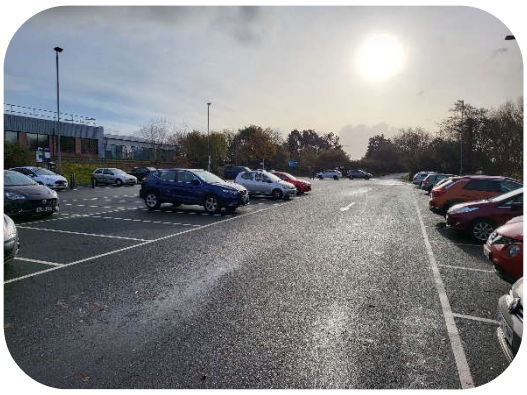
2020 CONSULTANCY

CHRISTCHURCH TOWN CENTRE CAR PARK STUDY

FOR CHRISTCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 2023



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

2020 Consultancy has been commissioned by Christchurch Town Council to undertake an assessment of parking in Christchurch town centre car parks to assess existing parking provision, capacity and forecasting future usage in conjunction with potential development that is occurring within the town. In addition, the study is seeking to compare current data to data that was collected as part of the 2017 car park strategy that was completed by 2020 Consultancy for the then Borough Council.

Christchurch Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of Christchurch Parish. This work is being led by a Neighbourhood Plan advisory committee called the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, reporting to the Planning & Regulatory Committee and Full Council as appropriate.

The project will provide statistical evidence to facilitate decision making and establish the feasibility of potential future redevelopment in Christchurch town centre. It will outline the impact the redevelopment may have on parking and what this could mean for the town centre, both now and looking ahead over a 15-year period until 2037.

2020 Consultancy is a highways and transport consultancy that specialise in a range of services including parking, road safety, and traffic engineering. The company, formed in 2012 have undertaken numerous car parking related projects which ensures there is considerable expertise, knowledge, and experience available to work on this study. 2020 Consultancy has worked with over 25 local authorities on car parking related projects as well as central government.

The supply of parking spaces serves various functions; it is a service to the public, residents and visitors; it can support businesses to operate and expand; it can support (or undermine) efforts to improve the local environment. If a revenue surplus is generated by off-street parking, it can be used by local authorities to maintain parking facilities or provide funds for other schemes and services.

The population of Christchurch is around 32,000 (Census 2021). Christchurch is situated in the southwest of England and is part of the newly formed BCP Council, which includes Bournemouth, and Poole in addition to Christchurch. The district of Christchurch has good transport links within the district and into neighbouring authorities including Dorset and Hampshire. The area is approximately 51.7km².

Figure 1 below illustrates the location of Christchurch within the context of the east Dorset region, and the west Hampshire region.

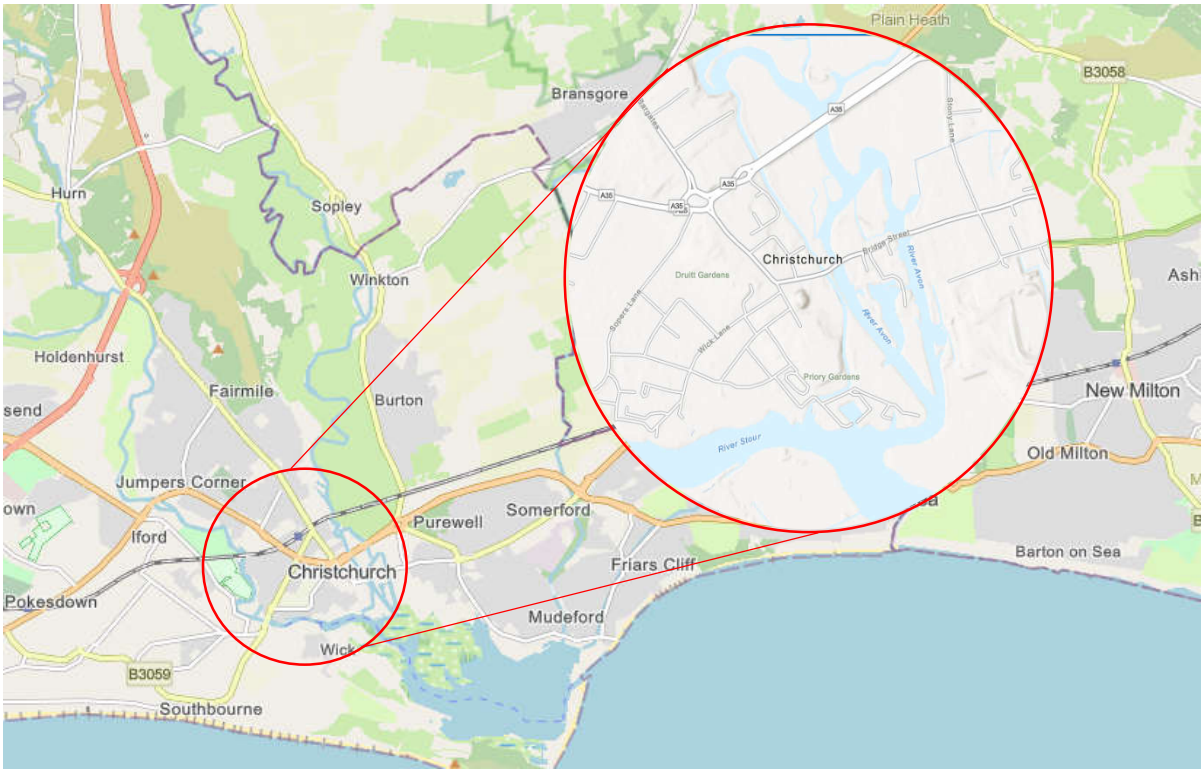


Figure 1 – Christchurch town and its location within Dorset

1.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Christchurch is a coastal market town and civil parish located on the south coast in the county of Dorset. Christchurch is located near the boundary with Hampshire county, and also the New Forest National Park. Christchurch, estimated as home to approximately 32,000 residents, is part of the UK's newest city region. The city region brings together three different towns, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, with Christchurch described as "a place of heritage, character and beauty, which needs a balance of sympathetic investment and protection".

Within the BCP region the population is estimated to be approximately 400,000 based on the 2021 Census data. This means that approximately 8% of the city region population lives in Christchurch, which is classed as the 3rd largest settlement within the BCP region.

Christchurch borders Bournemouth town to the west and is approximately 9 miles (14 km) east of Poole, 20 miles (32 km) west of Southampton, 23 miles (37 km) south of Salisbury. As a south coast town, Christchurch is located to the south on the UK road network. The

nearest motorway junction is Junction 1 of the M27, located approximately 25km north-east of the town centre. Further afield, the M3 is located approximately 35km north-east of Christchurch, and the M5 is located over 100km to the west. The closest Strategic Road Network is the A338, which is to the west of Christchurch. The A338 connects into the A31 to the north, which provides an onward route to key towns such as Ringwood, and Dorchester (via the A35).

The 2021 BCP Retail and Leisure Study noted that, in terms of customer opinion, the most popular suggestions in terms of what would make them shop more in the centre, related to more / better shops and more / cheaper parking and addressing concerns regarding safety and homelessness levels. The SWOT analysis notes that convenient public car parks located near the shops / services are one of the strengths of the centre, but has not identified the loss of parking as a potential threat.

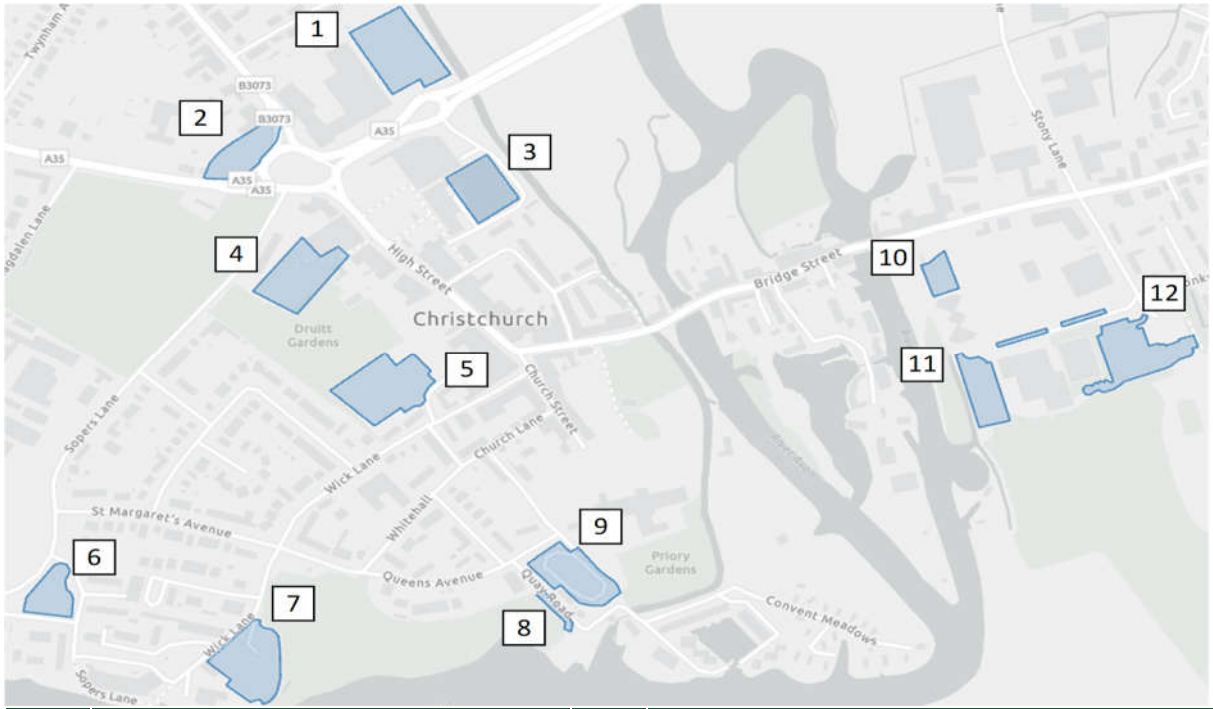
Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires BCP as a Local Planning Authority (LPA) to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). BCP Council's LDS came into effect on the 27th July 2022 and focuses specifically on the key milestones for the BCP Local Plan. As such, it provides the community and other interested parties with an indication of the stages of plan production, highlighting how interested parties can engage with the council.

The new BCP Local Plan will set out the overall planning framework to support growth and development in the region. The new Local Plan includes strategic priorities and long-term vision for the area. It will contain a Spatial Strategy which identifies locations for delivering strategic development needs such as housing, employment, retail, leisure, and infrastructure. It will also include strategic policies, site allocation policies, development management policies and a Map for determining planning applications.

1.2 CHRISTCHURCH TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

There are approximately 1,400 publicly available, off-street car-parking spaces situated in and around Christchurch town centre and their locations are shown in figure 2. The car parks highlighted within figure 2 only include council owned car parks that are operated by BCP Council. There are privately owned car parks within the town centre that haven't been included in this study as they will not impact the Neighbourhood Plan that Christchurch Town Council are currently preparing.

There are also a number of locations within the town centre where it's possible to park on-street. Some of these locations have restrictions to allow short term parking (High Street), whereas other locations have no parking controls, meaning vehicles can park all day. A number of roads with parking controls do not operate on a Sunday, meaning there is likely to be less turnover of spaces on these roads.



Ref	Parking Location	Ref	Parking Location
1	Bypass	7	Mayors Mead
2	Pit Site	8	Quay
3	Saxon Square	9	Priory
4	Bank Close	10	Bridge Street
5	Wick Lane	11	Leisure Centre (West)
6	Willow Way	12	Leisure Centre (East)

Figure 2 – Off-street car parks in Christchurch town centre

Although there are key centralized car parks which are directly within Christchurch town Centre there is a clear spatial zoning of the off-street car parks within Christchurch. They have distinctive parking and land use characteristics, but there is also a lot of interaction between these zones, i.e., people park in one zone and work or shop in another. There are four zones, which can be classified as the following:

- Central zone
- Outer central zone
- Quayside zone
- Leisure centre zone

Two car parks fall within the outer central zone; Bypass car park; and Pit Site car park. Bypass car park is designed to serve visitors to the Waitrose supermarket and other small, localised trips. Pit Site car park is designed to serve visitors of shops and amenities located along the B3073 and the A35. Located primarily for the trip generators located just outside the town Centre.

Three car parks are located within the central zone; Saxon Square car park; Bank close car park; and Wick Lane car park. These three car parks are located in a prime position to help serve the parking needs of visitors to the High Street area and the other centralized trip generators.

The quayside zone has four car parks located within it; Willow car park; Mayors Mead car park; Quay car park; and Priory car park. These four car parks are strategically positioned near the quayside serving visitors to the waterside and key alternative rip generators including the Christchurch Historical society and small local restaurants. The attractiveness of these off-street parking locations is the close proximity to the High Street, allowing for a larger proportion of visitors willing to park at this location.

The final zone is the Leisure Centre zone located to the east of the waterways. There are three off-street car parks located within this zone; Bridge Street car park; Leisure Centre West; and Leisure Centre East. These primarily serve visitors accessing the Leisure Centre and nearby amenities / offices located outside the centralised area.

Figure 3 below illustrates the informal spatial zoning that has been formed through the location of the car parks and land uses.

Figure 3 – Informal spatial zoning of car parks in Christchurch.

Including the key on-street parking bays discussed above, there is approximately 901 parking spaces within the central and outer central zones. It's noted that there are pockets of small areas elsewhere within the town centre, which means the actual capacity for the town is higher than the 901 figure. As shown in figure 3 above the off-street car parks are well positioned to serve the various needs of the residents and visitors of Christchurch.

There are 352 off-street car parking spaces located within the quayside zone, and again there are small pockets of additional on-street capacity spread within this zone. In addition, there are 356 off-street parking spaces located within the leisure centre zone and again a small number of additional on-street car parking spaces and locations that are within this zone.

The primary routes into Christchurch align from the east and the west along the A35. The zones which are located within this area are the central and outer central zones which aligns with the strategic positioning of these locations along with the increased overall capacity over other zones and locations. The largest car park within Christchurch is the Saxon Square which is the only multi-level off-street car park within Christchurch and

equates to a capacity of 265 spaces. This equates to 16% of the total off-street parking supply within Christchurch.

This car park along with three others are car parks which have a 10% or above proportion of the overall off-street car park capacity offering. The smallest off-street car park destination is the Quay and equates to a total offering of 21 spaces.

All council owned car parks in the town centre have parking charges in place. Table 1 provides details on the tariff in place. Eight of the town centre car parks are designated as short-stay, and generally these are the ones that are more centrally located. There are ten car parks that offer long-stay parking as stated by BCP Council, including:

- Priory;
- **Quay;**
- Pit Site;
- Saxton Square (lower level);
- **Mayors Mead;**
- **Bridge Street;**
- Bargates;
- Willow Way;
- **Leisure Centre East & Leisure Centre West**.

Some of these car parks offer both long-stay and short-stay parking, which have been highlighted in bold. There are three car parks that are designated as short-stay only. These include Wick Lane, Bank Close, and Bypass car parks. Wick Lane, and Bank Close in particular are located within the core town centre, which is likely to be subject to high demand. This is likely to result in the turnover of spaces being high.

Name of Car Park	Location	Tariff Charges (£)							
		0-1 Hour	1-2 Hour	2-3 Hour	3-4 Hour	4-5 Hour	5-6 Hour	12 Hour	24 Hour
Bargates	BH23 1QL								
Pit Site	BH23 1PE	0.90	1.70	2.50	3.30	-	-	5.50	-
Christchurch Quay	BH23 1BY	-	2.00	-	3.30	-	-	5.50	-
Willow Way	BH23 1NU								
Bridge Street	BH23 1AZ	0.90	1.70	2.60	3.50	-	-	6.00	-
Mayors Mead	BH23 1NY	-	2.00	-	3.30			6.00	12.00
Bank Close	BH23 1JG	-	1.00	2.60	3.50	-	-	-	-
Bypass (Waitrose)	BH23 1QD	-	1.00	2.60	3.50	-	-	-	-

Wick Lane	BH23 1HT	-	1.00	2.60	3.50	-	-	-	-
Priory	BH23 1BU	-	2.00	-	3.30	-	-	6.00	-
Leisure Centre East	BH23 1HW	-	1.00	-	1.90	-		4.00	-
Leisure Centre West	BH23 1HW	-	1.00	-	1.90	-		4.00	-
Saxon Square	BH23 1QA	-	1.00	2.60	3.50	-	-	-	-

Table 1 – Tariff charges for the off-street car parks in Christchurch town centre

It is well documented that Christchurch has one of the highest age demographics within England hence therefore this is perceived to be the reason for higher than average disabled space provision. Table 2 provides a breakdown of each car park within Christchurch town centre, which includes the designation, and parking spaces.

Car Park	Designation	Number of Parking Spaces	
		Standard	Disabled
Bypass	Long-stay	202	12
Pit Site	Long-stay	58	4
Saxon Square	Short-stay	257	16
Bank Close	Long-stay	156	9
Wick Lane	Short-stay	184	12
Willow Way	Short-stay	61	4
Mayors Mead	Long-stay	156	8
Quay	Short-stay	21	3
Priory	Short-stay	101	6
Bridge Street	Short-stay	40	4
Leisure Centre (W)	Short-stay	119	3
Leisure Centre (E)	Short-stay	172	8

Table 2 – Details of the council owned car parks within Christchurch town centre

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

On parking space numbers and impact on the local economy of parking charges it should be noted that the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) identified a common misconception that providing as many parking spaces as possible is the best way to manage parking so as to maximise access.

Rather, the key is to ensure that the parking stock is used efficiently so that the availability of space matches demand wherever possible. The effective management of parking provision is therefore as important as the absolute number of parking spaces provided.

Rather, the key is to ensure that the parking stock is used efficiently so that the availability of space matches demand wherever possible. The effective management of parking provision is therefore as important as the absolute number of parking spaces provided.

2.2 POLICY CONTEXT

There is a range of national, regional and local policy that is relevant to parking, promoting the vitality and viability of town centres, assisting residents and businesses.

In 2012 the Government published its new National Planning Policy Framework.

Section 3 of the Framework entitled Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy which refers to parking provision for both new building developments and town centre parking as follows:

“39. If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the accessibility of the development.
- the type, mix and use of development.
- the availability of and opportunities for public transport.
- local car ownership levels; and
- an overall need to reduce the use of high-emission vehicles.

Local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking in town centres so that it is convenient, safe and secure, including appropriate provision for motorcycles. They should

set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres. Parking enforcement should be proportionate."

2.3 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

Further to the National Planning Policy Framework new planning guidance was published in March 2014 which provides further detail in terms of town centre parking provision stating that councils should understand the important role appropriate parking facilities can play in rejuvenating shops, high streets and town centres:

"This positive approach should include seeking to improve the quality of parking in town centres (in line with the National Planning Policy Framework) and, where it is necessary to ensure the vitality of town centres, the quantity too. Local authorities should set appropriate parking charges that do not undermine the vitality of town centres and parking enforcement should be proportionate, avoiding unfairly penalising drivers."

2.4 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

The new BCP Local Plan will set out the overall planning framework to support growth and development in the region. The new Local Plan includes strategic priorities and long-term vision for the area. It will contain a Spatial Strategy which identifies locations for delivering strategic development needs such as housing, employment, retail, leisure, and infrastructure. It will also include strategic policies, site allocation policies, development management policies and a Map for determining planning applications.

3.0 BENCHMARKING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the parking study, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to determine how the Christchurch town centre parking offer compares to neighbouring authorities and other towns that are similar to Christchurch. The towns that are similar to Christchurch were selected as they have similar characteristics such as type of town offering, size, population, and localised position. The coastal locations near to Christchurch selected for the benchmarking exercise include:

- Bournemouth;
- Poole;
- Weymouth.

The locations near to Christchurch that share similar characteristics that were selected for the benchmarking exercise include:

- Dorchester;
- Ringwood.

3.2 REVIEW OF BENCHMARKING TOWNS

The population, number of specific car parking spaces, and percentage of spaces against the population for each location is shown in table 3. A comparison can be drawn between the tariff charges applied in off-street car parks within all the bench marked areas above. An average tariff charge is displayed to give a representation of the tariff issued with the area designated.

Location Centre	Population (2021 Census)	Town Centre Car Parks		Parking Charges			
		No. Spaces	% Spaces Population	1 Hour	2 Hour	3 Hour	4 Hour
Christchurch	32,000	1660	4.4	0.90	£1.70	£2.60	£3.30
Bournemouth	201,000	6086	3.0	~	£2.50	£3.50	£4.50
Poole	151,500	5319	3.5	~	£2.00	£3.00	£4.00
Weymouth	59,032	3356	5.7	~	£1.50	£2.20	£3.50
Ringwood	14,366	416	2.9	~	£2.00	£2.50	£3.00
Dorchester	21,366	1673	7.8	£1.00	£1.50	£2.20	£3.50

Table 3 – Benchmarking tariff charge table for destinations similar to Christchurch

As illustrated in table 3 above, Christchurch has an average amount of parking spaces compared to the towns included in the benchmarking exercise. Two locations provide a

greater percentage of parking spaces compared to the population of the town. Dorchester provides approximately 1,673 parking spaces, which is more than Christchurch despite the population being over 10,000 less. 7.8% is a higher than average provision for a town centre. Weymouth provides around 3,356 parking spaces, which is over twice the amount in Christchurch. However, the population is considerably higher. With a 5.7% provision this is a slightly higher provision for a town.

Bournemouth and Poole provide a similar amount of parking spaces in relation to the percentage of the population. Although there is an additional 50,000 residents in Bournemouth compared to Poole, there is more than an extra 750 parking spaces in the town centre. That being said, Poole as a 0.5% increase compared to Bournemouth. Ringwood only provides 416 parking spaces in the town centre, which is 2.9% of the population. With this amount of parking, there is a good chance that during peak periods, there is difficultly locating a parking space in the town centre.

Christchurch is one of only two towns included in the benchmarking exercise that offer a 1 hour parking tariff. The cost for one hour of parking on average across the town centre car parks is £0.90. This is marginally cheaper than Dorchester that have an average cost per hour of £1.00. The remaining towns from the benchmarking exercise have a 0-2 hour tariff in operation. This can increase the length of time visitors will spend in a town centre, as they seek to get the most value for their money.

When reviewing the 2-hour tariff, Christchurch is in a similar position to the percentage of spaces compared to the population. Two locations have a slightly cheaper 2-hour tariff, with Weymouth and Dorchester having a cost of £1.50 compared to Christchurch, which costs £1.70. Poole and Ringwood have a cost of £2.00, whereas Bournemouth has a cost of £2.50. Whilst the cost of parking in surrounding areas is a critical consideration when structing parking tariffs, the cost should be related to the town offering as well. With more trip generators, and attractions in Bournemouth compared to the other towns, there is suitable justification for the higher charge.

Based on the town centre offering, Christchurch, Poole, and Dorchester have an appropriate tariff. Weymouth has a number of trip generators and attractions, meaning their tariff could be increased with justification. Based on the offering within Ringwood, their charge appears slightly excessive, which may impact the number of visitors.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF CHRISTCHURCH TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the development of the Christchurch town centre parking study, an assessment of each town centre car park was undertaken to understand the current condition of the car park, which may inform recommendations provided within this report. Site visits were undertaken during November/December that included a non-market weekday, a market weekday, and a Saturday. This provided the opportunity to inspect the car parks in greater detail.

Each car park within the town centre is included below. The car park has been assessed against a set of criteria that was developed prior to the site visits to allow each car park to be scored, to provide a prioritisation list of sites that may require attention before others. The assessment criteria included the following considerations:

- **Location** – This is the score based on whether a user is likely to use this car park if other car parks are close to full occupancy. In addition, the score is based on whether the user is likely to use this car park if they have multiple trips.
- **Car park signage & road markings** – This is the quality of the existing signage within the car park and the condition of the road markings.
- **Lighting** – This is based on the amount of lighting provided for the car park.
- **Pedestrian access and safety**; - This is based on how safe the pedestrian access is and how many access points there are.
- **Vehicular access** - This is based on how many vehicle access points there are and how safe and useable they are for the driver.
- **Directional signage on approach to the car park** – How frequent and well positioned the vehicle directional and informational signage is on approach to the car park. This includes both static signs and Variable Message Signs.
- **Wayfinding to key destinations in or near the car park**; How frequent and well positioned the pedestrian informational signage within the close vicinity of the car park. This signage should be clear and specific in enabling the user to find onward locations.

- **Payment machines** – This is based on the grade of the existing payment machines located within the car park.
- **Overall condition of the car park –** This is the overall condition score based on how welcoming the facilities are.
- **Location to the primary destination** – This is how close the car park is to a primary destination.

For each of the above criteria, a score of 1-5 was provided. Table 4 details the scoring criteria.

Score	Assessment
1	Doesn't meet criteria at all
2	Below what is expected
3	Meets the expected criteria
4	Slightly above the expected criteria
5	Exceeds the expected criteria

Table 4 – Car park scoring table

4.2 CAR PARK ASSESSMENTS FOR TOWN CENTRE

4.2.1 BYPASS CAR PARK

Bypass is a car park that is located off the fountain roundabout within close proximity to the A35 and serves the visitors of the Waitrose situated on site. The car park is formal with line painted car park bays and various supplementary additional features such as priority spaces and payment machines. The car park has capacity for 202 vehicles with a designated area for long stay permit holders. The car park has a dual entrance and exit which follows out onto the fountain roundabout and subsequent A35.

The boundaries are adequate with pedestrian access points from different areas, including access through to the B3073. The signage for the car park is adequate with signage on the nearby road network. The signage onto further destinations is inadequate with no pedestrian wayfinding present.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Bypass	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	5	**28**

4.2.2 PIT SITE CAR PARK

Pit Site car park is located to the north of the Fountain roundabout near the A35 and serves the business located in the near vicinity. The car park is formalised with line marking and payment machines both of which are of poor quality. The car park has a capacity for 51 vehicles with a small allocation of 4 spaces designated as disabled parking. The car park has a small vehicle access and exit point along with various areas for pedestrian access.

The provision within the car park is adequate but not great and could be improved. The signage for the car park on the roads surrounding the location are good with various references to the capacity of the site by VMS. The signage for onward destinations is poor, albeit the location of the site dictates that the purpose of using this car park would be that the destination is known or very close to the site itself.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Pitsite	3	2	1	2	2	3	1	1	2	3	**20**

4.2.3 SAXON SQUARE CAR PARK

Saxon Square is the largest and only multi-levelled car park in Christchurch. It is located off the eastern extents of the Fountain roundabout and has a separate entrance and access off Millhams Street North. The car park is formalised with good road markings and adequate payment facilities located on both levels of the car park. There are multiple pedestrian access points onto both levels with a designated pedestrian pathway leading directly into the shopping area of the centre of Christchurch. The car park has capacity for a total of 265 vehicles.

The signage for the car park on the roads surrounding the location is adequate with several signs signposting the location of the car park. The signage for onward destinations is poor, although the car park is located in the heart of the town centre.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Saxon Square	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	3	5	**30**

4.2.4 BANK CLOSE CAR PARK

Bank Close car park is centrally located within Christchurch and is in a primary position for users of the High Street and the surrounding area. It is accessed off Sopers Lane, which is off the southwest side of the Fountain roundabout. The car park has capacity for a total of 156 vehicles and has only one vehicle entrance and exit point. Pedestrians have access points from two separate locations, one of which opens out directly onto the High Street.

The signage for onward destinations is poor, albeit the location of the site dictates that the purpose of using this car park would dictate that the destination would be known or very close to the site itself. The condition of the car park is adequate with specific improvements on road markings and payment machines being an action which would greatly improve the operation of the car park.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Bank Close	4	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	3	5	**29**

4.2.5 WICK LANE CAR PARK

Wick Lane car park is located centrally within Christchurch and is accessed off the one-way system between Church Lane and Wick Lane. The car park has capacity for 187 number vehicles and is situated within a short walking distance of the trip generators located along the High Street. There is one primary vehicle access and exit point with pedestrian access points from within the bordering greenspace areas.

The car park is on two same tier levels and has various on-site trip generators including office space and musical societies. The vehicle access is poor and there is very little signage for onward destinations. The condition of the car park is adequate with any future improvements likely to increase the attractiveness for use.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Wick Lane	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	**25**

4.2.6 WILLOW WAY CAR PARK

Willow Way car park is located to the southwest of Christchurch town centre. Located close to the quay it is situated just off Willow Drive and has an overall capacity for 61 vehicles, making this one of the smaller car parks in the town centre. The car park has one singular entrance and exit point. The overall condition of the car park is adequate with improvements to road markings, lighting, and parking infrastructure likely to make substantial improvements.

The signage for the car park is good with several signs indicating not only capacity but location. Due to the position of the car park, it is difficult to determine the primary use for car park users, which may mean there are a number of uses that attract visitors.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Willow Way	2	2	2	2	2	4	1	1	3	2	**21**

4.2.7 MAYORS MEAD CAR PARK

Mayors Mead car park has a capacity for 156 vehicles, and is located near the quay, west of a large greenspace area and park. It is accessed off Wick Lane by a singular entrance and exit point. It has two businesses located on site; River Shack Boats; and the Christchurch Rowing club. It is assumed that based on this and the location, Mayors Mead car park is a lot more popular during the summer months.

The overall condition of the car park is good with the parking infrastructure being of a suitable standard. The road markings and lighting are adequate to serve the needs and safety of the car park and the location is good as it serves multiple trip generators. There are various pedestrian access points both formal and informal that increases possible safety risks. Signage for the car park is poor with limited directional signage.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Mayors Mead	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	5	**27**

4.2.8 QUAY CAR PARK

Quay car park is a collection of on-street car parking bays located off Quay Lane. There are 21 parking spaces and they are positioned next to the quay itself. The user need appears to be various restaurants and small businesses located in the vicinity. The overall condition of the car park is good with adequate road markings and lighting to serve the safety needs of the users. The car parking infrastructure is of adequate quality to service the actions of visitors.

The car park is accessed of Quay Lane by singular entrance and exit point. There is some pedestrian walkways off-road which are safe for use and allow users to locate their destination safely. The signage both for the car park and for pedestrian wayfinding is poor with improvements to this likely to make substantial advancements to the overall useability of the parking location.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Quay	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	**23**

4.2.9 PRIORY CAR PARK

The priory car park is located to the south of Christchurch town centre and is on the site of the Christchurch Priory. It is located off Quay lane and accessed through a one-way system that runs through the south of the town centre. It is positioned to service the needs of visitors to the Priory and also the town centre and localised businesses. The car park has capacity for a total of 101 vehicles and overall it is in a good condition. The car park has many trees located within the car parks extent which creates issues with lighting and seasonal leaf shedding.

The car park infrastructure is of an adequate quality with attention needed to improve the road markings and lighting as previously discussed. The signage for the car park is adequate with both positional and capacity signage present. There are also some finger posts within close proximity, which aids pedestrians in finding their desired destination. The position of the car park is good with it being within close proximity to a multitude of different destinations.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Priory	4	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	5	**29**

4.2.10 BRIDGE STREET CAR PARK

Bridge Street car park is located directly off Bridge Street, which is just west of the River Avon. Located within a built area of businesses and residential houses, it has a total capacity for 40 vehicles. It serves the parking needs of the businesses located just around the car parking area and those wishing to visit the small cluster of businesses located along Bridge Street. The overall condition of the car park is adequate with road markings and lighting at a sufficient level to ensure that safety needs are met.

The car parking infrastructure is again adequate with any improvements in the near future ensuring that the useability of the car park is increased. The car park signage is adequate with signs located along Bridge Street. The pedestrian wayfinding signage is poor with no sufficient signs detailing how to get to onward destinations, which is important due to the location.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Bridge Street	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	**21**

4.2.11 LEISURE CENTRE WEST CAR PARK

The Leisure Centre West car park is located to the south of the Bridge Street car park. It is accessed from Bridge Street through a walkway that passes through the old council offices. For traffic, it is located Story Lane South, which is a junction off Bridge Street. The car park has capacity for 133 vehicles with most users of the car park either visiting the Leisure Centre or the bowls area or are workers for local businesses. Overall, the car park is of good quality, with clear road markings and a suitable lighting provision.

The payment machines are in adequate condition. The car park is accessed through a singular entrance and exit point and has various formal and informal pedestrian access points. To the south of the car park there is adjoining access to the River Avon for boat users and people wishing to use those facilities. The signage for the car park is adequate with some advanced directional signage present.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Leisure Centre (West)	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	5	**27**

4.2.12 LEISURE CENTRE EAST CAR PARK

The Leisure Centre East car park is further east than the Leisure Centre West car park, and as with the west car park is located off Story Lane South. The car park has capacity for 172 vehicles and serves the parking needs of visitors to the Leisure Centre the bowls club, and sports pitches. Similarly to the west car park the road markings and lighting are of sufficient level to serve the needs of the users and has an appropriate level of parking infrastructure.

The car park has many formal and informal pedestrian access points and has a separate entrance and exit point located off the local road network. The location of the car park is good for the desired location and allows users to park there from a multitude of different trip generators. There are bus stop facilities near the car park entrance and exit, which require extra attention from drivers to avoid the risk of collisions occurring.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Leisure Centre (East)	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	5	**27**

4.3 CAR PARK CONSULTATION SUMMARY

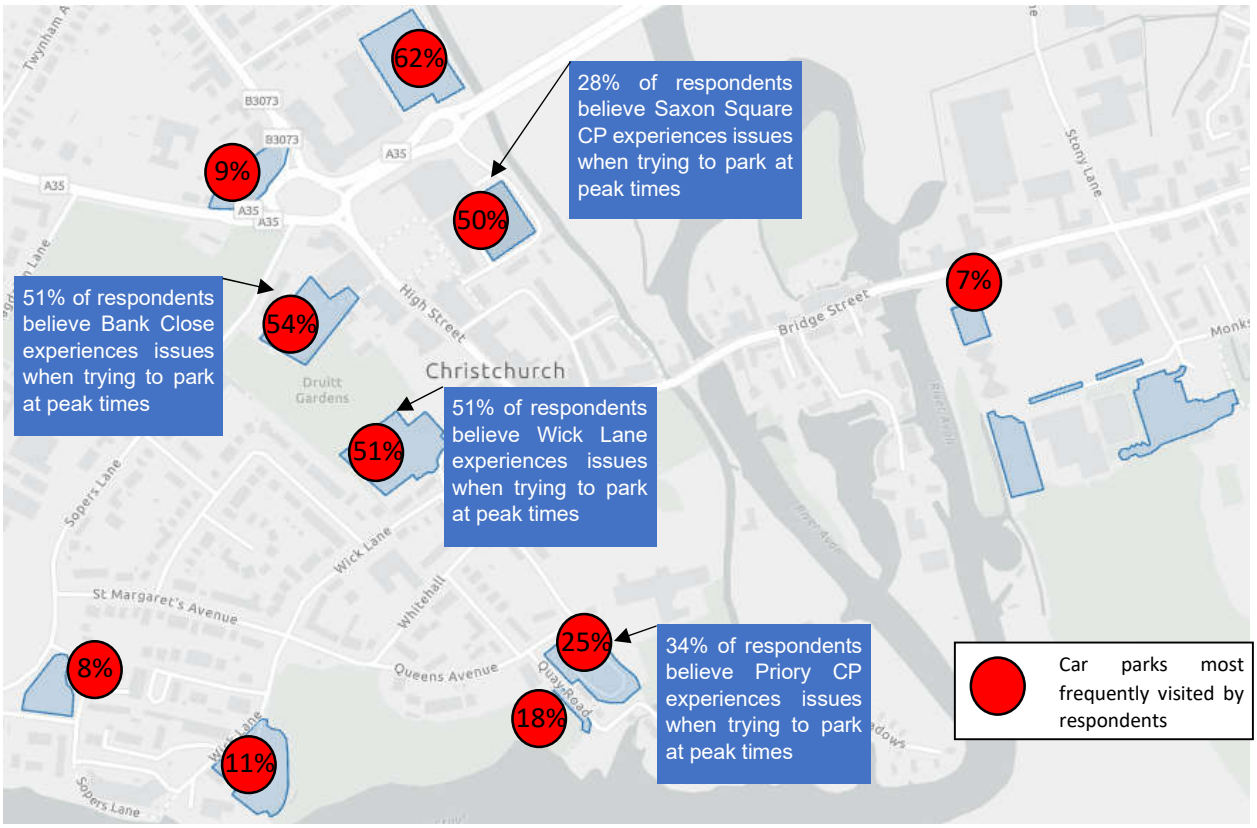


Figure 3 – Car park consultation information

A consultation was undertaken by the Town Council to gain understanding from residents on various topics within Christchurch. One of these topics was parking, which contributed to some worthwhile data. The above details each car park that was listed and if respondents visited them frequently. As the results above in figure 3 show, there are three car parks that had large numbers of respondents selecting them.

- Bank Close (54%)
- Wick Lane (51%)
- Saxon Square (50%)

Two of the three car parks above are also selected as the car parks that experience issues when trying to park at peak times.

- Bank Close (51%)
- Wick Lane (51%)
- Priory (34%)
- Saxon Square (28%)

This data is to be expected as there is a direct correlation between high occupancy and frequency of issues experienced.

4.4 CAR PARK TRANSACTION DATA

Once the project had commenced various samples of data were supplied to contribute to the overall understanding of the existing situation within Christchurch. One of these datasets was the transactions per car park.

Table 5 below details this information.

Car Parks		2017-18 Transactions	2018-19 Transactions	2019-20 Transactions	2020-21 Transactions
Bypass	Tkt Machine	257,037	256,761	251,875	154,942
	RingGo	8,852	11,036	17,093	25,485
	Total	265,889	267,797	268,968	180,427
Pitsite	Tkt Machine	14,105	11,936	10,100	4,635
	RingGo	1,068	2,985	3,733	3,049
	Total	15,173	14,921	13,833	7,684
Saxon Square	Tkt Machine	216,889	201,913	194,376	83,844
	RingGo	16,243	20,971	32,715	24,771
	Total	233,132	222,884	227,091	108,615
Bank Close	Tkt Machine	205,315	206,271	204,748	118,562
	RingGo	10,747	14,507	21,001	23,744
	Total	216,062	220,778	225,749	142,306
Wick Lane	Tkt Machine	173,120	157,859	147,697	50,555
	RingGo	18,809	24,324	31,215	20,584
	Total	191,929	182,183	178,912	71,139
Willow Way	Tkt Machine	14,707	13,707	15,134	9,699
	RingGo	1,435	2,383	3,446	3,917
	Total	16,142	16,090	18,580	13,616
Priory	Tkt Machine	72,075	68,964	60,739	30,294
	RingGo	8,853	13,646	17,093	21,181
	Total	80,928	82,610	77,832	51,475
Bridge Street	Tkt Machine	26,056	23,417	22,025	8,704
	RingGo	3,187	4,514	6,232	5,659

	Total	29,243	27,931	28,257	14,363
Leisure Centre	Tkt Machine	78,888	78,715	74,680	18,212
	RingGo	6,036	8,795	12,903	7,381
	Total	84,924	87,510	87,583	25,593

Table 5– Transactions per car park for a designated period

The above data shows that most of the larger car parks are preforming well in regards to transaction totals for the years detailed. Some smaller car parks have low transaction totals. The consideration of the Covid-19 pandemic must be taken into effect when looking at the overall transaction values for years prior to now.

Overall the table highlights the popularity for car parks such as Bypass, Saxon Square, and Bank Close. As previously detailed within the consultation data by others these are the car parks that residents use the most.

4.4 SUMMARY OF TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS

When reviewing the town centre car parks collectively, the provision in place is suitable for use by a variety of users. Generally speaking the surface, road markings, and signage within the car parks are adequate and should not cause any issues for car park users. There is a mixture of payment machines, some of which require replacement sooner than others. Most car parks have designated lighting, which improves the conspicuously and safety of the car park. For those that haven't got designated lighting (i.e. Pit Site), there is risk users will not visit these car parks.

The amount of directional signage within the town is above the level expected for a town the size of Christchurch. However, much of this signage is confusing and would benefit from improvement. This includes Variable Message Signs, and static signs.

Table 6 below summarises all scores for the car parks that are within Christchurch.

Name of Car Park	Scoring Criteria										
	Location	Road Markings	Lighting	Pedestrian Access	Vehicular Access	Signage (Car Park)	Signage (To further destinations)	Payment Machines	Overall Condition	Location to Primary Destination	**Total**
Bypass	2	3	3	3	2	3	1	3	3	5	**28**
Pitsite	3	2	1	2	2	3	1	1	2	3	**20**
Saxon Square	4	3	2	4	2	3	2	2	3	5	**30**
Bank Close	4	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	3	5	**29**
Wick Lane	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	**25**
Willow Way	2	2	2	2	2	4	1	1	3	2	**21**
Mayors Mead	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	5	**27**
Quay	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	**23**
Priory	4	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	5	**29**
Bridge Street	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	2	**21**
Leisure Centre (West)	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	5	**27**
Leisure Centre (East)	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	3	3	5	**27**

Table 6 – Car park scoring against specific criteria

5.0 PARKING SURVEYS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the process of undertaking a parking study, there is a need to undertake parking occupancy surveys. These surveys involve visiting parking locations at various times of the day on weekdays and a Saturday, to collect data on usage in each car park. Collating information of vehicles that are present over several survey times i.e. 10am, 12noon, 2pm, and 4pm, it's possible to determine the turnover of spaces in each car park and whether vehicles are undertaking short-stay or long-stay parking. This is important as the designation of car park spaces may need adjusting to cater for the demand i.e. more long-stay parking spaces or more short-stay parking spaces. Alternatively, it may highlight any concerns that need addressing such as low turnover of spaces that may impact the town centre local economy, as there are no parking charges to encourage turnover of spaces.

In line with the approach adopted elsewhere in this study, private car parks for the use of specific businesses (e.g. private staff car parks for offices) have not been surveyed or taken into account within the occupancy analysis. These car parks are outside of the scope of this project but nevertheless will still impact upon traffic flows, congestion, air quality, and, in many ways, demand at public car parks. In an ideal situation, the parking survey results should demonstrate a higher turnover of spaces in the core town centre car parks that would include Bank Close, and Saxton Square (upper level).

5.2 PARKING OCCUPANCY SURVEYS

Parking occupancy surveys have been undertaken for all parking locations described in section 4.2 of this report, which includes all council owned off-street car parks. The surveys were undertaken during November 2022, and were undertaken during term time to provide regular data, and included weekdays and a Saturday. The Saturday survey was undertaken on Saturday 26th November to co-inside with the Christmas market and light switch-on, when it would be likely to demonstrate higher parking demand. The weekday surveys were undertaken on a Monday (28th) to understand what the parking demand is like on a market day, and a Thursday (30th) to provide a comparison to a market day.

Surveys were undertaken at various times of the day, which included 10am, 12pm, 2pm, and 4pm on the weekdays to understand the fluctuating parking pattens within the town centre. On the Saturday, this was adjusted to take into consideration the likely peak period

of between 5pm and 6pm as part of the Christmas market and the light switch-on. Undertaking the surveys at various times also enables us to understand the likely reasons for parking. For instance, if a vehicle is present between 8am and 4pm it's likely to be a commuter or a resident. If a vehicle is present at just one survey, it's likely to be a visitor.

Table 7-9 provide the occupancy data for each of the parking locations below. Colours have been used to demonstrate the parking locations that are at the highest occupancy rates. Parking locations that are occupied between 75-84% are shown in yellow. At this level of occupancy, it should be possible to locate a parking space but will appear busy. Parking locations that are occupied between 85-94% are shown in amber. At this level, it may be difficult to locate a parking space, and it may be necessary to travel around the area to identify a space. This level of occupancy can cause some frustration with drivers.

Parking locations that are occupied at and above 95% are shown in red. At this level of occupancy, it will be very difficult to locate a parking space, especially in large car parks where it may require drivers to view every individual section to locate a space. With priority spaces such as disabled spaces, quite often there isn't any standard spaces available as it is only priority spaces available. If a parking location is regularly reaching and exceeding 85% occupancy, it may be necessary to consider providing greater parking provision or implementing measures that may discourage single occupancy journeys to car parks.

Table 7 provides occupancy data for each parking locations from the Saturday site survey.

Car Park	Spaces (S)	10am		12:30pm		3pm		5pm	
		Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ
Bargates	15	12	80	13	87	10	67	7	47
Pit Site	58	32	55	21	36	18	31	14	24
Quay	21	14	67	18	86	8	38	9	43
Willow	61	23	38	21	34	18	30	26	43
Bridge Street	40	16	40	25	63	29	73	30	75
Mayors Mead	156	14	9	25	16	23	15	26	17
Bank Close	156	129	83	133	85	142	91	151	97
Bypass	202	118	58	107	53	97	48	70	35
Wick Lane	184	164	89	165	90	167	91	161	88
Priory	101	98	97	99	98	83	82	80	79
Leisure Centre East	172	76	44	19	11	12	7	4	2
Leisure Centre West	119	57	48	34	29	21	18	14	12
Saxton Square	257	142	55	163	63	153	60	159	62

Table 7 – Parking occupancy data for Christchurch town centre on a Saturday

Table 8 provides occupancy data for each parking locations from the Monday site survey, which is a market day.

Car Park	Spaces (S)	10am		12pm		2pm		4pm	
		Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ
Bargates	15	15	100	11	73	10	67	7	47
Pit Site	58	50	86	56	97	41	71	35	60
Quay	21	9	43	6	29	7	33	4	19
Willow	61	32	52	33	54	14	36	10	39
Bridge Street	40	22	55	20	50	12	30	8	20
Mayors Mead	156	Car park closed during survey date							
Bank Close	156	122	78	120	77	86	55	24	15
Bypass	202	115	57	79	39	70	35	59	29
Wick Lane	184	176	96	146	78	83	45	67	36
Priory	101	77	76	68	67	35	35	21	21
Leisure Centre East	172	73	42	70	41	22	13	6	3
Leisure Centre West	119	44	37	45	38	19	16	8	7
Saxton Square	257	171	67	110	43	75	29	46	18

Table 8 – Parking occupancy data for Christchurch town centre on a Monday (market day)

Table 9 provides occupancy data for each parking locations from the Thursday site survey.

Car Park	Spaces (S)	10am		12pm		2pm		4pm	
		Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ	Occ	% Occ
Bargates	15	11	73	12	80	13	87	10	67
Pit Site	58	55	95	55	95	53	91	48	83
Quay	21	8	38	13	62	9	43	6	29
Willow	61	32	52	31	51	22	36	24	39
Bridge Street	40	21	53	21	53	25	63	15	38
Mayors Mead	156	12	8	18	12	19	12	23	15
Bank Close	156	114	73	101	65	109	70	42	27
Bypass	202	97	48	85	42	88	44	67	33
Wick Lane	184	111	60	114	62	122	66	97	53
Priory	101	49	49	64	63	59	58	55	54
Leisure Centre East	172	73	42	70	41	34	20	38	22
Leisure Centre West	119	38	32	44	37	38	32	35	29
Saxton Square	257	126	49	134	52	89	35	63	25

Table 9– Parking occupancy data for Christchurch town centre on a Thursday (non-market day)

The key headline from tables 7-9 demonstrate that overall across the town centre, there is sufficient parking capacity to supply the demand. Whilst it has to be acknowledged that at peak periods the capacity may become an issue, taking this data as a standard neutral

week, increasing the number of parking spaces shouldn't be a priority. From the data above, the peak parking demand occurs between 10am and 12:00pm on a Monday with an average occupancy rate of 66%. This means that across all parking spaces within the town centre, there are up to 480 available spaces. Interestingly, it's often the case for peak parking periods to occur on a Saturday. This suggests the market brings additional visitors into the town centre, which is reinforced by the lower occupancy rates on the Thursday.

There is noticeable fluctuation between the average parking occupancy rates when comparing the three surveys together. Both the Saturday, and Monday survey demonstrate peak periods at the first survey. Each survey thereafter provides a lower average occupancy rate. The Thursday survey demonstrates a higher peak at 12pm, with the 2pm survey providing similar occupancy rates to the 10am survey.

The Monday survey demonstrates a high drop-off of occupancy by the 4pm survey. In comparison, the Saturday, and Thursday survey demonstrate much higher occupancy rates still during the last survey time. On the Saturday, this will be due to the Christmas market and light switch-on, which generated a lot of additional traffic in the town from 4pm onwards. It's unknown why the Thursday survey demonstrates high occupancy rates still. Traditionally, Thursdays are renowned for late night Christmas shopping on the lead up to Christmas. As this survey was undertaken on the 1st December, there may be a higher demand later in the afternoon with visitors taking advantage of the shops remaining open for longer periods into the evening.

The data collected from the Monday survey demonstrates the highest rates of reduction between survey times. There is a 13% reduction between the 2pm and 4pm survey, and a 9% reduction between the 10am and 12pm survey. In comparison, 8% is the highest reduction on a Saturday (between 12:30pm and 3pm), and 9% is the highest reduction on a Thursday (between 2pm and 4pm). Thursday between 10am and 12pm is the only survey where there is an increase in occupancy, which was 3%.

Figure 4 illustrates the average parking occupancy rates for each of the car parks within Christchurch town centre over the two-hour survey periods to illustrate the parking behaviours on Saturday, weekday market day, and weekday non-market day.

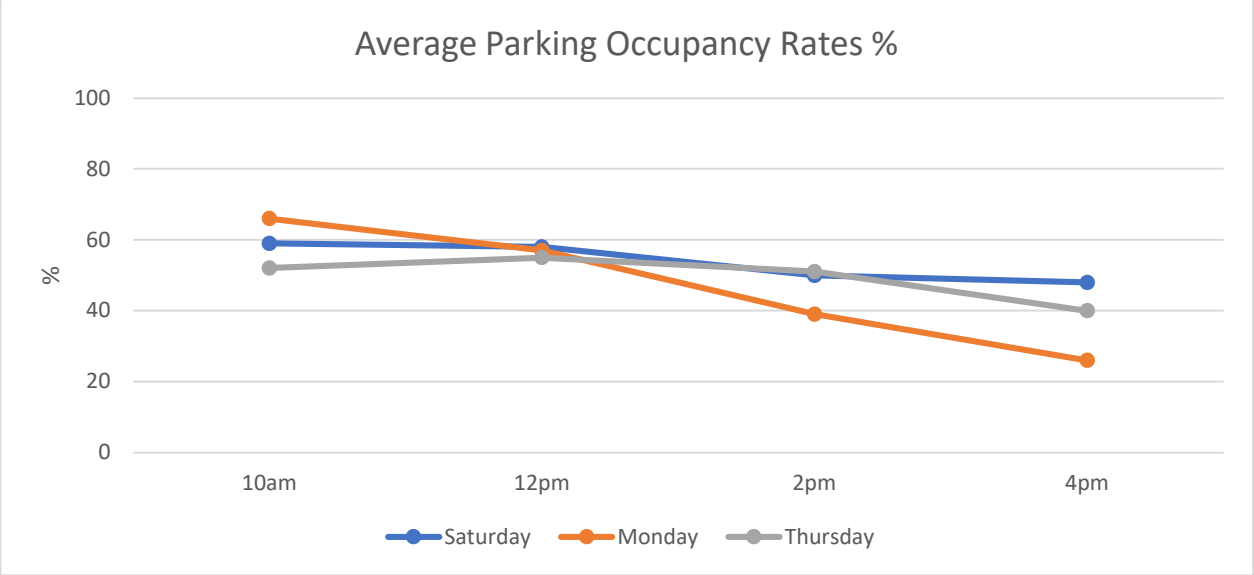


Figure 4 – Average parking occupancy rates in Christchurch town centre

The data demonstrates that there is a certain degree of consistent parking across the town centre with a number of occupancy levels within the 50-60%. Whilst this data suggests that there is plenty of parking available, there are some factors that need further consideration. For instance, the most desirable parking locations within Christchurch are the car parks closest to the town centre, such as Bank Close, and Wick Lane. Analysing the data for these parking locations demonstrates that there is much more demand with occupancy rates in excess of 90% in both parking locations during the peak periods. There are also car parks with lower capacity rates, which are located on the outskirts of the town centre, such as Mayors Mead, and Bridge Street.

This demonstrates that the location of parking is critical for visitors as when occupancy rates reach 85% it can be considered difficult to locate a parking space. This means that visitors are likely prepared to risk visiting a car park that may be at or near capacity rather than visiting a car park with a lot more availability. The car parks with the higher demand also appear to have a high turnover of spaces. This suggests that a high proportion of visitors are able to complete their trips within a shorter term timeframe.

5.3 DURATION OF STAY SURVEYS

Duration of stay parking analysis was undertaken to understand the turnover of spaces. This plays an important role in the town centre economy. Data suggests if the turnover of spaces is too low it is likely that parking charges are too low, and visitors and shoppers are happy to loiter and may not spend the same amount of money as those who are visiting the town centre for shorter periods of time. If the turnover of spaces is too high it

is likely that parking charges are high, the tariff structure isn't suitable, or the town centre offering isn't fit for purpose and visitors don't have the same opportunities to spend money.

To enable the identification of the turnover of car parking spaces, vehicle registration plate data is noted during each survey. This was collected during the occupancy surveys, so this data was collected at 10am, 12:30pm, 3pm, and 5pm on the Saturday survey, and 10am, 12pm, 2pm, and 4pm on the weekday surveys. Business owners and employees are likely to be located in the car park for all four of these surveys, or at least three surveys. Vehicles that are present for more than two hours but less than four hours are highly likely to be visitors or shoppers. Vehicles that are present for less than two hours are likely to be locals that will visit the town centre frequently.

For each of the car parks shown below the total number of vehicles recorded in parking spaces has been demonstrated (acts). The higher the number of acts in relation to the number of spaces, the greater the car park turnover is during the day.

If a car park records fewer parking acts per bay than overall spaces, it is usually a good indication that the car park is not performing from an operational perspective, or the car park is a designated long-stay car park. It is likely that without the car park there wouldn't be a significant impact on the town centre and other town centre car parks. The number of parking acts should reduce for each time period i.e. there should be more parking acts between 0-2 hours than 2-4 hours. The only caveat with this is parking acts over 6 hours as this covers more than a two hour window.

In Christchurch town centre, there are four car parks that have fewer parking acts per bay than overall spaces on a Saturday. These car parks include Willow, Mayors Mead, Leisure Centre East, and West. Willow car park had 57 parking acts across the day, and provides 61 spaces, which means this is just below the threshold identified. Mayors Mead car park has the lowest ratio of acts against spaces. Based on the location, likely usage, and historic data from the 2017 surveys (from the summer), it's likely that this car park will be subject to higher usage during the summer months.

There are three car parks that have fewer parking acts per bay than overall spaces on a Monday. These car parks include Quay, Leisure Centre East, and Leisure Centre West. It should be noted that Mayors Mead car park was closed during this survey to enable drainage works to be undertaken so no data is available. Quay had a relatively high ratio of acts against spaces on the Saturday, so it's quite surprising to see this parking location

below the 1.0 threshold. Although Leisure Centre East was below the 1.0 threshold, there were 166 parking acts in a 172 space car park, meaning this is just below the threshold.

There are four car parks that have fewer parking acts per bay than overall spaces on a Thursday. These car parks include Willow, Mayors Mead, Leisure Centre East, and West. Willow, Leisure Centre East, and West car parks were all just below the 1.0 threshold, whereas Mayors Mead car park was well below the 1.0 threshold.

Across all three survey dates, only five car parks fall below the 1.0 threshold. Only Quay could be classified as a designated town centre parking location. Willow car park is located in an area that makes it challenging to provide a clear designation in a similar method it can be done for other car parks based on location i.e. town centre. This is likely to be a contributory factor to these car parks falling below the 1.0 threshold.

Table 10 provides a breakdown of parking acts for each of the off-street car parks within Christchurch town centre from the Saturday survey.

Car Park	Acts (A)	Spaces (S)	A/S	0-2 Hours		2-4 Hours		4-6 Hours		>6 Hours	
				No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts
Bargates	15	15	1	2	13	5	33	2	13	6	40
Pit Site	60	58	1.03	32	53	15	25	6	10	7	12
Quay	35	21	1.67	21	60	5	14	2	6	7	20
Willow	57	61	0.93	23	40	10	18	16	28	8	14
Bridge Street	61	40	1.53	33	54	19	31	6	10	3	5
Mayors Mead	72	156	0.46	56	78	12	17	4	6	0	0
Bank Close	452	156	2.90	384	85	43	10	20	4	5	1
Bypass	392	202	1.94	360	92	28	7	4	1	0	0
Wick Lane	412	184	2.24	210	51	112	27	67	16	23	6
Priory	183	101	1.81	82	45	53	29	31	17	17	9
Leisure Centre East	98	172	0.57	86	88	10	10	2	2	0	0
Leisure Centre West	92	119	0.77	65	71	21	23	4	4	2	2
Saxton Square	376	257	1.46	228	61	101	27	35	9	12	3

Table 10 – Parking acts for all town centre car parks in Christchurch on a Saturday

Table 11 provides a breakdown of parking acts for each of the off-street car parks within Christchurch town centre from the Monday (market day) survey.

Car Park	Acts (A)	Spaces (S)	A/S	0-2 Hours		2-4 Hours		4-6 Hours		>6 Hours	
				No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts
Bargates	21	15	1.40	13	62	1	5	1	5	6	29
Pit Site	64	58	1.10	7	11	8	13	15	23	34	53
Quay	14	21	0.67	8	57	2	14	2	14	2	14
Willow	86	61	1.41	46	53	35	41	2	2	3	3
Bridge Street	40	40	1.00	28	70	5	13	4	10	3	8
Mayors Mead	Car park closed during survey date										
Bank Close	326	156	2.09	307	94	13	4	4	1	2	1
Bypass	290	202	1.44	257	89	24	8	8	3	1	0
Wick Lane	298	184	1.62	227	76	31	10	19	6	21	7
Priory	154	101	1.52	124	81	14	9	10	6	6	4
Leisure Centre East	166	172	0.97	131	79	19	11	13	8	3	2
Leisure Centre West	74	119	0.62	45	61	14	19	7	9	8	11
Saxton Square	297	257	1.16	220	74	31	10	28	9	18	6

Table 11 – Parking acts for all town centre car parks in Christchurch on a Monday (market day)

Table 12 provides a breakdown of parking acts for each of the off-street car parks within Christchurch town centre from the Thursday (non-market day) survey.

Car Park	Acts (A)	Spaces (S)	A/S	0-2 Hours		2-4 Hours		4-6 Hours		>6 Hours	
				No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts	No. Acts	% Acts
Bargates	19	15	1.27	8	42	3	16	3	16	5	26
Pit Site	81	58	1.40	15	19	18	22	19	23	29	36
Quay	28	21	1.33	23	82	4	14	0	0	1	4
Willow	58	61	0.95	30	52	15	26	5	9	8	14
Bridge Street	44	40	1.10	28	64	8	18	3	7	5	11
Mayors Mead	51	122	0.42	40	78	8	16	2	4	1	2
Bank Close	333	156	2.13	301	90	31	9	1	0	0	0
Bypass	303	202	1.50	269	89	19	6	12	4	3	1
Wick Lane	322	184	1.75	237	74	47	15	20	6	18	6
Priory	141	101	1.40	85	60	31	22	15	11	10	7
Leisure Centre East	166	172	0.97	133	80	25	15	4	2	4	2
Leisure Centre West	96	119	0.81	67	70	18	19	8	8	3	3
Saxton Square	293	257	1.14	231	79	25	9	23	8	14	5

Table 12 – Parking acts for all town centre car parks in Christchurch on a Thursday (non-market day)

The number of parking acts (number of vehicles using the car park) are recorded per space, which can indicate the popularity of a car park, or the number of long-stay parking

acts occupying spaces. The nature of the car park will impact the turnover of spaces as a car park usually has a primary use. For instance, Bank Close is likely to be popular for users that wish to park for short-stay shopping visits whereas Pit-Site is more likely to be used for long-stay visits due to its use by employees and businesses in the town.

From the data collected during the Saturday survey, Bank Close has the highest number of parking acts per space with 452 parking acts over the survey period. Wick Lane has the second highest number of parking acts per space with 412 parking acts over the survey period. Bypass has the third highest number of parking acts per space with 392 parking acts over the survey period. All three of these car parks are short-stay car parks, two of which are within the core town centre vicinity. Although Bypass is located across the A35, which acts as a natural boundary for the core town centre, the turnover of spaces is high as the primary use of this car park is to service the Waitrose superstore.

From the data collected during the Monday survey, Bank Close has the highest number of parking acts per space with 326 parking acts over the survey period. Wick Lane has the second highest number of parking acts per space with 298 parking acts over the survey period. Although there were more parking acts in Bypass car park (290) compared to Priory car park (154), the ratio was higher in Priory car park as this is car park is smaller than Bypass car park, which increases the ratio per space. Priory car park along with Bank Close, and Wick Lane car parks are all within the core town centre vicinity.

From the data collected during the Thursday survey, Bank Close has the highest number of parking acts per space with 333 parking acts over the survey period. Wick Lane has the second highest number of parking acts per space with 322 parking acts over the survey period. Bypass has the third highest number of parking acts per space with 303 parking acts over the survey period. This demonstrates that Bank Close has the highest number of parking acts per space for all three surveys, and Wick Lane has the second highest number of parking acts per space for all three surveys. Along with Bypass, these car parks can be considered the most in-demand short-stay car parks in the town centre.

It should be noted that Saxton Square would also be one of the most in-demand short-stay car parks in the town centre, if the surface level and lower level were separated. As the lower-level is long-stay parking, this does drastically reduce the acts per space.

5.4 2017 SURVEY COMPARISON

Since the 2017 parking strategy in Christchurch town centre was completed, there has been a number of significant events that has occurred that may impact parking behaviours in town centres. Most notably, the Covid-19 pandemic that resulted in drastically reduced visitors into town centres due to lock downs, and restrictions. From March 2020 when the pandemic began until Spring 2022, it can be argued there was limited time when a consistent travel patten was happening. During this time, there were two national lockdowns that lasted several months, and restrictions that impacted the number of people that could be in the same environment. This would have a noticeable impact on parking.

In addition to this, technology has enabled far more activities to be carried out from home. Working from home has remained at a high-level since the pandemic, and there has been a huge increase in the purchasing of goods online, such as food, clothes, and electronic. The impact of this has been a reduction in the number of visitors travelling to town centres to purchase goods such as this. Town centre economies has started to shift from the purchasing of goods towards more entertainment, restaurants, and coffee shops.

There has been other events that will have impacted visitors travelling into town centres. The cost of living crisis, and the increase in fuel prices would have resulted in a reduction in town centre visits, especially due to the improvements in technology, allowing more to be done online. Whilst it's too early to fully understand the consequences of these events, it's unlikely that parking pattens will be the same as those taking place in 2017.

It should be noted however, that there has likely been some positives for Christchurch as a result of these events. Since the pandemic, there has been a sharp increase in "staycations" with less people travelling abroad. As an attractive holiday destination, it's likely that Christchurch will have seen an increase in tourism during the summer months.

To better understand the impact of the above, a comparison has been undertaken between the surveys carried out in 2017 as part of the parking strategy work, and the data collected during this car park study. It should be noted that the surveys undertaken in 2017 were carried out in the summer months. Although there is a noticeable increase in town centre visits on the approach to Christmas, it's highly unlikely to be relative to the visits that occur during the summer months, as Christchurch is a popular holiday destination.

Table 13 provides the results of the Saturday survey carried out as part of this study, and the results of the Saturday 2017 survey carried out as part of the strategy development.

Car Park	Spaces (S)	10am		12:30pm		3pm		5pm	
		% 2017	% Occ	% 2017	% Occ	% 2017	% Occ	% 2017	% Occ
Bargates	15	28	80	61	87	55	67	41	47
Pit Site	58	20	55	25	36	30	31	21	24
Quay	21	75	67	100	86	95	38	60	43
Willow	61	57	38	67	34	74	30	57	43
Bridge Street	40	44	40	100	63	92	73	64	75
Mayors Mead	156	52	9	91	16	96	15	71	17
Bank Close	156	98	83	64	85	84	91	75	97
Bypass	202	92	58	94	53	88	48	89	35
Wick Lane	184	66	89	80	90	96	91	74	88
Priory	101	100	97	100	98	99	82	72	79
Leisure Centre East	172	38	44	45	11	37	7	33	2
Leisure Centre West	119	78	48	76	29	74	18	55	12
Saxton Square	257	69	55	72	63	72	60	61	62

Table 13 - Comparison between Saturday 2022 and Saturday 2017 surveys

In table 13, the survey with the higher occupancy rate has been highlighted in red for each of the four survey times across the day. There is a much higher rate of car parks from the 2022 survey having the higher occupancy compared to the 2017 survey during the 5pm survey. This is due to the Christmas market and light switch-on, which bought considerable numbers of residents and visitors into the town centre.

The results of this comparison demonstrate that on the whole, car park occupancy was much higher in the summer 2017 than it was in November 2022. As stated above, car park demand will be higher in the summer months as a tourist destination. Although the town centre may be as busy, it's likely there will be more residents visiting on the lead up to Christmas. Many of these residents may live close enough to the town centre to walk.

Bargates and Pit Site are the only two car parks that demonstrate higher occupancy rates across all four survey times from the recent 2022 surveys. Bargates cannot be compared to the 2017 survey as the car park is closed, and it is now just a small parking area providing 15 spaces as oppose to the full car park that provided 74 spaces in 2017. Wick Lane, and Bank Close car parks provided higher occupancy rates in three of the four survey times from the 2022 survey. These are the two car parks with the highest turnover of spaces, and are both located in the core town centre.

The car park that demonstrates the highest fluctuation in occupancy rates between the 2017 survey and 2022 survey is Mayors Mead. This peaks at a 81% difference, which

occurred at the 3pm survey. In 2017 the car park was 96% occupied at 3pm, whereas in 2022 the car park was only 15% occupied at 3pm. As stated above, Mayors Mead car park appears to be car park designated for the summer with access to the River Stour, and the Christchurch Rowing Club located directly off the car park.

Leisure Centre West, and Bypass are a further two car parks that demonstrate high levels of fluctuation between the two survey years. Leisure Centre West car park had a peak occupancy rate of 78% on the Saturday in 2017, whereas the peak during the 2022 survey was only 48%. Although 30% is a high fluctuation, this increased to 56% at the 3pm survey, where the occupancy rate was 74% in 2017, and only 18% in 2022. Bypass car park was consistently subject to high usage during the 2017, ranging from 88% at its lowest, and 94% at its highest. In comparison, during the 2022 survey, the usage did not exceed 58%. This reinforces the change in behaviours with online shopping much more popular now than it was in 2017. The cost of living crisis is also likely to have an impact.

Table 14 provides the results of the Monday survey carried out as part of this study, and the results of the Monday 2017 survey carried out as part of the strategy development.

Car Park	Spaces (S)	10am		12:30pm		3pm		5pm	
		% 2017	% Occ	% 2017	% Occ	% 2017	% Occ	% 2017	% Occ
Bargates	15	26	100	28	73	31	67	19	47
Pit Site	58	68	86	71	97	72	71	61	60
Quay	21	25	43	95	29	75	33	10	19
Willow	61	51	52	54	54	59	36	46	39
Bridge Street	40	53	55	55	50	58	30	40	20
Bank Close	156	79	78	83	77	90	55	72	15
Bypass	202	91	57	94	39	86	35	78	29
Wick Lane	184	57	96	70	78	53	45	28	36
Priory	101	52	76	62	67	67	35	16	21
Leisure Centre East	172	58	42	51	41	43	13	61	3
Leisure Centre West	119	89	37	89	38	80	16	60	7
Saxton Square	257	49	67	43	43	40	29	37	18

Table 14- Comparison between Monday 2022 and Saturday 2017 surveys

The results of this comparison demonstrate that on the whole, car park occupancy was much higher in the summer 2017 than it was in November 2022. Apart from Bargates, there wasn't a single car park that demonstrated higher occupancy rates during all the 2022 surveys. There were two car parks provided higher occupancy rates in three of the

four survey times from the 2022 survey. These two car parks included Wick Lane, and Priory. Both these car parks are core town centre car parks with a good turnover of spaces.

The car park that demonstrates the highest fluctuation in occupancy rates between the 2017 survey and 2022 survey is Leisure Centre West. This peaks at a 64% difference, which occurred at the 3pm survey. In 2017 the car park was 80% occupied at 3pm, whereas in 2022 the car park was only 16% occupied at 3pm. It's likely that Mayors Mead car park would also be subject to high fluctuation but the car park was closed during the 2022 survey on the Monday. Therefore, it hasn't been included in this survey comparison.

Bypass and Leisure Centre East are a further two car parks that demonstrate high levels of fluctuation between the two survey years. Similarly to the Saturday data from 2017, Bypass car park was consistently subject to high usage, ranging from 78% at its lowest, and 94% at its highest. In comparison, during the 2022 survey, the usage did not exceed 57%. Leisure Centre East car park had a peak occupancy rate of 61% on the Saturday in 2017, whereas the peak during the 2022 survey was only 42%. At the survey time where the 61% figure was recorded in 2017, the equivalent 2022 survey was only 3%.

The data contained in table 14 does highlight a greater number of car parks from the 2022 surveys with higher occupancy compared to the Saturday data. This suggests that whilst Saturdays in the summer months is more popular than the winter months, there is less of a difference on Mondays. This is likely to be impacted by the market. The 2017 survey did not include a Thursday survey, so it isn't possible to compare these figures. However, as it appears that the higher usage towards the end of the day may be due to Thursdays being the traditional day for late night Christmas shopping, this may skew the results.

Although there is a fairly even split between the 2017 and 2022 peak car park occupancy rates across three of the four survey times, there is a noticeable difference at the 2pm survey time. At this time, Bargates is the only parking location that had a higher occupancy rate from the 2022 surveys, which is due to the closure of the main car park. It is unknown why there is a much more consistent occupancy rate from the 2017 survey at this time in particular. Not only this, but the fluctuation is also much higher at this time. Across all car parks (apart from Bargates), the average fluctuation is 30% between 2017 and 2022. During the other survey times, the fluctuation ranges from 2% to 22%.

6.0 FORECASTING FUTURE PARKING DEMAND

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The car parking supply in Christchurch town centre overall is currently adequate for the demand. Although there are some car parks at or over capacity, there is sufficient parking spaces across the town centre to cater for demand. It is acknowledged that parking pressure may be experienced at peak times i.e. during the summer holidays, but this doesn't justify the need to consider additional parking capacity at this stage. If parking pressure begins to increase over the short-term, consideration should be given to the spatial zoning of car parks within the town centre, reviewing the designation based on the duration of stay data, or reviewing the parking tariff charges and structure of the charges.

Whilst there isn't a need to increase parking supply within Christchurch town centre based on the current demand, it may be necessary to increase the supply in the future based on increased vehicles entering the town centre. With likely development opportunities along with the scope for car ownership to increase, it's probable that the demand on parking is likely to increase in future years.

6.2 METHODOLOGY

To assist the development of car park studies, strategies and transport planning projects that consider the impact of traffic in the future, the Department for Transport have developed a tool that assists in the forecasting of traffic growth. TEMPro (Version 8.0) is a software programme designed for estimating growth in traffic. It is based on predictions of future housing, population, car ownership, trip rates and jobs in and around the relevant area. It is a model that is based on origin and destinations, and therefore it also takes into account general growth from surrounding areas and then predicts how this growth will affect the relevant area. The software produces growth factors for a relevant area based on specified baseline and future years.

Any forecasts about future travel behaviour are subject to levels of uncertainty because of the sheer numbers of contributory factors and unforeseen circumstances, but the use of the DfT's traffic growth forecasts is considered to be the best available tool to make these predictions. It may be advisable to have contingencies in place that reduce the risk

of future forecasts being higher or lower than forecast and regular reviews of town centre parking would help to steer the strategy in the right direction.

Estimating future parking demand is not a straightforward exercise as it is influenced by factors including:

- The availability of parking – plentiful supply means the attractiveness of driving to a location increases whereas, conversely, if parking is in short supply, drivers may travel by an alternative mode or may even be discouraged from visiting an area altogether. Furthermore, the more plentiful the parking supply, the cheaper the charges levied are likely to be thereby increasing demand further. It is therefore difficult to determine whether any latent demand exists in such circumstances;
- Sustainable travel options – if attractive alternatives to the private car are available, people are more likely to use them and be less reliant upon car use thereby reducing demand for parking. However, it is noted that the travel requirements of some people mean that they cannot use sustainable transport options and this can limit the effectiveness of this factor. It should also be noted that town centre trips often result in the purchasing of goods that may be difficult to transport using sustainable transport;
- Parking charges – if parking charges are too high, people may be put off from driving to an area. They may choose to travel by an alternative mode, go elsewhere or may be discouraged from visiting an area altogether. Conversely, charges that are too low may result in an overreliance upon car use to access the town that may result in detrimental environmental and social impacts;
- Growth of the internet – an increasing number of everyday tasks can now be undertaken without having to travel. Additionally, the internet provides information on the location and price of parking spaces, their availability, if the appropriate technology has been implemented and it enables the development of new initiatives such as driveway rental, car sharing and bike hire. As the internet continues to evolve this will impact upon travel patterns and parking demand;
- Population growth and relocation – as population increases and moves, demand for goods and services will increase and change. These people will be free to travel where they like and will not necessarily choose their closest destination.

In addition to factors likely to influence demand, several issues are likely to influence the supply of parking spaces. Foremost amongst them is the need to consider how and where potential development proposals might reduce the supply or alter the location of public parking. This can have significant impacts on a town centre, and the local economy.

The TEMPRO growth tool is developed by the Department for Transport (DFT) which provides for growth projections used in transport models. The tool considers all contributing factors including population growth and car ownership. The data has been applied to the surveyed data to project future parking demand within the town centre for a 15-year period up to 2037. The growth in car ownership within Christchurch has been applied, rather than trip end growth, as the projected growth is greater. The predicted growth in parking demand is shown in table 15 and table 16. The figures shown in the tables are base level figures based on growth of the existing situation. Further improvements in Christchurch town centre will result in an increase in numbers.

From…	To…	Origin Trip Growth	Destination Trip Growth	Average Trip Growth
2022	2027	1.0477	1.0406	1.0442
2022	2032	1.0760	1.0647	1.0704
2022	2037	1.0932	1.0801	1.0867

Table 15 - Predicted growth TEMPRO Version 7.2

From…	To…	Don't own a Car	own 1 Car	Owns 2 Cars	Owns 3+ cars	All Cars
2022	2027	0.9546	1.0249	1.0554	1.0972	1.0547
2022	2032	0.9403	1.0463	1.0847	1.1924	1.0969
2022	2037	0.9252	1.0651	1.1123	1.2796	1.1356

Table 16 - Car Ownership TEMPRO Version 7.2

6.3 IMPACT ON PARKING IN CHRISTCHURCH TOWN CENTRE

It is acknowledged that whilst TEMPro provides a good basis for estimating background growth across the district in overall terms, it may not necessarily be reflective of the specific locations of growth and consequently parking demand within specific car parks in the town centre.

Care should be taken to ensure that the proposed level of parking is not set too high as to inadvertently encourage car use to access the town centre to the detriment of more

sustainable modes, particularly if doing so would be likely to undermine the viability of such services and supporting infrastructure (e.g. congestion increasing delay for public transport vehicles or severance of key links for pedestrians and cyclists. This said, the future prosperity and economic success of the town centre will be reliant upon reasonable access by car.

The TEMPro figures are broken down into five year periods. As the parking surveys were undertaken in 2022, which create the baseline figures, the 15-year period covers the years 2027, 2032, and 2037. Tables 17 – 22 provide the forecasted growth in the town centre car parks for each of the five-year periods based on the Saturday data. As previously discussed, this is based on many variables and should be taken as a guide only.

Car Park	Capacity	Baseline Peak	2027	% Occupied
Bargates	15	13	14	91
Pit Site	58	32	34	58
Quay	21	18	19	90
Willow	61	23	24	40
Bridge Street	40	30	32	79
Mayors Mead	156	26	27	18
Bank Close	156	142	150	96
Bypass	202	118	124	62
Wick Lane	184	167	176	96
Priory	101	99	104	103
Leisure Centre East	172	76	80	47
Leisure Centre West	119	57	60	51
Saxton Square	257	163	172	67

Table 17 – TEMPro forecasting in town centre car parks for 2027 (Saturday)

Car Park	Capacity	Baseline Peak	2032	% Occupied
Bargates	15	13	14	95
Pit Site	58	32	35	61
Quay	21	18	20	94
Willow	61	23	25	41
Bridge Street	40	30	33	82
Mayors Mead	156	26	29	18
Bank Close	156	142	156	100
Bypass	202	118	129	64
Wick Lane	184	167	183	100
Priory	101	99	109	108

Leisure Centre East	172	76	83	48
Leisure Centre West	119	57	63	53
Saxton Square	257	163	179	70

Table 18 – TEMPro forecasting in town centre car parks for 2032 (Saturday)

Car Park	Capacity	Baseline Peak	2037	% Occupied
Bargates	15	13	15	98
Pit Site	58	32	36	63
Quay	21	18	20	97
Willow	61	23	26	43
Bridge Street	40	30	34	85
Mayors Mead	156	26	30	19
Bank Close	156	142	161	103
Bypass	202	118	134	66
Wick Lane	184	167	190	103
Priory	101	99	112	111
Leisure Centre East	172	76	86	50
Leisure Centre West	119	57	65	54
Saxton Square	257	163	185	72

Table 19– TEMPro forecasting in town centre car parks for 2037 (Saturday)

Tables 20-22 provide the forecasted growth in the town centre car parks for each of the five-year periods based on the average weekday data (Monday and Thursday combined).

Car Park	Capacity	Baseline Peak	2027	% Occupied
Bargates	15	13	14	91
Pit Site	58	56	59	102
Quay	21	11	12	55
Willow	61	43	45	74
Bridge Street	40	24	25	63
Mayors Mead	156	23	24	16
Bank Close	156	118	124	80
Bypass	202	106	112	55
Wick Lane	184	149	157	85
Priory	101	71	75	74
Leisure Centre East	172	100	105	61
Leisure Centre West	119	45	47	40
Saxton Square	257	153	161	63

Table 20 – TEMPro forecasting in town centre car parks for 2027 (weekday)

Car Park	Capacity	Baseline Peak	2032	% Occupied
Bargates	15	13	14	95
Pit Site	58	56	61	106
Quay	21	11	12	57
Willow	61	43	47	77
Bridge Street	40	24	26	66
Mayors Mead	156	23	25	16
Bank Close	156	118	129	83
Bypass	202	106	116	58
Wick Lane	184	149	163	89
Priory	101	71	78	77
Leisure Centre East	172	100	110	64
Leisure Centre West	119	45	49	41
Saxton Square	257	153	168	65

Table 21 – TEMPro forecasting in town centre car parks for 2032 (weekday)

Car Park	Capacity	Baseline Peak	2037	% Occupied
Bargates	15	13	15	98
Pit Site	58	56	64	110
Quay	21	11	12	59
Willow	61	43	49	80
Bridge Street	40	24	27	68
Mayors Mead	156	23	26	17
Bank Close	156	118	134	86
Bypass	202	106	120	60
Wick Lane	184	149	169	92
Priory	101	71	81	80
Leisure Centre East	172	100	114	66
Leisure Centre West	119	45	51	43
Saxton Square	257	153	174	68

Table 22 – TEMPro forecasting in town centre car parks for 2037 (weekday)

The results show that there is a 3-5% increase in overall parking demand over each five year period. Based on this data, the initial recommendation would be that no additional parking supply would be required within Christchurch town centre up to the year 2037 as there is sufficient supply to avoid any negative impact on the town centre economy. However, this does rely upon visitors to the town centre to be willing to relocate to other car park locations. Based on the high occupancy rates in the most desired parking

locations in Christchurch already, it will be vital that information such as traffic signage and websites provide clarity on parking within the town centre.

As shown in tables 17-19, and tables 20-22, there are a number of car parks that exceed the available capacity based on the continuation of demand through the forecasting. It is to be assumed that these vehicles would relocate to another car park that had sufficient occupancy. As the car parks that exceed the capacity of the car park are core town centre car parks, visitors will look at the closest alternative. In the case of Bank Close, Wick Lane, and Priory, these car parks cannot be used for relocation. Whilst Saxton Square has capacity even in 2037, this is on the lower-level, which provides long-stay parking.

This means that the most logical car parks that visitors will relocate to include Bypass, Willow, and Mayors Mead. Although Mayors Mead car park demonstrates spare capacity, this is based on the 2022 survey data. If the car park is subject to greater usage in the summer as expected, this may result in further capacity issues. Both Bypass, and Willow car parks are not ideally located for visitors to the town centre. Bypass requires visitors to cross the A35 via the underpass, which isn't a welcoming environment, and Willow is a 10-minute walk to the town centre. This may discourage visitors from returning to the town.

What will become more critical if these forecasts become reality is improvements to the car park directional signage. Currently there is a good amount of car park directional signage within Christchurch town centre. However, the signage in many locations is confusing, and inaccurate (based on some of the Variable Message Signs). Therefore, although it may be possible to relocate visitors, improvements to the signage is vital.

6.4 2017 FORECASTING COMPARISON

Similarly to the car park occupancy data, it is possible to compare the forecasting future growth in Christchurch town centre car parks from the 2017 parking strategy. The parking strategy followed the same process as this study has highlighted above, using car ownership data, and providing a breakdown over five-year periods. Although the strategy is dated 2017, the parking surveys were undertaken in 2016. This means the five-year period most relevant for comparison is the 2021 forecast.

Table 23 provides the 2021 forecast percentage, the 2022 survey percentage, and the percentage difference between the two sets of data. This is based on the Saturday.

Car Park	Spaces	% Occ 2021	% Occ 2022	% Difference
Bargates	15	82	87	5
Pit Site	58	100	55	-45
Quay	21	100	86	-14
Willow	61	61	38	-23
Bridge Street	40	100	75	-25
Mayors Mead	156	66	17	-49
Bank Close	156	97	91	-6
Bypass	202	86	58	-28
Wick Lane	184	100	91	-9
Priory	101	100	98	-2
Leisure Centre East	172	33	44	11
Leisure Centre West	119	28	48	20
Saxton Square	257	67	63	-4

Table 23 – Comparison between the parking strategy 2021 forecast and the 2022 survey (Saturday)

The results of table 23 demonstrate that across all town centre car parks in Christchurch, only three car parks from the 2022 survey provide higher occupancy levels than the 2021 forecast. One of these is Bargates, which needs to be removed based on the reasons provided elsewhere in the study. The remaining two car parks are Leisure Centre East, and Leisure Centre West. Although the usage during the 2022 survey wasn't high, and the weekday data from the 2016 surveys was much higher, based on the Saturday data, the 2022 surveys are higher than expected.

There are some car parks where the difference between the 2021 forecast and the 2022 survey data is low. Priory car park has a 2% difference, which works out to be approximately two spaces. Saxton Square has a difference of 4%, which works out to be approximately four spaces, and Bank Close has a difference of 6%, which is approximately six spaces. There are car parks that have a much higher difference between the 2021 forecast and the 2022 survey data. Mayors Mead has the highest, although it has been acknowledged this is likely due to the time of the year the baseline data was collected. Pit Site has a 45% difference, and Bypass has a 28% difference.

Table 24 provides the 2021 forecast percentage, the 2022 survey percentage, and the percentage difference between the two sets of data. This is based on the weekday.

Car Park	Spaces	% Occ 2021	% Occ 2022	% Difference
Bargates	15	30	93	63
Pit Site	58	76	96	20
Quay	21	100	52	-48
Willow	61	57	70	13
Bridge Street	40	96	59	-37
Mayors Mead	156	34	15	-19
Bank Close	156	89	76	-13
Bypass	202	100	52	-48
Wick Lane	184	74	81	7
Priory	101	67	70	3
Leisure Centre East	172	54	58	4
Leisure Centre West	119	95	37	-58
Saxton Square	257	46	59	13

Table 24 – Comparison between the parking strategy 2021 forecast and the 2022 survey (weekday)

The results of table 24 demonstrate that the difference between the 2021 forecast, and the 2022 survey data is less than the Saturday figures. This is likely due to the higher usage in the summer months, which provided a higher baseline to commence the forecasting from. Including Bargates, there are seven car parks from the 2022 survey that demonstrate a higher occupancy rate than the 2021 forecast. These car parks include:

- Pit Site;
- Willow;
- Wick Lane;
- Priory;
- Leisure Centre East;
- Saxton Square.

Excluding Bargates, half the car parks have a difference no greater than 7% between the 2016 forecast and the 2022 survey. These car parks include Wick Lane, and Priory, both of which are core town centre car parks. Saxton Square has a 9% difference, which is still relatively low, working out at approximately 13 parking spaces. There are some large differences between the two sets of data, which are generally where the 2016 survey has a higher occupancy rate. Bypass, and Quay car parks have a 48% difference in usage, and Leisure Centre West has a 58% difference in usage. This is approximately 68 spaces.

6.4 FORECASTING FUTURE PARKING DEMAND CONCLUSIONS

Having utilised the parking survey data as baseline data, it has been possible to forecast future parking demand within Christchurch town centre using TEMPRO, the Trip End Model Presentation Program, is designed to allow detailed analysis of pre-processed trip-end, journey mileage, car ownership and population/workforce planning data from the National Trip End Model (NTEM). TEMPRO is the industry standard tool for estimating traffic growth, which is required when assessing the traffic impact of a development on the local highway network (including car parking demand).

The results have demonstrated that based on likely growth in comparison to the available parking supply within the town centre, there should be no requirements to increase the number of parking spaces within the town over the next 15 years. This does rely upon visitors that would use parking locations that are exceeding occupancy to relocate to alternative car parks. To achieve this, the Council need to invest in additional parking signage and improvements on the website that will provide direction to drivers, as well as considering the redesignation of certain car parks to avoid them visiting other towns.

Comparing the 2021 forecast data from the 2017 parking strategy with the 2022 survey data demonstrates a more accurate forecast based on the weekday parking surveys. It has to be acknowledged that the 2016 surveys were undertaken in the summer when it's likely to be more visitors travelling into Christchurch town centre as a popular tourist destination. The data suggests that there is higher usage to the town centre from residents on weekdays compared to Saturdays. The most accurate method to confirm this assumption would be to carry out additional surveys in the summer 2023 for comparison.

As there are a number of car parks from the 2022 survey that exceed the 2021 forecast, this suggests that the various impacts to town centres highlighted in chapter 5.4 of this report haven't impacted Christchurch to the level that may be experienced elsewhere. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the town centre offering has at least remained the same as it was in 2016, and the growth of the area has increased more than expected, the town centre offering has increased, or there is a noticeable impact from the partial closure of Bargates car park. If it's the latter, this provides considerable justification for not redeveloping any further car parks in Christchurch town centre.

7.0 IMPACT OF CAR PARK REDEVELOPMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the key objectives of this car park study was to consider the impact on the town centre as part of any car park redevelopment. Within the project specification issued by Christchurch Town Council it states that *the Issues and Options consultation for the BCP Local Plan, published in January 2022, highlighted a number of car parks around the town centre which could be redeveloped. Proposals for these sites have yet to be published, and although the officer-level review of these sites has suggested that there would / should be scope to incorporate replacement parking into redevelopment it is important that any decisions on these sites is informed by a timely study regarding the levels of public parking that needs to be retained to support the town centre's vitality*.

Based on this, 2020 Consultancy have considered a number of scenarios around the redevelopment of town centre car parks. It has been assumed that Bargates and Pit Site car parks have agreements in place for redevelopment. It's our understanding that the following car parks have been allocated as being potentially viable for redevelopment in the future:

- Bank Close;
- Saxton Square;
- Leisure Centre East;
- Leisure Centre West.

Due to the location and usage of Bank Close, and Saxton Square car parks, it is assumed that it would be one of these car parks that would be subject to potential redevelopment, as oppose to both. It would be inconceivable for both these car parks to be redeveloped, as the impact on the town centre would be considerable. Due to the additional complications involved with Saxton Square as a short-stay car park and a long-stay car park, for the purpose of this study, the redevelopment of Bank Close has been included in the scenario testing, to understand the impact on town centre parking and the economy.

As it's assumed that both Bargates and Pit Site have been agreed for redevelopment, two separate scenarios has been tested for this exercise. Firstly, the impact on the town centre with the closure of Leisure Centre East, and Leisure Centre West car parks; and secondly

the impact of closing these car parks as well as Bank Close car park. Based on the specific nature of the Leisure Centre car parks, a scenario of retaining these car parks and closing Bank Close car park hasn't been tested as this will have little impact on the town centre.

To understand the impact the redevelopment of car parks may have on the town centre, the scenario testing involves using the same data from the forecasting. The 2022 surveys provide the baseline, and the growth factors are applied. The number of vehicles for the car parks subject to potential redevelopment are then redistributed to the most logical car park. In most cases this is the closest car park, but there may be justification for other car parks. For instance, if Priory car park became full, it wouldn't be beneficial allocating vehicles to Quay as this is a small parking location and would make little difference.

In some cases, the redistribution of vehicles may be higher than the number of spaces. This is more likely to happen when more than one car park may be redeveloped as more vehicles require redistribution, and there are less car parks for the redistribution to occur.

7.2 CLOSURE OF BARGATES AND PIT SITE CAR PARKS

As part of the first scenario tested, consideration has been given to the closure of Bargates and Pit Site car parks only. Although it has been assumed that both these car parks have been committed for redevelopment, Pit Site is currently fully open, and Bargates allows up to 15 vehicles to park, which means there is a noticeable impact on the town centre.

Based on the tariff structure, and the duration of stay data collected from the surveys, it appears that both these car parks are designated for long-stay parking acts. The closest car parks to these two would be Bypass, and Bank Close. Both these car parks are short-stay with a high turnover of spaces, which means they wouldn't be suitable for the redistribution of vehicles. The next closest car park is Saxton Square. Although the upper level of Saxton Square is short-stay, the lower level is a designated long-stay car park that also provides permit parking opportunities. Therefore, it is logical for the redistribution of traffic from Bargates and Pit Site car parks to be allocated to Saxton Square car park.

As stated above, for the purpose of this exercise, it has been assumed that Saxton Square would not be subject to redevelopment as well as Bank Close car park. Due to the designation of both short, and long-stay parking, the more parking spaces provided, and the overall score of the car park (based on our assessment criteria outlined in section x.x), the assumption has been made to consider the redevelopment of Bank Close only.

If Saxton Square car park was redeveloped, the redistribution of vehicles from Bargates and Pit Site car parks would be a lot more challenging, if seeking a like for like car park designation. In reality, the council would need to consider reclassifying one of the short-stay car parks such as Bypass to provide both short, and long-stay parking bays.

Table 25 provides the occupancy rates across the town centre with the closure of Bargates and Pit Site car parks, with the redistribution of vehicles located in Saxton Square only.

Car Park	Capacity	% Occupied 2022	% Occupied 2027	% Occupied 2032	% Occupied 2037
Quay	21	86	90	94	97
Willow	61	38	40	41	43
Bridge Street	40	75	79	82	85
Mayors Mead	156	17	18	18	19
Bank Close	156	91	96	100	103
Bypass	202	58	62	64	66
Wick Lane	184	91	96	100	103
Priory	101	98	103	108	111
Leisure Centre East	172	44	47	48	50
Leisure Centre West	119	48	51	53	54
Saxton Square	257	81	85	89	92

Table 25 – Car park occupancy forecasting based on closure of Bargate and Pit Site car parks

Although Saxton Square is the only car park impacted by this scenario, it does result in the car park reaching the 85% threshold when locating a parking space can become more challenging as early as 2027. Without this redistribution, the car park doesn't exceed 72% even as far out as 2037. This may have a consequence for the town centre. It has been assumed that all the vehicles from Bargates and Pit Site car parks are long-stay visitors. In reality, it's likely there will be some short-stay parking acts, which may not be possible in Saxton Square as the upper-level reaches capacity currently at peak times.

Table 25 highlights that there are a number of car parks that have exceeded the 100% mark. The percentage over this is related to how many vehicles would not be able to park in the car park. For example, in 2037 the forecasted demand for Priory car park is 111%. This means that 11% of users wouldn't be able to park as the car park is at capacity. Therefore, to provide a true reflection of the impact on the town centre, any car park that has a demand above 100% should have the excess relocated to another car park.

Table 26 below provides the adjusted car park occupancy rates based on the excess demand from table 25 above. For the purpose of this exercise, any excess demand from a car park has been relocated to the nearest car park that hasn't reached capacity.

Car Park	Capacity	% Occupied 2022	% Occupied 2027	% Occupied 2032	% Occupied 2037
Quay	21	86	96	100	100
Willow	61	38	40	41	46
Bridge Street	40	75	79	82	85
Mayors Mead	156	17	18	18	19
Bank Close	156	91	96	100	100
Bypass	202	58	62	64	66
Wick Lane	184	91	96	100	100
Priory	101	98	100	100	100
Leisure Centre East	172	44	47	48	50
Leisure Centre West	119	48	51	53	54
Saxton Square	257	81	85	92	100

Table 26 – Adjusted car park occupancy forecasting based on closure of Bargate and Pit Site car parks

Table 26 demonstrates that by 2037 all core town centre car parks (Bank Close, Wick Lane, Priory, and Saxton Square) are at 100% capacity. In reality, this is likely to be the occurrence much earlier unless Saxton Square car park is adjusted to enable short-stay parking acts to occur in the lower-level. This may have a negative impact on Christchurch town centre, and the local economy. This impact may occur with the closure of just Bargates, and Pit Site car parks. Further car park closures would exacerbate the problem.

7.3 CLOSURE OF BARGATES PIT SITE & LEISURE CENTRE CAR PARKS

The second scenario tested considers the impact on the town centre if Bargates, Pit Site, and the two Leisure Centre car parks are closed. Understanding the impact on the town centre will be challenging based on this scenario, as it's unknown whether visitors to these car parks would still be travelling into Christchurch without access to these car parks.

The car parks appear to include both short-stay and long-stay parking acts, although the short-stay acts far outweigh those parking for the longer term. Vehicles that are parking for longer periods are generally parking for the full day. Therefore, it isn't known if the vehicles are staff within the Leisure Centre, or whether they are employees / business

owners from elsewhere in the vicinity of the Leisure Centre. Apart from these car park users, it's expected that the majority of users are using the car parks either for the Leisure Centre, or the sports pitches that are located adjacent to the Leisure Centre.

Due to the location of these car parks, it's unlikely there will be many visitors to the town centre using these car parks. Based on this, it's unknown whether there would be much redistribution to other car parks if the two Leisure Centre car parks were closed for redevelopment. To protect the town centre, it's the opinion of 2020 Consultancy that the scenario should redistribute all the car park users across the town centre car parks.

Bridge Street car park is the most obvious location for the redistribution of vehicles. However, the car park is small, providing only 40 spaces. The peak occupancy rate based on the 2022 survey was 75%. This means there was only 10 spaces remaining. Therefore, there would be very little gained from the redistribution of vehicles into this car park, although it's noted that this will almost certainly where the vehicles will travel to first if the Leisure Centre car parks are closed for redevelopment based on location only.

Alongside Bridge Street car park, it will be necessary for vehicles to be redistributed to other car parks if all visitors to Leisure Centre East, and Leisure Centre West were to remain in Christchurch town centre. Based on location, the most logical car parks that would be utilised include Priory, Quay, Wick Lane, Saxton Square, and Bypass car parks.

The closure of both Leisure Centre East, and West would result in approximately 133 vehicles needing to be redistributed across other car parks if all those users want to remain in the town centre. Based on the existing occupancy rates in the car parks mentioned above, all the car parks listed above will experience an increase in usage. This is because there is insufficient spare capacity in the car parks to cope with the additional demand.

Table 27 provides the occupancy rates across the town centre based on the closure of Bargates Pit Site, Leisure Centre East, and Leisure Centre West car parks, with the assumption that all vehicles will want to remain in Christchurch town centre.

Car Park	Capacity	% Occupied 2022	% Occupied 2027	% Occupied 2032	% Occupied 2037
Quay	21	100	105	110	114
Willow	61	38	40	41	43
Bridge Street	40	100	105	110	114
Mayors Mead	156	94	99	103	106
Bank Close	156	91	96	100	103
Bypass	202	90	95	100	105
Wick Lane	184	100	105	110	114
Priory	101	100	105	110	114
Saxton Square	257	96	101	105	109

Table 27 – Car park forecasting based on closure of Bargate Pit Site & Leisure Centre car parks

The impact of closing and redeveloping Bargates, Pit Site, and both Leisure Centre East, and West without the provision of new parking, is five additional town centre car parks are impacted. Along with Saxton Square, Quay, Bridge Street, Mayors Mead, Bypass, and Priory car parks all may experience additional demand based on the redistribution of vehicles. This results in four town centre car parks reaching capacity straight away if the car parks were closed at this moment. A further four car parks would have demand at 90% and above. Only Willow car park would have a suitable amount of capacity in the town.

Whilst it's unlikely all these car parks would be closed at the same time, table 27 illustrates that as soon as all the car parks were to close, there would be a significant shortfall in parking within the town centre. This would almost certainly impact the local economy.

By 2027, there are five car parks that have exceeded capacity. Three of these car parks are located in the core town centre area. A further three car parks have a demand at 95% and above. By 2032, all car parks exceed capacity apart from Willow car park, based on table 27. However, with the relocation of this excess demand, by 2027 there is a risk that all car parks in Christchurch town centre have reached capacity. By 2032, there will still be an excess, meaning not all visitors will be able to park in the town centre.

Table 28 below provides the adjusted car park occupancy rates based on the excess demand from table 27 above. For the purpose of this exercise, any excess demand from a car park has been relocated to the nearest car park that hasn't reached capacity.

Car Park	Capacity	% Occupied 2022	% Occupied 2027	% Occupied 2032	% Occupied 2037
Quay	21	100	100	100	100
Willow	61	38	100	100	100
Bridge Street	40	100	100	100	100
Mayors Mead	156	94	100	100	100
Bank Close	156	91	100	100	100
Bypass	202	90	100	100	100
Wick Lane	184	100	100	100	100
Priory	101	100	100	100	100
Saxton Square	257	96	100	100	100

Table 28 – Adjusted car park occupancy forecasting based on impacts of table 27

Under no circumstances can this scenario be allowed to occur without the inclusion of additional parking. Based on the forecasting of future growth in car parks without any car park closures, there is a risk that by 2037, there may be concerns with the number of parking spaces within Christchurch town centre. Based on that, it's recommended that as part of any redevelopment of town centre car parks, for every parking space lost, a new parking space should be provided within the development site. This may still be insufficient based on the potential growth (depending on the development site), and how many of the spaces will be permitted for town centre visitors. This will require further discussion.

7.4 CLOSURE OF BARGATES PIT SITE LEISURE CENTRE & BANK CLOSE CAR PARKS

The third scenario was to consider the impact on the town centre if the car parks as detailed above were to close in addition to Bank Close, which had been highlighted as a potential redevelopment site as well in the BCP Local Plan. However, based on the summary above, undertaking this exercise will not be beneficial, due to the impact this would have on the town centre. Bank Close is a core town centre car park that has the highest turnover of spaces rate. Redeveloping this car park should be avoided in any of the scenarios. It would have a substantial negative impact on the town centre.

The alternative option would be to consider the redevelopment of Saxton Square car park. However, this is also a core town centre car park that would have a detrimental impact to the town centre if redeveloped. There is a risk that the impacts could be greater with this car park as it provides both short-stay parking and long-stay parking.

8.0 CHRISTCHURCH TOWN CENTRE PARKING SERVICE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

With 12 key car park locations across the town centre that provide different functions i.e. town centre parking, long-stay and short-stay parking, quayside parking access, it's vital that BCP Council provide adequate service provision to ensure the parking experience isn't compromised. For instance, if a visitor that has never been to Christchurch would like to visit the town centre, they will expect to see and have specific information relating to parking, rather than just the town centre as an all-encompassing collation.

This consideration should take into account all aspects of the parking service to provide the level of service that will provide a good first impression for visitors and will likely result in visitors returning. Examples of the service provision required include:

- Car parking signage & way-finding;
- Electric Vehicle charge points;
- Disabled and child priority spaces;
- Enforcement of parking restrictions;
- Integration of sustainable transport.

Each of the separate service provisions shown above, within Christchurch town centre car parks are discussed in greater detail, based on the results of the parking assessments carried out during the development of the car park study.

8.2 EXISTING SITUATION

It was decided to give an high level assessment of the car park signage for Christchurch. This entailed a site visit to determine where both VAS signs and static car park signs were positioned. This methodology allows for analysis on the following:

- Have Christchurch got enough car park signage currently
- Are the signs which are in situ in the best possible position
- The condition of the existing signs
- Are the signs effective or do they need to display different information.

Figure 5 below demonstrates the position of the existing signage in Christchurch.

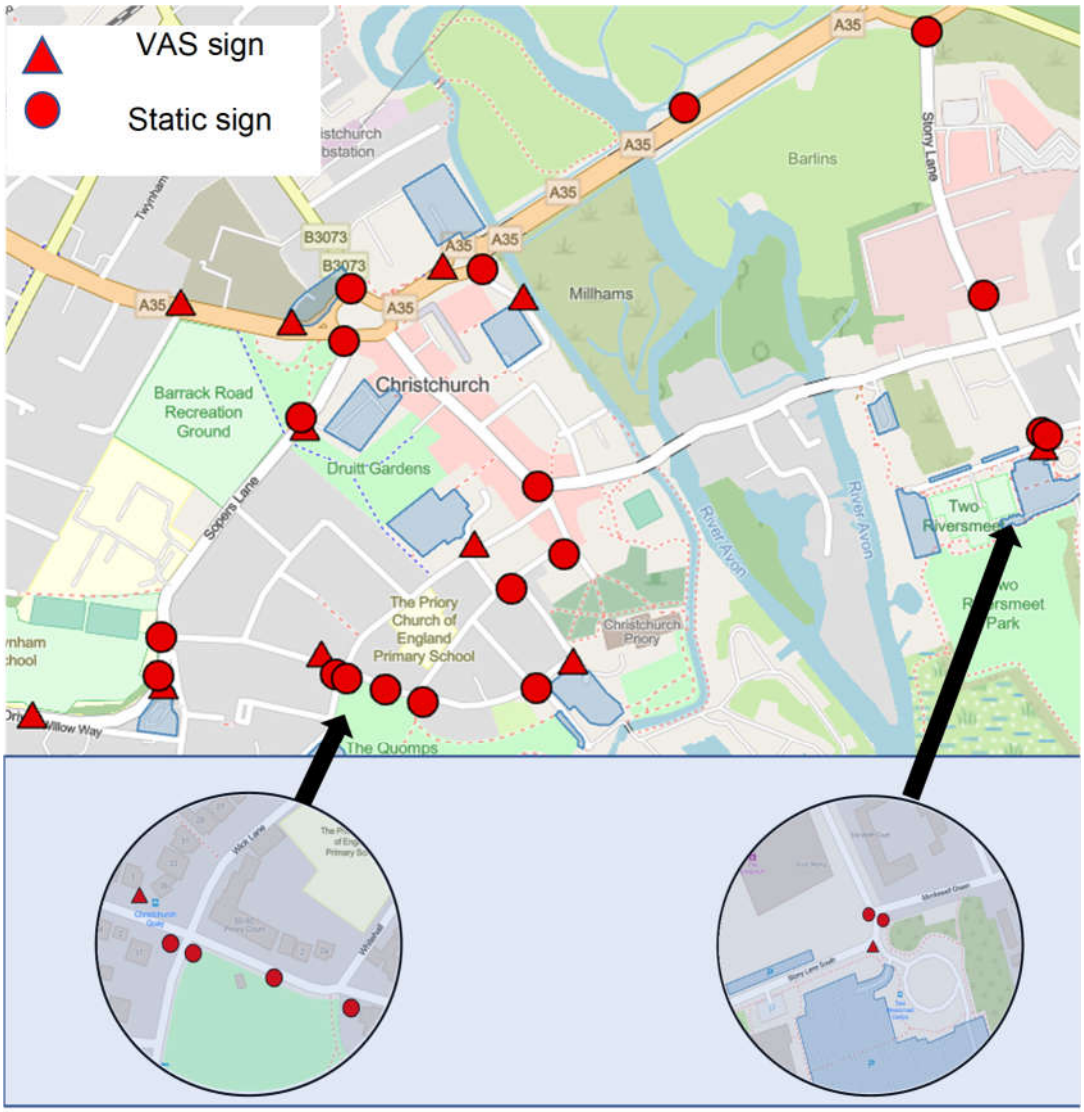


Figure 5 – Existing car park directional signage in Christchurch town centre

8.3 CAR PARKING SIGNAGE & WAY-FINDING

2020 Consultancy have carried out a high-level review of car park signage across the town to identify where improvements can be made. This includes the introduction of Variable Message Signs (VMS). There is a direct link between a town centre economy and how easy the town centre is to access for all modes of transport. Ideally a town centre should be walking distance to all major transport hubs such as car parks, bus stations, and rail stations.

The town centre car parks are located across Christchurch, which is useful as visitors can choose the most appropriate car park depending on their intended destination. The only reliable method of allowing visitors to make this decision is through signage. There is currently many car parking signs within the town centre, which are located on the primary

road network, such as the A35, connector roads such as Sopers Lane, and along unclassified roads outside car park entrances. An example of the type of car parking signage currently in Christchurch town centre is shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 – Example of existing car park directional signage in Christchurch

Although the quantity of the signs is considered above average for a town centre, the quality of the signs is below standard. Many of the signs are inconspicuous due to vegetation and infrastructure obscuring the signs, are in poor condition, and are difficult to interpret (such as the VMS), especially when travelling past in a vehicle.

Another key feature for accessing the town centre is how straight forward and clear signage is for visitors from their transport mode to the destination. The success of good car park directional signage for vehicles will be completely undone if the subsequent signage directing visitors from the car park to their destination is poor.

Therefore, wayfinding is used to support directional signage. This is most commonly done as finger posts with key destinations such as town centre, toilets, bus/rail station, and others being signed in the direction of travel. These can be supported through simple and complex monolith signs that can include maps and key information. These can be modern day tourist information systems.

The location and number of way-finding signs is as important as vehicular signs. It should be possible for a visitor to have no understanding of a town centre, to make their way from a car park to their destination without any confusion.

For a town centre economy to be maximised, visitors should spend as little time travelling from the car park to their destination as possible. This results in a greater turnover of spaces, greater economy, and a better town centre experience. Therefore, improvements to the town centre parking signage and way-finding is possible.

There are four types of car parking signage that have been considered as part of this high-level assessment. These are:

- Strategic car parking signage that provides car parking directional information for a number of car parks or parking locations in the town centre;
- Car park advanced directional signage that provides directional information for a few car parks in an area such Wick Lane and Willow Way car parks
- Car park Variable Message Signs that provide car parking directional information across the town centre;
- Specific car park sign that can be static or Variable Message Sign for individual car parks.

Figure 7 provides examples of these signs.

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Figure 7 – Examples of car park signage

8.3.1 STRATEGIC CAR PARK SIGNS

Strategic car park directional signs are designed to advise drivers a certain direction to travel before entering the town centre. The wording on these signs should be fairly generic such as town centre north and town centre south, or long or short-stay.

8.3.2 ADVANCED DIRECTIONAL CAR PARK SIGNS

Advanced directional car park signs are designed to provide direction to a few car park locations within an area. These signs can introduce specific car parks or still provide generic information. It allows destinations to be included within the text. For instance, town centre, or Bank Close can be listed.

8.3.3 CAR PARK VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

A Variable Message Sign is classified as “a device capable of displaying, at different times, two or more aspects”. These aspects may take the form of a sign prescribed by the TSRGD 2016, a legend in accordance with Schedule 16 to the TSRGD 2016 which

remains unchanged from the 2002 regulations, a non-prescribed temporary sign or a blank grey or blank black face. Variable Message Signs encompasses all types of variable sign from simple flap-type fixed signs to complex light-emitting panels. New LED Variable Message Signs allow additional messages to be displayed, which would benefit the town centre if car parks were full as further information i.e. alternative car parks can be provided.

A Variable Message Sign is one of the most effective methods of providing key clear concise information to drivers as they travel to their destination. Variable Message Signs are usually classified as either “free text Variable Message Signs” or “car park guidance Variable Message Signs”. Free text signs provide useful information related to a motorists destination such as “congestion ahead” whereas car park guidance signs provide car park information such as the number of spaces available within a car park. Variable Message Signs can use both forms such as a free text sign displaying “car park A full please use car park B”.

The effectiveness of the Variable Message Sign is related to the location of the sign. The location of the sign is the single most important aspect of delivering an effective sign. If the sign isn’t located in the most appropriate position, it will not serve the purpose it was intended for. Due to the cost of Variable Message Signs, this makes identifying the location critical. Motorists have little time to take note of the sign, which means it needs to be located within close proximity, although it’s vital the sign doesn’t create any visibility issues as the signs can be large in size. All the information on the sign should be clear and visible, which means setting the sign at the correct height is important as well as ensuring no obstacles will obscure the sign such as overgrown vegetation.

Due to the cost of Variable Message Signs, consideration should be given to number of motorists that will view the sign on their journey to the end destination. A sign should be located where the majority of motorists will view the sign. This means signs should be located where routes meet to avoid needing to repeat signs with the same message that could be avoided. In reality this isn’t always possible due to the layout of the road network, but it is recommended to allocate time considering the road network to identify the most suitable locations that maximise exposure of each sign under consideration. The exception to this is on roads where the 85th percentile traffic speeds are over 40mph as the Department for Transport states that two Variable Message Signs displaying the same message is provided.

There may be a number of local influences that are likely to have an impact on the location of Variable Message Signs within an authority. The installation of signs on a local level will need to consider the local issues and understand the main traffic flows within the town.

Variable Message Signs can work well with static car parking signs. This reduces the cost associated with signage. Our recommendation is for BCP Council to undertake a more detailed car park signage strategy. This should include a more detailed review of the existing signage, along with proposals, and recommendations on the improvements that can be made to the existing signage. For example, replacing some of the existing VMS with the more simplistic modern style sign, as shown below.

8.3.4 WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE

There is limited way-finding signage in Christchurch town centre and it appears to be focused small clusters around key trip generators.

To improve access in the town centre, it is recommended to implement new way-finding signage and monolith signs throughout the town centre including to and from transport hubs and car parks. As described above, wayfinding should be consistent and frequent enough to ensure easy to follow directions are visible for visitors to follow. Therefore, as a minimum wayfinding should be located at each junction or point where more than one direction is available.

It is recommended to implement wayfinding at each car park and include the majority of car parks on wayfinding in the town centre. Using monolith signs is a useful way of including car park locations as well as key town centre features. Implementing a point of

interest system will also enable visitors to keep track of where they are and their transport destination.

To safeguard future developments and adjustments to the town centre, it is recommended to create a signage and way-finding plan. This document will outline the procedures and requirements for signage and wayfinding for the town centre including design, usage, and location. This document will ensure consistency is maintained in the town centre for the long term and short term.

8.4 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS

There is currently only two Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points within Christchurch town centre car parks. These are located within the lower level of Saxon Square car park and provide drivers of EVs the opportunity to charge their vehicles whilst visiting the town centre.

If visitors are travelling into Christchurch town centre from further distances and would benefit / need to charge their vehicles, there is very little information available to visitors to understand that Saxon Square car park offers EV charge point facilities. Due to other parking locations being closer to the main amenities of the town, visitors from further afield are more likely to park closer to intended destinations.

It's vital that BCP Council and Christchurch Town Council promote the EV charge point facilities within Saxon Square car park to increase the likelihood of usage. Based on the trajectory of electric vehicle sales, it's likely that the ownership of these vehicles is likely

to increase significantly over the next 10 years. Central government have confirmed that selling new petrol and diesel vehicles will not be permitted from the year 2030. This will place more pressure on car parks incorporating EV charge points.

It isn't sufficient for Christchurch town centre to offer as little as two EV charge points. The provision in car parks will need to increase as short, medium, and long term actions. The scaling of EV charge points needs to be in line with sales of electric vehicles to avoid a negative impact on town centre car parks. Due to the infrastructure required, an EV charge point may take up more room than one standard parking space. Therefore, introducing several EV charge points will create a noticeable impact on the occupancy levels within a car park.

Not all car parks will be suitable for EV charge points. Small car parks will unlikely to be effective as it will reduce occupancy levels, creating an issue with demand. Therefore, it's important to consider the most effective car parks for EV charge points, based on the location and size of the car park. As part of our high-level assessment undertaken as part of this study, Wick Lane, Priory, Bank Close, and additional charge points in Saxton Square would be the most effective locations in the core town centre area. In addition, one of the Leisure Centre car parks would be effective.

It should be noted that a more detailed study into the suitability and deliverability of EV charge points should be undertaken, which will allow car parks to be prioritised.

8.5 DISABLED AND CHILD PRIORITY SPACES

There is a clear need to consider priority spaces in car parks to protect specific groups such as those with a disability and those with young children. Visitors with a blue badge may have mobility difficulties, which means it's vital they have the opportunity to park as close as possible to the intended destination such as Bank Close. There are several disabled visitors that require walking aids that need to be setup prior to use. Without the additional space a disabled bay provides, this might be extremely challenging, especially in busy car parks with little areas for pedestrians.

Similarly with visitors with small children, it can be extremely difficult to safely extract children from vehicles into pushchairs without the additional space priority parking spaces can provide. They should also be located near intended destinations to provide additional safety, and reduce the time spent travelling within the car park environment where there is little segregation between traffic and pedestrians.

Within the Christchurch town centre car parks, there appears to be a shortage of child priority spaces. There are 89 disabled parking spaces across the Christchurch town centre car parks. This means the town centre provides 5% disabled bays out of its total offering. Although there isn't a specific threshold, 4% is an approximate average level of disabled spaces based on work with previous local authorities. Therefore, Christchurch town centre offers slightly above the average level of disabled parking bays in a town centre.

It should be noted that there are opportunities for disabled users to park on-street in several locations across the town centre. This can be done in any street that doesn't have a specific prohibition against disabled parking, which can be achieved through either no loading lines on kerbs or the installation of red routes. Red routes are principally designed for more built-up urban cities so this isn't a viable approach. However, if there are any streets within Christchurch where blue badge is causing either a safety or traffic flow issue, it is recommended to install no loading lines. Blue badge holders are likely to park on-street as it's often appealing as it can provide better access to the intended destination. If the provision of disabled bays is provided in the most suitable locations, this issue shouldn't occur.

8.6 ENFORCEMENT OF CAR PARKS

The management of parking in the town centre falls into two broad areas. Firstly, enforcement and secondly, the back-office management. It is important for BCP Council to consider and investigate the best and most cost-effective way of delivering the service whilst acknowledging that this important, customer facing service does still require dedicated resource.

8.7 INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT IN CAR PARKS

The provision of sustainable transport is clearly a much wider issue than parking but there is a relationship between the volume and cost of parking and successful adoption and promotion of measures to support sustainable travel (i.e. walking, cycling, and public transport. Greater sustainable transport will support objectives to improve air quality and tackle congestion.

An over-provision or poor management of parking can damage efforts to encourage the use of sustainable modes by increasing reliance on car use in preference to other forms

of travel and in operational terms by increasing congestion, delay and severance of sustainable routes and services. Conversely, the provision of good quality sustainable travel options can reduce the need for additional parking spaces and help reduce congestion and the associated detrimental environmental impacts of excessive car use.

Whilst the increased use of sustainable modes can be expected to offset and reduce the need to build additional parking capacity there are clearly limitations on the effectiveness of such a strategy.

In such circumstances, convenient accessibility by car (part of which is a suitable supply of car parking) will continue to provide vital support to the town centre economic and social prosperity for the foreseeable future.

Car parks can have a role to play in the improvement of sustainable transport by providing a secure location for cycle parking and motorcycle parking. All the town centre car parks would provide viable options for secure bicycle parking, which could provide alternative options for residents and visitors to the area.

Along with secure bicycle parking, town centre car parks will also provide opportunity for a Docked bike or E-Scooter schemes, with the car park providing the storage facilities. This will be draw for car parks that are located further away from trip generators as visitors may welcome the opportunity to use active travel for part of their journey. This should be an approach BCP consider in the future.

9.0 HIGH STREET REGENERATION

Whilst not specifically related to parking, consideration has been given to how the town centre could be regenerated, which would have an impact on parking. It's acknowledged that the key town centre core is within the High Street area.

As the core town centre area, there is limited space for pedestrians to integrate. The existing footways are narrow in some places and parked vehicles are right on top of the footways. This means that during peak periods, there is the possibility of pedestrians spilling into the road, which creates a significant road safety risk.

Figure 8 is a sketch that was produced to illustrate the amount of space often taken up for vehicles in an environment in comparison to the space available for pedestrians.

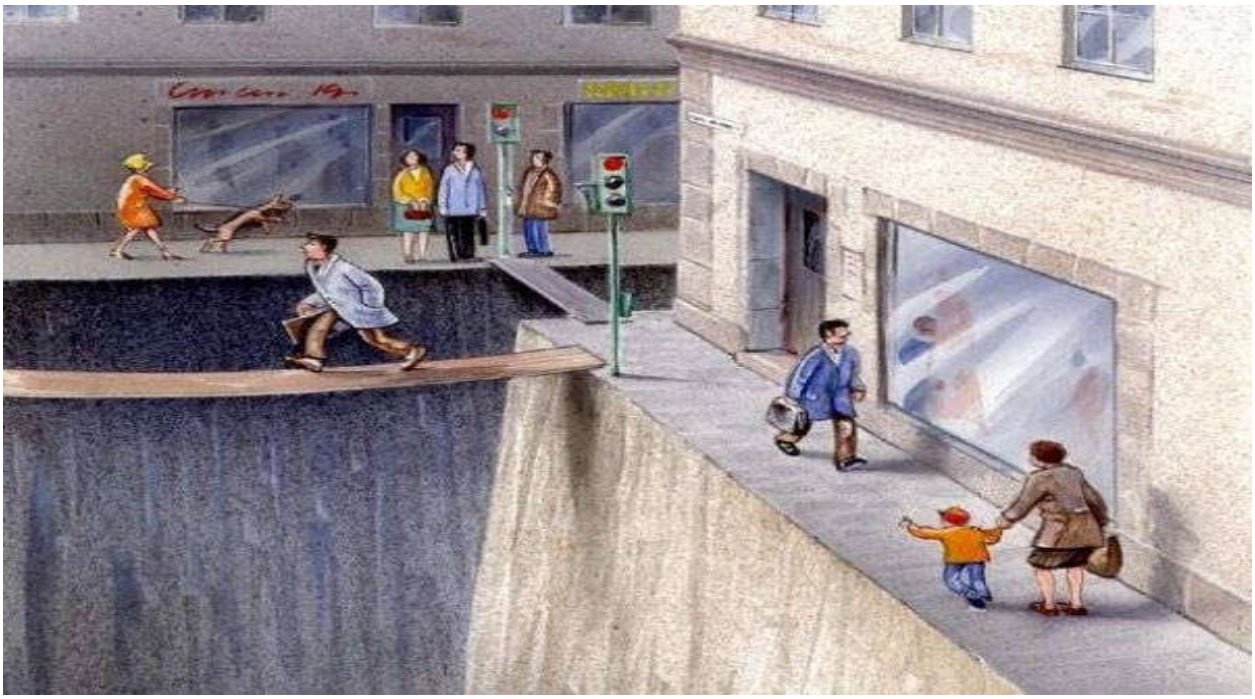

Figure 8 – Illustration of public space that represents High Street

A possible mitigation to this is to consider reallocating the roadspace to give pedestrians greater preference than currently exists. To achieve this, it would be necessary to loose some of the existing carriageway.

As the focal point for the town, the High Street should be a welcoming environment for all road users, but in particular NMUs. Pedestrians should feel comfortable and enjoy walking along the length of the street. This currently isn't possible as there is insufficient room for pedestrians to integrate. This results in pedestrians spilling into the carriageway and walking through the area quicker than they may wish to.

Therefore, consideration could be given to transformational change along the High Street. Examples of what could be achieved with further investigation and design include the opportunity to create a one-way system along the High Street, which will enable the width of the carriageway to be reduced noticeably. The carriageway only requires to be wide enough for one lane of traffic, with an appropriate amount of on-street parking. Although on-street parking is important, research demonstrates that the amount of on-street parking does not impact local businesses along a High Street as long as long as there is parking available nearby. With a provision of on-street parking, as well as nearby car parks, there is no concern that a regeneration scheme like this will impact local businesses.

Although the High Street is a bus route in both directions, there are methods available to allow the existing bus service provision to continue along the High Street even with proposals as transformational as what has been outlined. These methods would need to be developed further, if the Town Council wanted to pursue High Street proposals.

Whilst there may not be a negative impact, it's highly likely there will be a positive impact. Reallocating the roadspace from the carriageway to the footway will allow wider footways to be provided, along with the inclusion of public realm such as outdoor seating for cafes and restaurants, benches, cycle parking, and public art. A scheme such as this will also provide the opportunity for green infrastructure such as tree lines along the road. Introducing this level of public realm will attract additional footfall, which will improve the local economy. There will be obvious road safety benefits due to the narrower carriageway, and wider footways for pedestrians to use.

Other examples of what could be achieved would be to pursue the reallocation of space to incorporate a far greater pedestrian dominance. This can be achieved with the slight reduction of carriageway space and the restriction of traffic travelling southbound along the High Street. The only traffic that would be permitted to travel south would be Buses, as these would be infrequent it would be expected to see that traffic travelling north would have a large proportion of the carriageway space.

It is acknowledged that passing areas for buses travelling south would need to be designed and incorporated within this scheme yet at first hand it is felt that this could be achieved. This type of implementation would be expected to regenerate the High Street which would increase vibrancy and provide businesses on-street provision which would increase provision for market days.

Figure 9 provides some examples of the type of intervention that could be considered as part of the regeneration of Market Place to provide a better environment for pedestrians.

Figure 9– Examples of regeneration for High Street

Within the examples shown in figure 9 above, there are several consistent design principles that are apparent despite the differing of designs. Critical to the designs is the reallocation of roadspace, which ensures vehicles are not as dominant as they are in the current environment along the High Street. To achieve this, there is a high degree of shared space, which creates the impression that all travel modes are equal. This naturally brings an element of speed reduction. The use of different materials and surface treatments can be used to support this and provide specific designation i.e. areas to park.

Alongside this, traffic speed reducing measures will be necessary to support the transformation. A 20mph speed limit should be considered the maximum speed limit. The use of planting and greening will provide sustainability benefits within the area, which can be enhanced further through SUDs such as rain gardens. A possible addition could be to incorporate active travel infrastructure within the space such as segregated cycle lanes. There appears to be a high use of cycles within the High Street environment so this could be a welcome inclusion that provides further safety and promotes sustainable transport.

10.0 ACTION PLAN

Whilst this commission is a parking assessment as opposed to a parking strategy, there are several recommendations that can be taken from the contents of the report and taken forward to create an action plan for Christchurch Town Council to consider as part of their development of the Neighbourhood Plan, to improve car parking within Christchurch town centre. These can be separated into short, medium, and long-term measures based on the requirement and potential cost. For instance, the regeneration of High Street will take time to investigate and plan and will need significant investment so this will be classified as long-term. Implementing car park VMS is low cost and needed in the short-term.

Table 29 below provides the recommendations taken from this study and sets out the timeframe for implementation. For avoidance of doubt as part of this study, short-term measures are those to be implemented between 2023 and 2025, medium term measures are those to be implemented between 2025 and 2030 and long-term measures are those to be implemented after 2030.

Recommendation	Short Term 2023-2025	Medium Term 2025-2030	Long Term 2030+
Implement bi-annual benchmarking exercise for neighbouring towns and similar towns	X	X	X
Carry out regular parking surveys to monitor occupancy in car parks. If occupancy rates increase, parking charges may need increasing	X	X	X
Car park condition surveys should be undertaken every two years	X	X	X
Safeguard some funding received through PCN issue for the ongoing improvement of car parks such as infrastructure and lining	X	X	X
Retain Leisure Centre (East & West), and Bank Close car parks as part of any development	X		
Update Council parking webpages to provide more accurate information and provide clearer guidance to visitors	X		
Install child priority spaces in more off-street car parks	X		
Consider redesignating car parks based on duration of stay data. This can include separate short-term, and long-term car parks and combined short-term and long-term car parks		X	
Integrate sustainable transport measures such as secure bike parking and docked schemes within parking locations in town centre		X	
Traffic Regulation Orders should be routinely checked	X	X	X

Install additional electric vehicle charge points in suitable town centre car parks	X	X	X
Investigate the deliverability of on-street EV charge points to aid residents without off-street parking		X	
Carry out a more detailed car park signage study and develop strategy for the installation and management of signs for town centre car parks	X		
Implement new way-finding signage and monolith signs throughout the town centre	X		
Undertake a detailed assessment on the introduction of car club schemes within the town centre (car parks and on-street) as a suitable intervention to reduce demand in car parks	X		
Investigate the potential for the delivery of a out of town car park (near A338) with an excellent public transport provision to encourage visitors to use sustainable transport for journeys into the town centre, as well as providing more parking		X	
Carry out a more detailed study into the regeneration of High Street with an aim to reallocate roadspace for pedestrians and cyclists			X

Table 29– Action Plan for Christchurch town centre parking 2023-2032

11.0 CONCLUSION

Christchurch Town Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of Christchurch Parish. To support this, Christchurch Town Council commissioned 2020 Consultancy to undertake a parking study that considers current parking provision, projected future demand, and what effect the redevelopment of further car park sites that currently serve the town centre would have on parking provision, and to propose solutions to solve any parking shortfall that would be likely to harm the vitality of the town centre.

There are approximately 1,400 publicly available, off-street car-parking spaces situated in and around Christchurch town centre. Although there are key centralized car parks which are directly within Christchurch town Centre there is a clear spatial zoning of the off-street car parks. They have distinctive parking and land use characteristics, but there is also a lot of interaction between these zones.

Parking occupancy surveys were undertaken for all 12 council owned car parks. The surveys were undertaken during the month of November 2022 and were undertaken during term-time to provide regular data, and included a Saturday, a Monday (market day), and a Thursday (non-market day). Each car park was visited four times during the day with the times being 10am, 12:30pm, 3pm, and 5pm on the Saturday to coincide with the Christmas light switch-on, and 10am, 12pm, 2pm, and 4pm on the weekdays. This was to understand the fluctuating parking pattens within the town centre.

The key headline from the parking surveys demonstrated that overall across the town centre, there is sufficient parking capacity to supply the demand. Whilst it must be acknowledged that at peak periods the capacity may become an issue, taking this data as a standard neutral week, increasing the number of parking spaces shouldn't be a priority. From the data, the peak parking demand occurs between 10am and 12:00pm on a Monday with an average occupancy rate of 66%. This means that across all parking spaces within the town centre, there are up to 480 available spaces. Interestingly, it's often the case for peak parking periods to occur on a Saturday. This suggests the market brings additional visitors into the town centre, which is reinforced by the lower occupancy rates on the Thursday.

The data demonstrates that there is a certain degree of consistent parking across the town centre with several occupancy levels within the 50-60%. Whilst this data suggests that

there is plenty of parking available, there are some factors that need further consideration. For instance, the most desirable parking locations within Christchurch are the car parks closest to the town centre, such as Bank Close, and Wick Lane. Analysing the data for these parking locations demonstrates that there is much more demand with occupancy rates in excess of 90% in both parking locations during the peak periods. There are also car parks with lower capacity rates, which are located on the outskirts of the town centre, such as Mayors Mead, and Bridge Street.

As part of the survey process, number plate details were collated from vehicles in the car parks, which enabled the project team to determine the duration of stay for each car park.

From the data collected during the Saturday survey, Bank Close has the highest number of parking acts per space with 452 parking acts over the survey period. Wick Lane has the second highest number of parking acts per space with 412 parking acts over the survey period. Bypass has the third highest number of parking acts per space with 392 parking acts over the survey period. All three of these car parks are short-stay car parks, two of which are within the core town centre vicinity. Although Bypass is located across the A35, which acts as a natural boundary for the core town centre, the turnover of spaces is high as the primary use of this car park is to service the Waitrose superstore.

Having utilised the parking survey data as baseline data, it has been possible to forecast future parking demand within Christchurch town centre using TEMPRO. The results have demonstrated that based on likely growth in comparison to the available parking supply within the town centre, there should be no requirements to increase the number of parking spaces within the town over the next 15 years. This does rely upon visitors that would use parking locations that are exceeding occupancy to relocate to alternative car parks. To achieve this, the Council need to invest in additional parking signage and improvements on the website that will provide direction to drivers, as well as considering the redesignation of certain car parks to avoid them visiting other towns.

Comparing the 2021 forecast data from the 2017 parking strategy with the 2022 survey data demonstrates a more accurate forecast based on the weekday parking surveys. It has to be acknowledged that the 2016 surveys were undertaken in the summer when it's likely to be more visitors travelling into Christchurch town centre as a popular tourist destination. The data suggests that there is higher usage to the town centre from residents

on weekdays compared to Saturdays. The most accurate method to confirm this assumption would be to carry out additional surveys in the summer 2023 for comparison.

As there are a number of car parks from the 2022 survey that exceed the 2021 forecast, this suggests that the various impacts to town centres highlighted in this report haven't impacted Christchurch to the level that may be experienced elsewhere. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the town centre offering has at least remained the same as it was in 2016, and the growth of the area has increased more than expected, the town centre offering has increased, or there is a noticeable impact from the partial closure of Bargates car park. If it's the latter, this provides considerable justification for not redeveloping any further car parks in Christchurch town centre.

One of the key objectives of this car park study was to consider the impact on the town centre as part of any car park redevelopment. Based on this, 2020 Consultancy have considered several scenarios around the redevelopment of town centre car parks. The results of this exercise have highlighted major concerns with the loss of any car parking spaces. Even with the loss of Bargates and Pit Site, there will be a noticeable impact on the town centre car parks. With the loss of the Leisure Centre car parks, there will be insufficient capacity to cope with demand in as little as five years. Removing Bank Close Car park would cause significant impact on the town and shouldn't be considered at all.

It's recommended that the Town Council demand that any loss of car parking spaces is supplemented with new parking spaces as part of any development that occurs in the town. For every car park space lost, there is justification for a new space to be provided.

To support the outcomes of this study, 2020 Consultancy have identified a series of recommendations that should be considered over the short, medium, and long-term.

These include the following:

- Carry out regular benchmarking exercises and car park surveys to track demand;
- Safeguard funding received through PCN issue for the ongoing improvement of car parks such as infrastructure and lining;
- Install additional electric vehicle charge points in suitable town centre car parks;
- Carry out a more detailed car park signage & wayfinding study and develop strategy for the installation and management of signs for town centre car parks;
- Undertake an assessment on car club schemes within the town centre .

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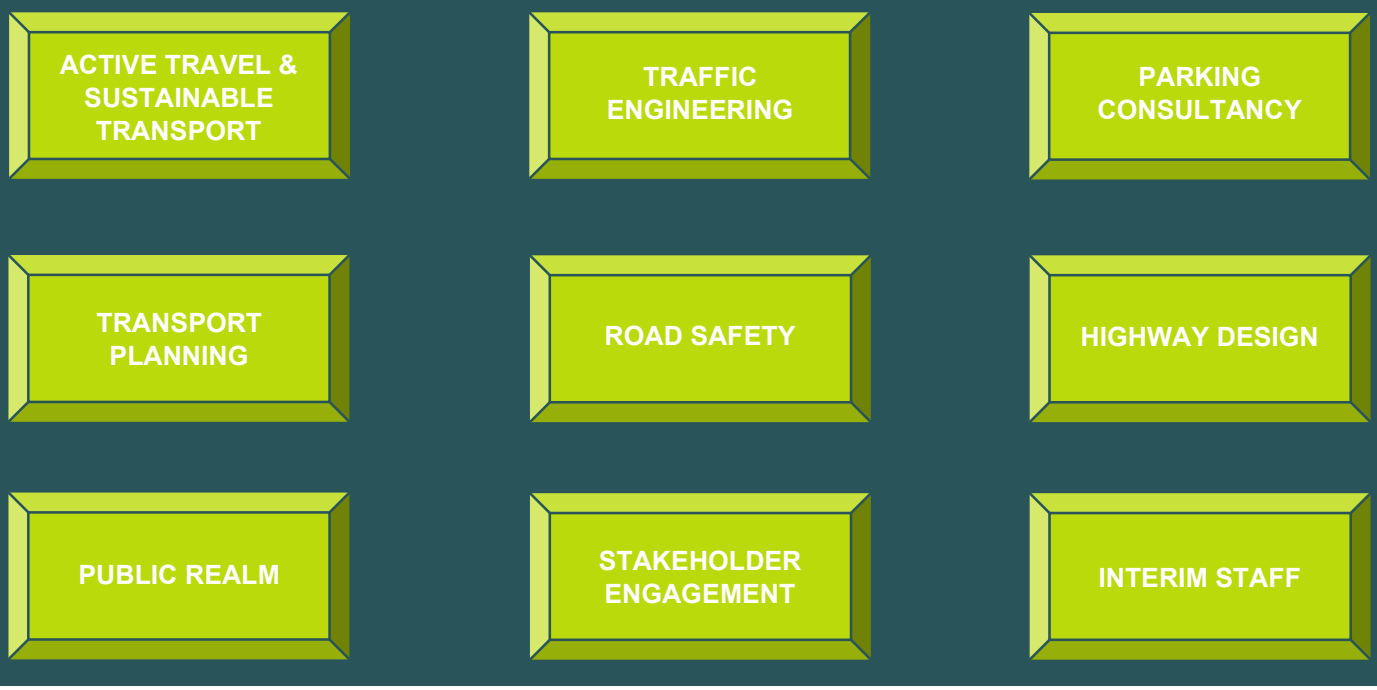
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