upon climate change. However, if the climate change recommendations made in the study are brought to fruition there could be a positive impact upon the environment. The data provided in the study will help support future external funding bids to make improvements to the car parking estate from a sustainability perspective or to bring forward regeneration opportunities on sites where car parking demand dictates an alternative use.
- 10.2 Climate change impacts on this study are minimal but this paves the way for implementations that will have a significant positive impact on the environment in the future. A climate change impact assessment has been completed and the summary position is below.



Chesterfield Borough Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 (6 years and 1 months away).

### 11.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

- 11.1 A preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. No negative impacts for protected groups have been identified from this study, however further assessments will be undertaken as proposals are developed.

### 12.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Financial Risk	High	Medium	Sensitive assessment of proposed increases as referenced within the report. Provision of a Residents Parking Scheme offering free parking. Permit options for regular users giving reduced parking charges. Communications plan to all users outlining the Council's need to increase tariffs sensitively and further promote the existing parking incentives.	Medium	low
Sustainability Risk	Medium	Medium	Changes to car parking provision and cost increase the use of ICVs in the town centre. Changes in use of car park areas could lead to increased emissions from building work etc.	Low	Low
Regeneration Risk - Failure to bring forward housing and development opportunities	Medium	Low	This study will support any future proposals for housing sites at 'Spire Neighbourhood' as well as redevelopment of town centre sites	Medium	Low

			and will provide supporting evidence for regeneration opportunities.		

**Decision information**

<b>Key decision number</b>	<i>All key decisions must be in the Forward Plan at least 28 days in advance. There are constitutional consequences if an item is not in the Forward Plan when it should have been. Contact Democratic Services if in doubt.</i>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Spire ward

**Document information**

<b>Report author</b>	
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<b>Background documents</b>	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
Chesterfield Car Parking Study	
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix 1	Chesterfield Car Parking Study