



# Sandwich Parking Strategy

## OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLAN

Report

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# 1 Introduction

## STUDY SCOPE

- 1.1 JMP Consultants Ltd (JMP) was appointed by Dover District Council (the Council) to conduct a review of parking strategy in Sandwich.
- 1.2 The study required a detailed assessment of existing parking provision across the town and the potential impact of proposed development upon future supply and demand. An initial output from the study was the identification of a key set of objectives that will provide for, and manage, future car parking provision. On the basis of these objectives, individual strategy options have been developed, prioritised, and packaged together to form the basis of the final parking Strategy Action Plan.

## BASELINE ANALYSIS

- 1.3 A detailed baseline assessment of the current supply of parking, the associated demand, and the potential future impact of development proposals has been evaluated in detail within the 'Sandwich Parking Strategy Baseline Report'<sup>1</sup>. This work encompassed:
  - An overview of relevant national, regional and local policies and strategies that need to be considered when developing parking policy.
  - A review of the current supply of on and off-street parking within the town, including assessments of both quality and quantity.
  - An assessment of committed and aspirational development proposals for the town that will affect the supply of parking, the demand for parking, or both.
  - An evaluation of existing demand for parking across the town, as well as potential changes in demand over time.
  - A combined assessment of supply and demand considering both existing and future car parking capacity utilisation under a range of different development scenarios.
  - A review of high-level public consultation views regarding parking in the town.
  - A summary of feedback from a stakeholder engagement process, incorporating a workshop
- 1.4 The outcomes from the baseline analysis provided the basis upon which to identify the key issues and opportunities facing parking within the town and to translate these into a set of outcome objectives for the emerging parking strategy. These objectives are replicated within Section 2 of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandwich Parking Strategy – Baseline Report – September 2015

## OUTCOMES AND ACTION PLAN REPORT

1.5 This report represents the final output from the study and presents the range of potential scheme options and an Action Plan for delivery. The report includes the following elements:

**Section 2** presents an overview of the key issues and opportunities identified through the baseline analysis and how these formed the set of objectives governing the strategy development process.

**Section 3** sets out a 'long-list' of potential policy tools and scheme measures available to the Council to influence future car parking demand and provision.

**Section 4** considers the best performing policy tools and scheme measures for delivering a coherent strategy for the town.

**Section 5** presents an Action Plan for implementation.

## 2 Issues and Opportunities

### OVERVIEW

- 2.1 This section presents an overview of some of the more pertinent outcomes of the baseline assessment work and summarises the key issues and opportunities that were identified, which subsequently formed the basis of the agreed strategy objectives.
- 2.2 A more detailed analysis can be found within the Sandwich Parking Strategy Baseline Report, referenced in Section 1.

### Parking Data

- 2.3 A full site audit of parking provision was undertaken to evaluate the quantity and quality of parking and evaluate their primary use functions.
- 2.4 Three distinct areas of the town were assessed and a review of on-street parking provision conducted, including approximately 250 marked bays and space for around 560 vehicles in unrestricted kerb side space. In addition, 550 off-street parking spaces were surveyed, including those at the railway station and Co-Op Supermarket (Pioneer car park).
- 2.5 Alongside this a series of data were collected and collated in order to evaluate underlying levels of demand. This indicated that, during a typical weekday in Sandwich, there is some spare parking capacity with utilisation levels of between 66% and 81% across all off-street car parks in the centre, depending upon the time of year. The Rail Station and Pioneer (Co-op) car parks are the busiest car parks being over 90% utilised in the week during peak seasons.
- 2.6 Demand on a Saturday was notably higher with an average of between 84% and 96% utilisation across all off-street parking areas, with The Quay and Guildhall car parks being 100% utilised at peak times. It is understood that on the days when special events are held in the town there are extremely high pressures upon available parking capacity.
- 2.7 The conclusion from the parking data analysis was that, overall, whilst there is generally sufficient supply of car parking across a typical week to meet current demand, certain car parks are heavily utilised, with peaks in demand on Saturdays. In addition, seasonal variation in demand for parking occurs with significantly higher demand in the summer seasons, as well as for special events. During these times there can be insufficient supply of parking to meet demand.
- 2.8 The utilisation data is influenced by the fact that residents with permits can park the vehicles within The Quay, Guildhall and Gazen Salts car parks. It is therefore an important consideration to ensure the right balance of parking spaces in these car parks is achieved between residents and visitors, so that the town can continue to thrive from tourism spend and encourage repeat visitors.

### Planned Development

- 2.9 A detailed review of proposed local development plans was undertaken to ascertain the level of town centre retail and residential growth, as well as the overall increase in residential dwellings around the town that may impact upon the future volume of trips into the town centre and, hence, parking demand.
- 2.10 The impact that the proposed development could have upon parking demand varies considerably upon the assessment approach adopted. Based on Central Government forecasts for growth in Sandwich the number of residential dwellings within the town expected to increase by 10% by 2025. The Local Plan development proposals would result in an increase closer to 20% over the same period.

- 2.11 These magnitudes of population growth could easily result in significant increases in parking utilisation across the town and could be particularly problematic on Saturdays. In practice, such an increase in demand would require a more holistic approach to travel management, providing a range of alternative means to travel than simply the private car so as to avoid significant congestion on the highway network.
- 2.12 In addition to housing growth, there is expected to be a growth in retail floor-space, with new supermarket provision, with associated car parking. This retail growth could potentially alter travel and parking demand in the town.

### Stakeholder Engagement

- 2.13 A widespread stakeholder engagement process was undertaken to collect a range of qualitative views on the issues and opportunities surrounding parking in Sandwich to supplement the quantitative data.
- 2.14 This process identified a range of issues, with the key strategic points summarised as the need to:
- Provide appropriate short-term parking for town centre users to encourage footfall in the town;
  - Provide “fairly priced” parking within Sandwich, in comparison to neighbouring towns;
  - Balance the seasonal demand for parking and the parking pressures that occur within the town during event days; and
  - Ensure on-street parking and loading does not unduly impact upon town centre traffic circulation.

### KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.15 The key issues and opportunities identified within the baseline analysis and stakeholder engagement process are as follows:
- Whilst all car parks within the town meeting the ParkMark Standard, there remains variation in the standards of provision with the opportunity to further enhance the quality, safety and security of some car parks.
  - Whilst there is seasonable variability in demand, the data indicates that there are constraints on the level of parking provision on Saturdays. This is exacerbated during the occasions when there are events being held within the town centre, such as the Summer Festival, when there can be virtually no spare capacity.
  - Future year increases in housing development will place further pressures on the provision of town centre car parking.
  - The provision of short-term free parking in the town centre would be perceived by stakeholders as beneficial for accessing retail outlets and help the vitality of the town centre.
  - The introduction of ‘pay-on-exit’ payment systems is perceived by local stakeholders as a mechanism that would encourage longer dwell times in the town centre.
  - It is important that on-street parking is managed appropriately, including school-related parking, to avoid impacting upon wider traffic movements.
  - An appropriate balance of on-street parking provision and loading/unloading facilities is required in the town centre so as to avoid inappropriate parking/loading and unnecessary disruption to traffic circulation.
  - Appropriate provision for disabled blue badge parking and coach parking is required across the town.
  - Improved signage would improve navigation around the town for visitors and help them identify the location of all car parks.
  - More intensive enforcement is considered by stakeholder a mechanism to improve the efficiency of town centre parking and ensure no inappropriate parking.



## FORMULATION OF STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

- 2.16 Based upon the key issues and opportunities highlighted above, the following set of objectives have been identified for the Sandwich Parking Strategy:
- i. Ensure adequate quality, safety and security of all public car parks
  - ii. Manage, maximise and expand the existing car parking provision to best meet the needs of the local community, considering short-stay parking, workers, delivery vehicles and coaches
  - iii. Provide mitigating measures to meet the increased visitor numbers to the town on event days
  - iv. Provide sufficient car parking provision to meet the future growth of the town
  - v. Provide sufficient and appropriately located disabled parking provision to manage blue badge parking
  - vi. Ensure effective enforcement of parking measures so as to maximise available supply and minimise traffic disruption
  - vii. Improve signage and navigation around the town to facilitate efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians to and from car parking provision
- 2.17 These are taken forward as the principle for developing and evaluating potential policy interventions and scheme measures for inclusion within the final parking strategy and Action Plan.

## 3 Scheme Option Development

### OVERVIEW

- 3.1 This section sets out a broad range of policy tools and scheme options that could be developed and implemented as part of the parking strategy for Sandwich. The aim is to present a 'long-list' of options for consideration prior to the development of the strategy itself in Section 4. The strategy development process will identify a 'short-list' of measures that are considered most likely to deliver the objectives of the strategy.

### POLICY TOOLS

- 3.2 The range of policy tools and scheme options available have been broadly classified into one of the following six areas:

- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| i. Pricing  | iv. User Prioritisation   |
| ii. Signage | v. Enforcement            |
| iii. Supply | vi. Marketing & Promotion |

- 3.3 In addition, the adoption of sustainable travel measures could provide the opportunity to manage parking demand within the town centre.

- 3.4 The sections below describe each of these areas in greater detail and then establish the range of policy and scheme measures that would, potentially, be appropriate to apply within the context of Sandwich Town Centre, taking into account underlying physical, spatial and existing policy positions. The outcomes of this section represent a 'long-list' of potential scheme measures that the strategy could utilise to manage parking provision. These are taken forward and refined and prioritised in Section 4.

### PRICING

- 3.5 Measures relating to pricing strategies and payment mechanisms are a key tool in influencing the type, location and duration of parking demand.

#### Payment Systems and Structures

- 3.6 Different payment systems can be established to enhance users' parking experience and to ensure efficient revenue return from both 'premium' locations and other 'standard' parking provision.

- 3.7 Various payment options are available. These may vary based upon the location, size, and baseline occupancy levels of individual car parks, as well as overarching parking provision across the town. The options include both physical technologies for payment, as well as the differentiating payment structures:

- Pay-on-exit (this would require car parks to be controlled by barrier operation, and/or ANPR). This is a tool designed to encourage users to spend a longer dwell time within a locality, as opposed to pre-paying on entry for a set duration of stay.
- Cashless payment (through the use of debit/credit cards at machine)
- Telephone/Mobile payment options (either through telephone/text message)
- Defined time period charging: set tariffs for specific unit of time (30, 60, 90 minutes etc), to encourage set parking durations (as opposed to the current linear charging model with a flat profile of charging per minute/hour). This approach could be adopted to encourage shorter durations of stay within short-stay car parks, or longer durations of stay in long-stay car parks.
- Reduced tariff ceiling: the current tariff structure extends up to 8 hours (between 9am and 5pm), a more compact structure could be applied with, for example, a maximum 4+ hours ticket in long-stay car parks. This could encourage more full-day trips to the town.

### Tariffs by Location and time of day

- 3.8 Pricing structures can be developed that are based around the location and accessibility of each car park in relation to local attractions and facilities within each town. This includes consideration for:
- Differential pricing structures for different categories of car parks (e.g. short-stay / long-stay, or premium locations / edge of town centre locations, etc.)
  - Zonal pricing with different tariff structures applicable in different areas of the town centre encompassing on and off-street parking. This can be used to encourage parking in edge-of-town centre car parks.
  - Variations in operational hours (e.g. extension of operational hours to reflect future changes to land-uses, e.g. the introduction of cinemas or restaurants)

### Potential pricing options

- 3.9 A summary of all potential pricing options are set out in Table 3.1 below, based on short, medium and longer term aspirations.

**Table 3.1 Summary of Potential Tariff Options ('long-list')**

Pricing – Short Term	Pricing – Medium/Longer Term
<p><b>Differential Pricing Structures</b> Introduction of variations in pricing structures across car parks, in particular between designated short and long term parking.</p> <p>Tariff charges would typically be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain relevant to wider parking conditions.</p> <p>Costs: Analysis of utilisation data Information &amp; advertisement</p>	<p><b>Extended Operational Hours</b> The introduction of changes to the operational hours of parking tariffs, both on and off-street, to reflect changes to nearby land-uses as the town develops.</p> <p>Costs: Analysis of Data Statutory consultation via TRO Information &amp; advertisement</p>
<p><b>Zonal Pricing</b> The introduction of geographical zonal pricing across the town encompassing on and off-street parking to optimise the current utilisation of car park provision across the town.</p> <p>Costs: Analysis of Data Statutory consultation via TRO</p>	<p><b>Alternative Payment Methods</b> Currently users can pay by cash or via pay-by-phone RingGo. With emerging new trends in payment systems, (e.g. ApplePay) a wider range of payment options could be considered over time.</p> <p>Costs: IT infrastructure and processing costs</p>
<p><b>Introduction of Pay-on-Exit</b> Pay-on-exit is designed to encourage users to spend a longer dwell time in town, as opposed to pre paying for parking on entry. Having pay on exit requires a strategic change in operational direction from pay on entry, with ticket machines to be recalibrated and barrier operations to be installed.</p> <p>Costs: Introduction of machines/barriers and ongoing maintenance.</p>	

## SIGNAGE

- 3.10 Signs can play an important role for both locals and visitor to a town. They can inform visitors of the parking provision available and so ease their journeys and subsequent enjoyment of the town.
- 3.11 Through improvements in signage, better awareness and information for of all car parks can be supplied to the public, ensuring an improved journey experience for visitors, and can potentially improve traffic circulation around the town.
- 3.12 A summary of potential signage options are set out in Table 3.2, based on short, medium and longer term aspirations.

**Table 3.2 Summary of Potential Signage Options ('long-list')**

Signage – Short Term	Signage – Medium/Longer Term
<p><b>Static Signage</b> Provide enhancements to overall signage, ensuring all signs include reference to short/long stay; number of spaces; and dedicated provision e.g. blue badge or coaches and that vehicles are taken on the most appropriate route to a car park.</p> <p>This could include the removal of obsolete signs, as advised by the DfT within their 'Signing the Way' document, to ensure clarity of signage.</p> <p>Costs: Sign Design &amp; Installation</p>	<p><b>Parking 'App'</b> A Sandwich Parking 'App' that utilises 'live' car park counts could feed information to users allowing them to make informed choices regarding parking before they start their journeys.</p> <p>Costs: 'Live' count technology Web development</p>
<p><b>Management Systems</b> The introduction of movement restrictions and banned turns around the vicinity of car parks could be investigated to influence driver choice of which car parks they use. This would require statutory consultation through amendments of Traffic Regulation Orders.</p> <p>Costs: Traffic surveys Statutory consultation Highways &amp; signage design &amp; installation</p>	
<p><b>Way-finding for Car Park Users</b> (e.g. signs to key locations for pedestrians egressing car parks)</p> <p>Whilst local users may be familiar with pedestrian routes from car parks to key locations, visitors to the area may be less well versed in navigating through the town. By signing key locations, (possibly as part of a Town Centre wide pedestrian route) ease of use will be improved.</p> <p>Costs: Sign Design &amp; Installation</p>	

## SUPPLY

- 3.13 There are a range of measures that can seek to either change the quality of parking provision or the overall quantity of supply. These relate to providing parking supply that is both safe and secure and is “future-proofed” against changes in travel patterns and land-use across each town.

### Quality

- 3.14 Measures relating to the quality of supply are important not just to ensure the safety and security of users and their vehicles, but also to ensure that all existing parking provision is utilised to its maximum and not avoided due to concerns about safety or standards. Overarching options include:

- Evaluating criteria on safety and quality of car parks set against standards, such as the Park Mark standard, including issues such as:
  - Surface quality
  - Access/egress routes for pedestrians
  - Lighting
  - CCTV
  - Natural surveillance
  - Clear signage and road markings within Car Parks
- Where ownership of public car parks is outside of the council's control, dialogue between the council and the operator can facilitate improvements in quality and safety of all public car parks and maximise utilisation of available spaces
- Consideration of the quality of on-street parking provision, including ensuring that parking bays meet the necessary standards, in particular in relation to disabled parking bays. Also ensuring appropriate maintenance of signs and lines.

### Quantity

- 3.15 The overall supply of parking provision has been identified as constrained at peak times of the week within Sandwich, in particular on Saturdays. Furthermore, anticipated levels of housing growth are also predicted to lead to additional pressures in the future. Adding to the overall quantity of supply is likely to be challenging within Sandwich due to planning constraints and cost implications.

- 3.16 Potential measures related to the quantity of supply include:

- Additional off-street car parking supply: this option will be constrained by available land and the value of that land. Whilst at-grade car parks offer the lowest cost option for development, decked car parks provide better utilisation of land and potential to mix land-uses; however, consideration has to be given to the historic nature of the town and it is extremely unlikely that such construction would be merited anywhere within the core town centre. Consideration should also be given to the impact that any form of new off-street parking provision may have upon traffic circulation within the town, as vehicles access and egress from car parks.
- Off-street parking standards for new developments: these are currently set by Kent County Council and adopted by Dover District Council but it is important that an on-going process of monitoring is established to ensure no extra pressure from development is placed on the existing car parking stock or on any current/future permit schemes..
- On-street parking supply: the overall supply of kerbside parking may be changed through application or removal of waiting and loading restrictions. Options may include restricting on-street parking around under-utilised off-street parking provision to remove on-street parking obstructions

and improve traffic circulation. It could also include the formalisation of parking provision on currently un-restricted streets, by restricting parking to appropriate locations. It is unlikely that additional on-street parking provision will be provided unless associated with wider changes to traffic management and classification of the local road network. For example, restricting vehicular access to a specific part of the town may permit additional on-street parking to be provided on previous access routes.

- Park & Ride supply: the introduction of a Park and Ride service was raised during the stakeholder engagement process as an alternative option for increasing parking capacity in Sandwich. It is considered unlikely that a regular service would be commercially viable as it would require a high frequency bus service to be an attractive alternative to town centre parking. This in turn requires high volumes of users to cover the costs of the buses. Whilst there may be demand at the weekends during peak season, the service is unlikely to be highly utilised on weekdays. This would make the overarching operational aspects of a service challenging. Providing Park and Ride as part of a major special event could be feasible but would be the responsibility of the event organisers to arrange and to meet the associate financial risk.

## Supply options

3.17 A summary of all potential supply options is set out in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3 Summary of Potential Supply Options ('long-list')**

Supply – Short Term	Supply – Medium/Longer Term
<p><b>Maintain and enhance quality</b>                      Off-street parking provision supplied the Council already meets the national standard of ParkMark and this should, as a minimum, be maintained.</p> <p>In practice, the ParkMark award is based around the safety of the car park and so the car park audit highlighted opportunities to raise standards further in terms of permeability of access of car parks, surface conditions, markings, signage and way-finding that could encourage more widespread use of some currently under-utilised car parks.</p> <p>Car parks should be viewed as internal 'gateways' into the core town centre retail / leisure area with high quality, safe and secure links, with appropriate way-finding into the heart of the town.</p> <p>Where on-street parking occurs, the maintenance of signs/lines and machines ensures that restrictions are clear for purposes of enforcement.</p> <p>Costs: Upgrade to parking provision</p> <p>Costs: Upgrade to Parking Provision</p> <p><b>Pavement Parking</b>                      Any areas where pavement parking occurs should be reviewed with consideration for introducing traffic regulation orders to prohibit on-pavement parking in inappropriate areas</p> <p>Costs: Review of parking                      TRO implementation</p>	<p><b>Parking Standards</b>                      Off street parking standards for new developments are currently set by Kent County Council and adopted by Dover District Council. Regular dialogue needs to take place between councils to ensure no further pressure is placed on existing parking stock and/or permit schemes and new dwellings are focused on sustainable forms of transport to the town.</p> <p>Cost: Minimal</p> <p><b>Additional off street parking</b>                      This option will be constrained in Sandwich by available land, the value of that land, as well as the historic nature of the town centre. At-grade car parks generally offer the lowest cost option for development, albeit with lower associated capacity. Decked car parks provide better utilisation of land and potential to mix land-uses, but often with greater visual intrusion that is not in keeping with a historic town centre.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the impact that any new off-street provision may have upon traffic circulation within the town as vehicle access and egress the car park.</p> <p>Costs: Design                      Land                      Construction</p>

## USER PRIORITISATION

3.18 In a situation with restricted overall supply of parking, as in Sandwich, the prioritisation of parking provision amongst different user classes is an important policy tool. Overall user prioritisation, along with localised prioritisation of space allocation, can be applied to act as both an overarching principle governing access and priority provision across a town or within specific localised parking areas within a section of the town. The former can assist in the management of vehicle flows, whilst the latter ensures that parking provision can be allocated in accordance with localised land-uses.

3.19 A priority list of parking users may be based around the following user classes:

- Residents;
- Businesses;
- Employees;
- Commuters;
- Shoppers;
- Visitors;
- Blue Badge Holders;
- Sustainable transport users (e.g. electric cars, car clubs)

3.20 In some cases these may form into larger clusters of groups with a common parking theme, such as short or long-stay parking, or vehicle type.

### **Parking Bay Designation and Road Space Allocation**

3.21 Measures relating to changing the user designation of supply include:

- Allocation of off-street parking spaces per user type (e.g. disabled, parent & child, motorcycle, coaches, motorhomes, electric vehicles, car share vehicles) to provide a supply that balances with current and/or future demand by user class.
- Reallocation of kerbside road space between uses: in addition to the total supply of on-street parking (discussed above under 'Quantity') the allocation between user classes can be undertaken. At a basic level this can include the introduction, or alteration, of pay & display parking in town centres to encourage variations in duration of stay and, by association, the type of user class that will then park. More generally, the application of permit parking provides a mechanism to prioritise specific users (discussed further below)

### **Permit Parking**

3.22 Where demand for kerb side space is high, controls to prioritise parking by specific user types can be implemented via permit schemes. A number of these permit scheme already exist within Sandwich.

3.23 By definition, a resident's permit scheme prioritises areas of kerb side for residents. The level of kerb side space available should typically be equal to the number of permits issued to ensure residents can always find a space and the issuing of permits strictly controlled.

3.24 Wider controlled parking zones can allow the introduction of various different permit types, alongside residents, such as business permits. The demand for spaces within these schemes will be higher and it is particularly important to understand the times of day when different users are wishing to park.

3.25 The following issues are important to ensure a consistent approach to permit parking:

- The number of permits issued against the available parking spaces
- The locations of both kerb side and off-street spaces where permit holders can park
- The various permit types issued and times of day these are being used.
- The impact that permit holder parking in car parks may be having on other visitors (e.g. perceived or actually lack of spaces within car parks due to permit holders using majority of spaces)
- The pricing structure of the permit system (this could be based on location, demand and accessibility to local amenities)



## User Prioritisation options

3.26 A summary of potential user prioritisation options is set out in Table 3.4 below.

**Table 3.4 Summary of Potential User Prioritisation Options ('long-list')**

Users – Short Term	Users – Medium/Longer Term
<p><b>Review of Zone J Permit Scheme</b></p> <p>The operation of the existing Zone J permit scheme in Sandwich could be reviewed. The zone currently encompasses the majority of the town centre within the town walls. As well as allowing residents to park in a range of on-street parking bays, the permit also allows parking within The Quay, The Guildhall, and Gazen Salts off-street car parks. The review could consider the current zone size and structure.</p> <p>Permit charges would typically be monitored alongside the level of demand for permits and the availability of permit bays. This is further complicated with Zone J in Sandwich where permit holders are able to park within off-street car parks and so compete with Pay and Display car park users for spaces. Any changes to permit provision would involve consultation with existing permit holders.</p> <p>Costs: Survey review and consultations</p> <p><b>Blue Badge Provision</b></p> <p>Ensure sufficient provision of formal blue badge parking in off-street car parks, maximising available space, and reducing ad hoc on-street parking in narrow streets within the town centre.</p> <p>Costs: Signs &amp; lines</p> <p><b>Loading Restrictions</b></p> <p>A review of loading/unloading restrictions could be undertaken to ensure effective provision for town centre retail/restaurant requirements and to minimise the risk of ad-hoc on-street parking that affects vehicle circulation.</p> <p>Costs: Signs &amp; lines</p> <p><b>Coach Parking</b></p> <p>Options for additional dedicated coach parking could be investigated in off-street car parks to minimise risk of on-street impacts.</p> <p>Costs: Signs &amp; lines</p>	<p><b>Permit Parking (on-going review)</b></p> <p>Existing permit parking schemes could typically be reviewed every 3 to 5 years within Sandwich, taking into account future growth in housing development within the wider town. This could include reviews to permit charges alongside the level of demand for permits and the availability of permit bays. Any changes to permit provision would involve consultation with existing permit holders.</p> <p>Additional permit schemes could be considered as the town grows and pressures on on-street parking increase, particularly in peripheral resident areas.</p> <p>Costs: Survey Review Informal Consultation / Statutory Consultation</p> <p><b>Allocation of road-space (on-going review)</b></p> <p>Review road-space allocation within the core town centre to reflect the changing dynamic of demand for parking across the town and ensure effective town centre vehicle circulation.</p> <p>Costs: Statutory consultation via TRO</p> <p><b>Electric Cars / Car Clubs</b></p> <p>With the emergence of electric cars and car clubs, consideration could be given to accommodating parking bays/charging points for these vehicles in the medium term, in line with increasing demand.</p> <p>Costs: Infrastructure Signs &amp; lines</p> <p><b>Virtual Permits</b></p> <p>“Virtual Permits” could be issued to residents, eliminating back office costs. Through applying online residents can obtain a permit with greater efficiency.</p> <p>Costs: Administration (which can be taken by parking contractor)</p>

## ENFORCEMENT

3.27 Enforcement is not only important to the operation of car parking provision per se (ensuring spaces are used by the appropriate user groups, turnover of space, etc.) but can also benefit the wider network through improving safety and traffic flow for all road users. A key issue when considering an appropriate enforcement regime relates to the balance of the associated costs of enforcement offset against the revenues generated from increased ticket sales and/or PCN issued.

3.28 Options for variations in enforcement mechanisms include:

- Contract types based on in- or out-of-house enforcement and the level of influence Council has within contract can vary
- ANPR enforcement on car parks at entry/exit points
- Alterations to CEO enforcement routes and monitoring for of on/off street parking provision.

3.29 A summary of potential enforcement options is set out in Table 3.5 below.

**Table 3.5 Summary of Potential Enforcement Options ('long-list')**

Enforcement – Short Term	Enforcement – Medium/Longer Term
<p><b>Efficient enforcement regimes</b>                      Ensure enforcement operations continue to be carried out in an efficient and timely manner, focusing on specific areas with significant parking pressures as necessary.                       Costs: Cost neutral</p>	<p><b>Revisions to enforcement</b>                      Updates to enforcement regimes to reflect the changing in dynamic of the town centre, in particular the increasing demand for parking.                       Costs: Enforcement cost increases                      Revenue stream increases</p> <p><b>Enforcement Contracts</b>                      Review provision of enforcement services to maximise value for money                       Costs: Potential savings</p> <p><b>ANPR Enforcement</b>                      Introduction of ANPR cameras at car park entry/exit locations as an automated means of enforcement                       Costs: Capital infrastructure costs                      On-going cost savings</p>

## MARKETING AND PROMOTION

- 3.30 Marketing and promotional activities can be utilised, in general, to influence demand for parking, including the:
- Absolute level of demand
  - Timing of demand
  - Duration of stay
  - Choice of location of demand
- 3.31 In addition, there are potential opportunities to influence parking associated with specific, one-off events, to mitigate the higher levels of parking demand often associated with these types of events.

### Influence demand

- 3.32 To influence the level of demand for parking spaces, marketing and promotional incentives for car parks could be used that include:
- Advertisement of car parks through council publications and local media releases with routes and walk times to nearby retail and leisure attractions
  - Promotion of improvements to car parks (e.g. resurfacing or security enhancements)
  - Advertisement of changes in tariffs, including potential reductions for seasonal events
  - Promotion of variations in tariffs between locations and duration of stay to encourage different parking behaviour (e.g. duration of stay, time of parking, type of parking) in different car parks
  - Promotional incentives on parking tickets in under-utilised car parks
- 3.33 A summary of potential marketing and enforcement options is set out in Table 3.6 below.

**Table 3.6 Summary of Potential Marketing and Promotional Options ('long-list')**

<b>Marketing – Short Term</b>	<b>Marketing – Medium/Longer Term</b>
<p><b>Promotional Incentives</b> Promotional incentives could be introduced to stimulate higher demand in specific car parks.</p> <p>Costs: Potentially low if sponsorship could be utilised</p>	<p><b>Information Campaigns</b> Consider wider advertisement of car parks through council publications and local media releases with routes and walk times to nearby retail and leisure attractions</p> <p>Costs: Design &amp; development Implementation</p> <p><b>Behavioural Change Campaigns</b> Consider wider information and marketing campaigns, highlighting the range of options for travelling into Sandwich Town Centre.</p> <p>Costs: Design &amp; development Implementation</p>

## EVENT MANAGEMENT

- 3.34 Feedback from the stakeholder engagement workshops suggested that when events are held within Sandwich, there are considerable pressures applied to parking provision, often to the detriment of residents. Working with event organisers to ensure improved co-ordination and advertisement of events within the town could manage these pressures. The following factors are considered important to discuss with event organisers:
- Dates/Times of events, including the time to set up and take down (and would this overlap with other events)
  - Expected duration of actual events and the peak times / 'shoulders' of the peak when visitors may arrive/depart
  - The demographic profile of visitors to the events and how this will influence parking provision.
  - How travel modes to the event are promoted to the visitor (e.g. can sustainable travel options be promoted over car journeys or can specific car parks/areas be promoted for event parking)
  - The pressure the event will apply to existing parking provision within the town and whether other areas of land be used for event parking (e.g. park & ride from peripheral areas or park & stride from edge of town centre parking)

## SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- 3.35 Alongside the direct strategies to manage parking supply and demand within Sandwich, a series of complementary measures can be considered that can seek to minimise the overall level of vehicular traffic entering the core town centre and requiring parking provision. This is a potentially wider-ranging policy area and so the focus of options is on measures that have either been identified within the stakeholder engagement process or are considered to be viable alternatives, within the context of Sandwich, to additional parking provision. These options may include:
- Promotion of local bus services into the town and the accessibility and connectivity of the stops with the key locations within the town.
  - Development and/or promotion of cycling and walking routes with the introduction of additional infrastructure such as bike stands and way-finding signs.
  - Prioritisation of car share spaces near entries to car parks
  - Traffic management measures, including potential changes to vehicle access to core town centre areas (either permanently or as part-time measures) to enhance provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

## 'LONG LIST' OF POTENTIAL MEASURES

- 3.36 The six 'long-lists' of policy interventions and scheme measures outlined within Section 3 above are now taken forward to provide the basis for identifying a 'short-list' of measures to address the identified parking strategy objectives within Sandwich.

## 4 Strategy Development

### DEVELOPING A PARKING STRATEGY FOR SANDWICH

- 4.1 It is clear from the collated evidence base that Sandwich requires a parking strategy that protects the historic nature of the town, whilst permitting the town's economy to thrive, and will evolve and adjust in relation to the levels of residential growth forecast within the town.
- 4.2 At present, the key issues facing Sandwich, in terms of parking, relate to making the most out of the existing parking stock, through incentivising use of spare capacity at different locations and times of the week, and in a manner that provides for the various users of the town centre.
- 4.3 The competing demand for parking provision from residents and visitors within the area is often raised as a concern to those residents in the area and this can lead to discord between these two groups.
- 4.4 Due to the associated volume of parking demand by visitors, large scale events within the town, such as Le Weekend and the Sandwich Festival, have their own car parking strategy. These include using areas of land, such as Cow Leas Meadow, for ad-hoc parking.
- 4.5 With between 10% to 20% forecast growth in residential dwellings in Sandwich, the dynamics of demand for parking could continue to change significantly and so it is important that parking provision is managed accordingly so as to facilitate housing growth without creating undue pressure on the local highway network. A simple response of predicting the future demand for parking and providing would not only be challenging to deliver but could, ultimately, be counterproductive, creating more issues for the town than benefits. Parking policy must, therefore, play its role within a wider context of managing demand for travel into the town centre.
- 4.6 Given the inevitable uncertainty over the absolute level of residential growth the parking strategy must be flexible enough to permit officers to respond to emerging travel demands and behaviours as they evolve. This is not to say that policy should be developed reactively - it will be important to have overall governing principles – but rather that the approach should be reviewed at incremental stages as the population grows to ensure that the best possible parking outcomes are being pursued.
- 4.7 It could be argued that the adoption of more radical travel demand management measures are required at this stage in order to change travel behaviours; however, it is appreciated that in the short-term there may be alternative options that are perceived to maximise the available parking assets of the town.
- 4.8 Alongside the development of the overarching principles for the parking strategy due consideration must be given to the funding and revenue aspects. With limited specific development occurring within the core town centre that might contribute funding to mitigating measures, any parking proposals must be considered carefully in terms of the potential capital and revenue stream impacts for the Council.

## OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- 4.9 Based upon the identified current and future needs of Sandwich Town Centre, and as a mechanism for delivery against the agreed objectives (as set out in Section 2), the overarching principles for the Sandwich Parking Strategy are as follows:
- Manage the Councils parking assets to maximise under-utilised car parking provision during the weekdays and manage provision at weekends and on event days.
  - Manage on-street parking to reduce conflicts between user groups and avoid detrimental impacts upon traffic circulation
  - Provide sufficient car parking capacity to reflect future growth in population, without inducing unmanageable traffic flows across and around the town
  - Inform and inspire the local community and visitors about parking provision and the range of options available to them to access the historic town core.
- 4.10 These overarching principles have subsequently been disaggregated into key areas for focus in the short term (the next 2 years) and the medium to longer term (2 to 10 years) primarily to acknowledge the changing dynamic within the town that is forecast to occur between these periods.

## SHORT TERM

- 4.11 Within the short term, the primary focus of the parking strategy is summarised within the following key areas:
- Ensure consistent standard of parking provision across the town
  - Manage the available parking assets to support the town centre vitality and provide for the needs of all users
  - Keep under review on-street parking provision and restrictions, giving due consideration for the varying needs of different parking user groups
  - Provide clear vehicle and pedestrian routings to/from car parking locations that minimise vehicle circulation and provide ease of access around town.

### Consistent High Parking Standard

- 4.12 The Council already employs the national 'ParkMark' standards across its car parks in Sandwich with the Guildhall, The Quay, and Gazen Salts reaching the national standard. Despite this, the site audit work still indicated some variation in the perceived standard of provision within individual car parks.
- 4.13 The ParkMark award is primarily focused upon the safety of a car park and so standards can still vary relating to the vehicular and pedestrian accessibility, surface conditions, markings, signage and way-finding within individual car parks. As 'gateway' points into the retail core of the town centre there are significant benefits that can be derived through continuing to improve the overall quality of car parks, including access and egress points for vehicles and pedestrians, and creating an enhanced pedestrian environment.
- 4.14 Having a consistent, high quality of car parks is considered particularly important as parking demands increases over time in order to encourage balanced use of all car parking provision around the town.

## Managing Parking Provision

### *Overview*

- 4.15 The profile of demand for parking in Sandwich indicates that there are periods during a typical week where there is available capacity but that during the peak seasonal periods, particularly on Saturdays, available capacity becomes scarce. Furthermore, during event days there is a significant lack of capacity across the core town centre that requires alternative parking provision to be utilised on the periphery of the town. The parking pressures encompass off-street parking provision but particularly affect on-street parking where conflicts are introduced between residents and non-resident parking needs.
- 4.16 The variability in demand requires a strategy to manage car parking provision during the peak periods, whilst ensuring that available capacity during the week is maximised. The role of parking tariffs can be an important tool in ensuring a balanced use of the town's entire car parking provision.
- 4.17 One of the more intrinsic natures of the historic town core is the challenge it presents to vehicle navigation, way-finding and circulation. This can create difficulties in identifying available parking capacity to visitors to the town. Providing clear signage to all car parking locations, with the number of spaces presented, is, therefore, of high importance to manage parking demand and minimise traffic circulation. This is discussed further in the section below on 'signage and routings'.
- 4.18 The stakeholder engagement process also raised the issue of enforcement and whether more regular patrols, especially on-street, could be utilised to manage parking levels and reduce inappropriate parking. This is discussed further in the 'on-street restrictions' section below.

### *Free parking*

- 4.19 Local stakeholders have indicated a preference for the introduction of free parking for short periods to enable locals to run errands within the town centre. Currently the minimum parking charge is 40 pence for both on and off-street provision, (with the exception of Gazen Salts at 30 pence). Whilst the intentions of this proposal are positive, it would need to be considered within the context of wider constraints on parking provision in the town. On a practical level the change would require an increase in enforcement costs, as Civil Enforcement Officers will need to patrol areas more regularly to record vehicles arrival times and duration of stay. The short-stay parking could also potentially lead to an increase in traffic circulation through town, encouraging additional trips and creating further traffic congestion. Furthermore, encouraging shorter dwell times within the town centre may not benefit all retailers. One option could be to introduce the short-stay free parking tariff on a weekday only when overall parking demand is generally lower.
- 4.20 An additional measure suggested by stakeholders is the introduction of limited number of 1-hour free parking spaces within The Quay and Guildhall car parks. These would also encourage short-stay parking and potentially encourage higher turnover of vehicles within these spaces. Given the average duration of stay in these car park is estimated at over two hours, this would increase the available capacity, particularly during busy periods. The measure would provide local shoppers greater opportunity to park in these premium locations and move some long-stay car parking to the Gazen Salts car park. The proposal would obviously have a direct impact upon the revenue generated from The Quay and/or the Guildhall car parks. The higher turnover of vehicles would also induce additional vehicle trips into the core town centre.

### *Duration of stay*

- 4.21 An alternative approach to providing free parking could be to reduce the permitted duration of stay within one or more of the car parks. At present all three Council-operated car parks in Sandwich permit up to 8 hour duration of stay, although the ticket sales data indicates less than 10% of Pay & Display car parking is for more than 4 hours. Nearly 50% of vehicles are parked between 2 and 4 hours in The Quay, on both weekdays and Saturdays (excluding permit parking). There is a similar profile in the Guildhall car park on a Saturday, although it is slightly lower (under 40%) on a weekday.



- 4.22 One option would be to reduce the permitted duration of Pay & Display parking in The Quay and/or the Guildhall car park to 4 hour maximum. This would require all 4+ hour parking to occur within Gazeon Salts and release between 5% and 10% demand in the other two car parks. A similar policy with a maximum stay of 3 hours Pay & Display parking would release between 12.5% and 20% of demand in the Guildhall car park and between 20% and 25% in The Quay. Either option to reduce long-stay car parking in The Quay and/or Guildhall car parks could potentially have a negative impact upon overall durations of stay in the town, despite Gazeon Salts being available for this type of parking. This would need to be considered carefully prior to any decision to implement.
- 4.23 The layout of the Guildhall car park would lend itself relatively easily to be split into a short and long-stay car parking to the north and south of the vehicular entrance. This arrangement could potentially allow the removal of some, but not all, long-stay parking and prioritise bays in premium locations close to the retail core for short-stay, high turnover, parking.
- 4.24 A further parking measure proposed by stakeholders is to provide long-stay parking for low-paid local employees, through provision of a permit scheme. A number of challenges are foreseen with the administration of such a scheme to ensure that the number of permits is suitably constrained, such that only a very limited proportion of premium town centre parking capacity is taken by all-day employee parking. Ideally, this type of parking would be allocated to areas outside of the core town centre so as not to reduce parking capacity for shoppers and visitors to the town. In the short term it could potentially be considered as a measure to be introduced at Gazeon Salts car park to maximise utilisation, potentially only on weekdays.

#### *Parking tariffs*

- 4.25 The collated survey data clearly indicates that demand for parking is significantly higher on Saturdays than that during the week. This is particularly true for on-street provision at Market Street and New Street, where Pay and Display demand on Saturdays is double that of a weekday. A sharp variation in demand can also be seen at the Guildhall Car Park.
- 4.26 One approach to balance out the level of demand between weekdays and Saturdays could be to introduce differential charging tariffs. This is likely to be more acceptable to the local community if it is introduced as a discount for weekdays rather than an increase on Saturdays, albeit there would be revenue implications which would need to be considered. At a holistic level, the introduction of a price differential should encourage those with a choice to visit the town more often on weekday rather than a Saturday. There will, however, be a significant proportion of people travelling into the town that are restricted to Saturdays; however, if the Saturday tariff remains static these people would be no worse off and may, potentially, find it easier to find a parking space.
- 4.27 Introducing differential charging may be considered confusing for some visitors; however, it is not uncommon to employ different parking restrictions on weekdays and weekends. In Sandwich it is further complicated by the fact that Sunday parking is free in two of the three council-operated car parks, meaning there would, effectively, be three tariff levels across the week. Provision of clear and concise signage can mitigate against this issue.

#### *Payment mechanisms*

- 4.28 The option to introduce 'pay-on-exit' ticketing was raised by some stakeholders as a means to induce longer durations of stay. Whilst this may offer benefits during weekdays, it is considered likely to increase pressure on scarce parking provision on Saturdays as people utilise spaces for longer. A 'Pay-on-exit' scheme would also require the implementation of new infrastructure, including barriers on entry, which could potentially lead to an increase in queuing vehicles at the car park access points, which would be detrimental to the traffic flow within the town. There are also practical difficulties in introducing it in some car parks, such as The Quay, given the layout of the site.



*Coach parking*

- 4.29 Where spare capacity exists within the town parking provision, one option could be to utilise this to provide coach parking, an issue identified by stakeholders. The designation of clear off-street parking provision for coaches, if delivered alongside wider visitor information measures, could attract more visitor trips into the core town centre. It could also alleviate some of the reported issues associated with obstructions caused by on-street parking of these larger vehicles.
- 4.30 Respondents suggested this parking could be out of the core town centre; however, designated provision within the town would offer a more beneficial solution to allow passengers to walk to and from the vehicle. Unfortunately the primary available capacity is within the Gazen Salts car park which is relatively constrained in physical access terms and so is unlikely to be practical for coach parking. A more viable solution would be to utilise the Guildhall car park; however, this already has much higher levels of existing utilisation and so could create peak period capacity constraints.
- 4.31 Practical short-term solutions for off-street coach parking in the town are considered limited and so this issue may only be addressed within the longer term.

## **Road-space allocation**

*Permit parking*

- 4.32 Demand for both on and off-street parking space in the core town centre is derived from both residents and visitors. A significant number of properties do not have off-street parking facilities and so a residents parking scheme (Zone J) operates within the town. This provides residents with an opportunity to park in 'limited waiting' kerbside spaces and in selected off-street car parks. In all cases spaces are shared between resident permit holders and visitors who can use the 'limited waiting' facility or Pay & Display in car parks. As a result of this set-up, residents with permits can often still have difficulty parking near their properties, an issue raised during the stakeholder engagement process.
- 4.33 It is understood that around 300 resident permits are currently issued for use in Zone J. Given the estimated number of on-street parking bays in the core town of around 250 spaces, this demonstrates the underlying requirement for off-street permit parking. It also provides a clear indication of the scale of demand for the shared spaces from residents, even without considering the demand from non-residents.
- 4.34 One option would be to consider the reallocation of some of these on-street permit / limited waiting bays to resident permit holders only. This would prioritise residents parking over visitors in some parts of the town. In parallel to this, and to ensure residents confidence in the parking scheme, appropriate levels of visible enforcement would minimise inappropriate use of these bays. To compensate for the loss of non-resident parking additional Pay & Display could be introduced in core retail areas of the town. This would provide clear designation of spaces for different user groups and help reduce conflicts; however, it may also reduce overall utilisation of on-street parking spaces across the whole day and week as the parking bays lose their multi-functional use.
- 4.35 It will be prudent to regulate the overall supply of resident permits within the town to ensure that demand for this type of parking does not have an overwhelming effect on other potential town centre users. For example, if all residents with permits parked in Guildhall this will be at the determinant of visitors and would inhibit a turnover of vehicles required for operational purposes.

*Loading/Unloading*

- 4.36 The stakeholder engagement process has highlighted the challenges faced by businesses and tradesmen in undertaking deliveries within the core town without creating undue constraints on traffic movements in narrow streets. The provision of loading bays is currently limited but reflects the overarching constraints on kerbside space in the town. Stakeholders have suggested permitting loading/tradesmen to utilise Pay & Display bays free of charge for an hour. Whilst this may encourage more appropriate parking it would be challenging in enforcement terms and could be subject to misuse.

It is recommended that provision of more formal loading/unloading bays, perhaps only operational during certain times of the day, would be more appropriate.

*Blue badge parking*

- 4.37 Within the stakeholder engagement process the limited provision of blue badge parking was raised. With the already relatively elderly population within the area expected to rise, the provision of both on and off-street blue badge bays should be investigated. As blue badge holders are eligible to park on single/double yellow lines (without loading limitations) it is important to ensure there is sufficient formal provision to minimise the level of ad hoc parking that can inconvenience traffic flow in the town and be disruptive to other road users.

*Traffic circulation*

- 4.38 In all issues relating to managing kerbside road-space, consideration should be given to the impact upon traffic circulation around the town. It is acknowledged that this is a critical issue given the nature of many streets within the town and that, as the town continues to grow, these pressures will only increase. As part of wider traffic management measures, the role of road-space allocation should be considered, including where absolutely necessary the removal of formal and/or unrestricted parking in narrow streets to ensure effective vehicle movements.

- 4.39 A specific issue for traffic circulation relates to congestion outside school during drop-off and collection times. Whilst this is confined to set periods of the day, it is acknowledged as a significant issue during these periods. Solutions to these issues must ideally be holistic in nature, encompassing travel behaviour, parking provision, as well as traffic management; however, consideration should be given to necessary highway alterations and/or restrictions around schools with associated enforcement.

## **Signage and Routing**

- 4.40 As mentioned previously, the intrinsic nature of the historic town core presents challenges to vehicle navigation, way-finding and circulation. Providing clear signage to all car parking locations, with the number of spaces presented, is, therefore, of high importance to manage parking demand and minimise traffic circulation.
- 4.41 Tourism plays a vital role for Sandwich and visitors and ensuring visitors unfamiliar with the area ascertain clear directions on where to park in relation to facilities is important for the visitor experience. Whilst some visitors may arrive independently on an ad-hoc basis, events within the town centre often bring higher visitor numbers during peak periods, often with visitors travelling by private car. It is therefore important that information is provided to visitors on locations of car parking facilities.
- 4.42 The provision of variable message signage for car parking in Sandwich is considered unlikely to be justified in terms of value for money given the absolute volume for traffic entering the town on each corridor. There are also only three primary off-street visitor car parking locations in the core town, along with the Co-Op Supermarket (Pioneer) car park, which means that there is less requirement for this type of system as sufficient information can generally be presented on static signs.
- 4.43 The historic and narrow streets can often become congested when an incident occurs, particularly due to the one-way systems around the town. For those unfamiliar with the area, navigation through these streets back onto the strategic road network can prove difficult. It is, therefore, important that at key decision points, signage is clear and consistent along a route.
- 4.44 Equally important is the provision of coherent and consistent way-finding from car parks to key town centre locations. This is particularly important for the car parks on the periphery of the town, such as Gazen Salts, to encourage their use.

## MEDIUM TO LONGER TERM

- 4.45 Within the medium-to-long term the focus of the parking strategy needs to reflect the increasing pressures that will be placed upon the town transport network and deliver measures that are a positive influence supporting the local economy and promoting tourism. Given both the physical constraints of the town and limited funding opportunities, this may require the incorporation of technological advances and the management of travel behaviour within the town.
- 4.46 Key areas of the strategy within the medium-to-long term include:
- Develop the available parking stock to support an increasing population across the town.
  - Monitor on-street parking needs to ensure the most efficient use of available parking provision.
  - Ensure adequate information is provided to direct visitors (including coaches) and residents to make informed choices on travel and parking decisions.

### Development of Parking Stock

#### *Overview*

- 4.47 The forecast residential population growth of between 10% and 20% in Sandwich and the surrounding hinterland over the next 10 years will result in increased demand for travel into Sandwich Town Centre and, hence, parking demand. Whilst there is some spare parking capacity during the weekdays the growth is likely to create significant pressures on weekend parking.
- 4.48 Alongside the residential growth there are some limited retail development proposals, including a new Waitrose store on the edge of the core town. This will be delivered with its own car parking provision but the wider impact this has upon traffic movements across the town, including linked trips into the town will need to be considered.
- 4.49 Within the core town centre itself there is unlikely to be any significant change to the overall retail and leisure offer, other than the underlying churn of retail units. It is, therefore, the growth in residential trip into the town, along with the visitor / event market that will impact most upon parking in the town.
- 4.50 Within off-street car parks there may be a requirement to provide additional priority spaces for specific user groups. Within the short term measures the requirements for blue badge holders has already been discussed. It is likely that with the UK's continuing aging population that the requirement for blue badge parking will continue to grow over the next ten years.
- 4.51 Consideration should also be given to the promotion of alternative forms of sustainable travel, specifically low or zero emissions vehicles through priority provision in a car parks and the potential installation of infrastructure to support them, such as charging points. Given the ever developing nature of this market this strategy needs to be flexible in terms of the promotion of these types of technologies.
- 4.52 Tariff structures should also continue to be monitored every three to five years both in terms of managing overall demand, as well as the use of differential pricing to maximise the use of available space.

#### *Increasing capacity*

- 4.53 The opportunities for additional parking provision within the town are limited. Multi-story parking provision on existing sites would be inappropriate within the historic nature of the town, as well as unlikely to be cost effective.
- 4.54 Cow Leas Meadow is currently utilised for up to 28 days a year, as permitted under planning terms, for informal event day parking in the town, such as for 'Le Weekend'. Preliminary investigations have taken place to evaluate the potential option for utilising the land to more formally increase parking capacity. The area of land is not designated for this form of development and in order to deliver such a scheme it would be necessary to produce a robust business case demonstrating the overall value from formal

development of the site into a car park for regular day-to-day parking. Given its location, a car park on this site might also potentially attract rail users and so the implications would need to be considered carefully.

- 4.55 Alternative sites that have been identified include the Kent County Council Highways Depot, located off Ash Road. The site is still relatively close to the town centre and so could offer an option for longer-stay car parking and potentially coach parking. Other 'open' sites around the River Stour are likely to be restrictive in conservation and environmental terms, despite potentially offering practical solutions in parking terms.
- 4.56 Whilst all of these options to increase parking supply have inherent challenges associated with them, it is important that they are retained for consideration in the longer-term as the town grows and appraised within the context of both parking pressures and associated constraints on the vitality of the town centre.

### **Road-space allocation**

- 4.57 Pressure on town centre on-street parking will increase as housing development is delivered within the wider town. With restrictive opportunities to increase off-street capacity, this is likely to increase pressure on kerbside road-space. It will be important to continually monitor the impacts, both within the core town centre, but also increasing in more peripheral, edge of town centre areas.
- 4.58 The balance of residents and non-residents parking in the centre will should be reviewed every three to five years to ensure it best meets the overall needs of the town. This could include the overall number of tariffs for permits and on-street Pay & Display. The on-going review of road-space allocation could also include revaluating enforcement regimes to ensure both regular enough patrols in recognised areas of high parking pressure, as well as including a wider area across the town as parking pressures spread.
- 4.59 Consideration may also be required for introducing additional residents permit schemes in other areas of the town, such as Whitefriars and Willowbank. This would typically be subject to survey work and community consultation.

### **Information**

- 4.60 Building upon the elements presented to minimise town centre circulation (see above), the physical and financial constraints of delivering infrastructure-related measures to support the future growth of the town mean that the role of information provision and signage will be a critical tool in managing the effective operation of the town centre transport network.
- 4.61 This can incorporate traditional directional forms of signage (discussed with the short term measures), but also wider information provision and social media 'apps' to encourage different patterns of behaviour amongst travellers accessing the town centre.
- 4.62 Working with the local tourism industry, dissemination of information on visitor parking and coach parking can be enhanced to minimise peak demands and traffic congestion within the town.
- 4.63 At a holistic level, minimising the future demand for parking provision across the town will be a key issue. Whilst much of this will involve the physical provision of alternative means of travel (public transport, walking and cycling) the role of information provision and community engagement will also be a critical issue in changing behaviour.
- 4.64 Even with a comprehensive sustainable travel approach, there will remain large volumes of private car trips and demand for parking. It will therefore be important to influence where, when and for how long these individuals park.

## 5 Strategy Action Plan

### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 This section sets out a series of actions to be implemented as part of the parking strategy process. As with the previous sections, the actions are disaggregated into short and medium/long term to reflect the changing dynamic of the town centre over that period

### SHORT TERM

- 5.2 Five short-term actions have been identified for implementation over the next two years. These are set out below along with associated outcome monitoring tools that can be applied to gauge success.

#### Quality

- i. Continue to apply Park Mark standards across all car parks but seek to further raise the standard of some car parks in terms of access and way-finding so they all act as positive 'gateways' leading into the core town centre.

**Outcome Monitoring:** Programme of formal audits alongside feedback from civil enforcement officers and public.

**Cost implications:** Urban realm, pedestrian and signage infrastructure

#### Managing available capacity

- ii. Consider opportunities to balance demand across all car parks either passively, through ensuring visitor information is available on where to park during busier periods, or more proactively, through consideration of price differentials to increase the utilisation of less popular car parking provision or altering permitted durations of stay.

**Outcome Monitoring:** Car park utilisation data

**Cost implications:** Car park revenues, information provision

#### Road-space allocation

- iii. Review Zone J residential permit parking to ensure the right balance of utilisation of both on-street parking bays and off-street car parks and consider the benefit of clear disaggregation of resident and non-resident on-street parking bays.

**Outcome Monitoring:** reported conflicts in on-street parking demand; levels of permits

**Cost implications:** signage changes

- iv. Provide sufficient formal blue badge parking and loading/unloading provision, alongside a wider review of enforcement regimes, to ensure that ad hoc (legal and illegal) parking activity does not detrimentally impact upon town centre traffic circulation, including around schools.

**Outcome Monitoring:** Blue badge parking and loading/unloading provision, levels of ad hoc blue badge parking and loading/unloading, traffic congestion levels

**Cost implications:** signs and lines implementation

## Signage

- v. Through development of a static sign and way-finding strategy, influence traffic circulation within the town and the choices drivers make about parking provision.

**Outcome Monitoring:** Traffic counts and car park occupancy

**Cost implications:** *Static signage provision, way-finding/urban realm enhancements*

- 5.3 The majority of the short term actions represent measures to improve the overall condition and manage on and off-street parking provision in Sandwich so as to maximise the efficiency of car park utilisation and the highway network.

## MEDIUM TO LONG TERM

- 5.4 A total of four longer-term actions have been identified for implementation from two years hence. These tend to be more flexible in nature, reflecting the uncertainty surrounding the scale and phasing of housing development around the town and the impact this may have upon the overall dynamic of parking requirements in the town.

- 5.5 The four actions are set out below along with associated outcome monitoring tools that can be applied to gauge success.

## Development of parking stock

- vi. Opportunities for additional parking capacity should be reviewed over time in line with increasing demand. Whilst some new public parking provision may be delivered through private developments (e.g. Supermarkets) the Council's own parking stock could potentially be increased if it were deemed to offer sufficient value for money and was considered to be sustainable in terms of both environmental impacts and overall traffic generation within the town.

**Outcome Monitoring:** Supply and utilisation of parking

**Cost implications:** Scheme development, design and implementation

## Road-space allocation

- vii. Monitor changes in demand for on-street parking provision resulting from increased housing development and consider the requirement for additional residential parking permit provision alongside priorities for use of road space within the core town centre.

**Outcome Monitoring:** reported conflicts in on-street parking demand; levels of permits

**Cost implications:** consultation, signage changes

## Information

- viii. Create parking websites and 'Apps', alongside traditional information formats, to inform locals and visitors of parking provision and alerts to special events / incidents

**Outcome Monitoring:** usage levels of 'App'; profile of parking utilisations

**Cost implications:** development and operating costs

- ix. Develop promotional & marketing campaigns in support of the developing town centre to encourage alternative means of travel to the core town centre or the re-timing of trips

**Outcome Monitoring:** number of promotional campaigns delivered; balance of sustainable travel

**Cost implications:** design and delivery of campaigns

- 5.6 The medium-to-longer term actions reflect the requirement to respond to the changing dynamic of the town centre with the potential increase in demand for travel into the centre. Whilst there may be some, albeit limited, opportunities to provide additional parking capacity, the strategy also needs to take into consideration the historic nature of the highway network and ensure that the overall growth in vehicle trips into the town is managed appropriately.