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Stockport Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

Strategy and Action Plan

Stockport Council

Project Number: 60532715

December 2017

Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Whilst the Council's overall, long term strategic ambition is to reduce car usage in Stockport town centre by encouraging more sustainable transport modes such as bus, cycling and walking, parking provision is fundamental to the successful operation and function of any town centre and is intrinsically linked to wider transport and land use planning. Parking does not solely relate to the provision of parking facilities for cars, but the provision of adequate and efficient car parking in Stockport Town Centre is crucial in helping ensure that Stockport successfully continues to develop its role as a key urban centre within Greater Manchester. In addition, car parking provides the Council with a major source of income, with the Council operating 30 car parks and nearly 3,000 car parking spaces within Stockport Town Centre.

The last car parking strategy for Stockport was adopted in 2012, and was developed based on findings from a parking study undertaken in 2008. Since the previous study, Stockport has entered a period of change, driven by a number of recent and proposed developments within the Town Centre such as Redrock and Stockport Exchange, and changes in the local road network through the Town Centre Access Package (TCAP). A review of the car parking strategy in the Town Centre has been undertaken to ensure that the Council's approach is fit for purpose in light of the level of change in the town centre; that the approach supports longer term aspirations for the town centre; and that it takes account of future developments and demand for parking.

The review is cognisant of the current parking service provision and needs of existing residents, businesses and visitors, whilst identifying opportunities to enhance provision in light of the proposed regeneration and road network changes. It will also ensure that provision is appropriately located and of sufficient capacity and quality to support economic development and regeneration whilst balancing the requirements of residents, businesses, commuters and visitors.

In developing the strategy, consideration has been given to:

1) Where are we now - assessment of the quantity, location, quality and cost of existing parking stock within the town centre.

2) Where we want to be – consideration of existing and future demand and assessment of the implications of town centre regeneration proposals and potential approaches to managing parking.

3) How we get there – action plan, recommendations and proposals for car parking priorities and policies to be delivered by the Council over the short, medium and long terms.

Whilst this strategy focuses on parking provision for cars, it does not sit in isolation and is complemented by the wider transport strategy context in Stockport, including the emerging Cycling and Walking Strategy, and the draft South East Manchester Multi Modal (SEMMM) Strategy Refresh.

1.2 Strategic Context

The Strategy has been prepared at a time when there are a number of competing priorities within Stockport Town Centre, influenced by the objectives of existing transport and growth strategies.

- Stockport's overall strategic transport aim is to reduce volumes of traffic circulating the town centre, combat long standing issues regarding congestion and address issues regarding poor air quality by finding ways to get more people using more sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Managing the amount and type of car parking provided can play an important role in encouraging modal shift.

- In addition to encouraging people to move to more sustainable public and active transport modes, technological advances mean there will be increasing demand for more sustainably fuelled vehicles. There is a strategic imperative to ensure that car parking provision is able to cater for the expected increased demand for electric vehicle charging.

- In terms of growth, the Council's aim is to attract and support commercial investment in the town centre, in the context of a competitive environment and against the offer at locations such as the Trafford Centre and Manchester Airport. This is complemented by a strategic ambition to attract residential uses in the town centre, and develop a broader leisure offer through new developments such as Redrock and Stockport Exchange.

Underpinning these wider agendas, there is a challenge to meet the needs of existing residents and businesses who live and operate in the Town Centre, as well as those visitors and commuters who travel to and from the Town Centre. There is also a challenge to capitalise on opportunities to generate income whilst balancing the achievement of long term income resulting from a more vibrant town centre, with any pressure for short term rises to meet the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. Any consideration of car parking provision is also set in the context that land in the town centre is finite, and that any new allocation of land for car parking needs to be balanced against other demands for space.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The Strategy has been developed with this strategic context in mind, aligning with the long term strategic approach for developing Stockport Town Centre, whilst allowing flexibility for the strategy to evolve in response to changing longer term travel patterns.

The Parking Strategy will help ensure the Council can manage its car parking provision and car parking policy in a way which will support wider transport initiatives, help reduce congestion, improve local air quality, and deliver reductions in carbon emissions. Stockport will, therefore, become a more appealing place to live, shop, visit and do business in, thereby helping grow the local economy

The Parking Strategy will aim to deliver the following 4 objectives:

1) **Ensure an appropriate supply of car parking to meet future demands in the town centre through the provision of flexible, adaptable multi-use parking solutions that suit the requirements of a variety of users.**

2) **Optimise the usage of existing capacity whilst minimising displacement into adjacent residential neighbourhoods.**

3) **Improve accessibility and signage to car parking within the town centre and from key surrounding routes so as to reduce the need for unnecessary traffic circulation in the town centre.**

4) **Optimise income generation from car parking whilst supporting the vitality and economic attractiveness of the town centre to visitors, investors and developers.**

2. Where are we now?

2.1 Study Baseline

The development of the Strategy has been informed by a comprehensive audit of existing car parking provision in Stockport Town Centre. A baseline review has been undertaken which considered the existing parking provision in the context of the number of spaces, car park ownership, tariffs, location and the existing on-street and permit parking arrangements.

The baseline review also investigated the potential impact on parking needs arising from planned major new developments within the study area, in order to identify the likely future demands for car parking provision, as well as where existing parking stock would be directly impacted by proposed developments.

The baseline situation was presented in the 'Stockport Town Centre Parking Strategy Initial Findings Report' (**Appendix A)**. The following section summarises the key findings and issues/opportunities identified in that review.

2.1.1 Existing Parking Provision

Off-street parking	Publicly available at 46 car parks within the specified study area. Of these 46 car parks, 30 (65%) were managed by SMBC, with the remaining 16 (35%) managed by private operators. Altogether, these car parks provided a total capacity of 7,251 parking spaces. 2,933 (40%) of these spaces were under SMBC management, with 4,318 (60%) being privately operated. However, of the 2,933 spaces managed by SMBC, only 2,420 spaces are publically available, with the remaining 513 spaces being available on a contract or permit-only basis.
On-street pay and display parking	Approximately 474 spaces were available at the baseline point of end December 2016. These spaces are predominantly located to the east of the A6 along Chestergate, Higher Hillgate, Middle Hillgate, Piccadilly, Norbury Street and Edward Street and the surrounding side streets.
Parking for disabled users	There are 137 spaces for disabled users within the off street, publicly available parking provision. Heaton Lane, Merseyway and Stockport Exchange car parks provide the majority of spaces for blue badge holders within the town centre with 25 provided at Heaton Lane, 31 at Merseyway and 50 at Stockport Exchange NCP. In addition, there are a number of on-street parking bays at various locations around the Town Centre that are set aside for blue badge holders only. There are also 33 spaces designated for parents with children and 8 spaces for electric vehicles within the off street provision.

Controlled Parking Zones	There is a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in operation within the Town Centre. There are currently 83 active residential permits within the Town Centre CPZ. These entitle residents to park anywhere in the on-street pay and display bays without any time limit. There are also 8 contract permits active within what is known as the CPZ Extension (near Stockport College) for the on-street Pay and Display bays.
Other	There are 23 contract permits active in Town Centre contract only car parks, 7 at Bamford Street, 7 at Edward Street and 9 at Lord Street 1. There is further availability at Loonies Court and Lord Street 1 and 2 however these are mainly used as for Council Staff overflow parking when the contracts aren't sold. There are 161 contract permits active in public pay and display car parks (159 at Heaton Lane car park - Level 3 and above - and 2 at Newbridge Lane car park). Vehicles which have exhaust emissions below 100g/km are eligible for free parking in chargeable on and off-street public parking places operated by the Council. There are 650 such permits active in Stockport.

1) **There is an opportunity to acquire car parks managed by the Council for incorporation into wider regeneration schemes.**
2) **There is an opportunity to manage provision to ensure it is integrated with appropriate land uses and increases visitor footfall (i.e. by locating short stay provision close to leisure activities)**
3) **There is an opportunity to improve signage to car parking and encourage better routeing of incoming traffic to appropriate car parks to reduce the time spent searching for a car park.**
4) **There is an opportunity to ensure that parking provision helps to contribute to encouraging modal shift (e.g. by integrating cycling parking)**
5) **There is an opportunity for the Council to continue to work with major employers and organisations in the Town Centre to encourage modal shift amongst staff, and to encourage modal shift amongst its own staff via implementation of the Council's Staff Travel Plan.**

2.1.2 Demand for Parking

Data from Variable Message Signs linked to several of the car parks has been used to establish maximum occupancy for several of the town centre car parks. Where this data was not available the Civil Enforcement team provided a further estimate, from personal observations, of the occupancy of each car park during an average weekday/weekend day.

The analysis resulted in the following key findings:

- On an average weekday the majority of Council operated car parks that are located within the town centre are full. However, at weekends these car parks are only at 25% of their capacity. With the exception of Banbury Street, Heaton Lane and Newbridge Lane car parks which were at 40% of capacity during the week and at 20% during the weekend.

- Of the privately operated off street parking stock it was estimated that Fletcher Street, Norbury Street, Wellington Street, Exchange Short Stay, Asda and Edward Street 2 were at or close to capacity both during the week and at weekends.

- The remaining privately operated car parks operated at approximately 50% of capacity during the week and between 50% and 75% at weekends, with the Peel Centre car park showing the greatest increase in demand at weekends.

User surveys were not undertaken and therefore it was not possible to identify the user type.

Motorists are currently directed to existing car parks via a series of static stack type and flag type direction signs. There are also a number of existing Variable Message Signs that indicate to motorists the capacity of nearby car parks and when they are full.

Car parks are currently named by the road on which they are located, for example 'Newbridge Lane Car Park' and 'Churchgate Car Park' and the signing is inconsistent and does not direct motorists to the car park most relevant to their destination or route.

1) **There is an opportunity to improve signage to car parking and encourage better routeing of incoming traffic to appropriate car parks to reduce the time spent searching for a car park.**
2) **There is an opportunity to optimise use of existing capacity by adopting flexible solutions which can be used by different complementary groups at different times (i.e. overnight parking for residential users alongside day time parking for retail users).**
3) **There is an opportunity to introduce payment mechanisms appropriate to specific car parks (e.g. pay on foot at large short stay car parks linked to retail activities).**

2.1.3 Price Comparison

The price of car parking is complex and there is an unclear relationship across the UK between the cost of parking and the level of footfall in town centres. There is also a social challenge to ensure that changes to pricing do not result in unintended changes to driver behaviour which could increase the level of on-street parking in surrounding neighbourhoods. At the same time, car parking charges can be a useful mechanism to encourage behaviour change and support people to choose public transport alternatives.

At present, there is a consistent tariff structure across the Council-owned car parks within the Town Centre which appears to be based upon proximity to the Town Centre retail core. However, there are variations with regards to what private operators are charging within the car parks they own and operate.

Within these car parks there also appears to be no correlation between the pricing structure and the quality of car park (e.g. surfacing, lighting, marked bays, CCTV, etc.).

Overall, Council-owned car parks are the cheapest for all lengths of stay, however, Matalan car park is equally as cheap for a one hour stay and both Matalan and Asda car parks are as cheap as the Council car parks for a 2 hour stay.

The provision of free or cheap car parking can be a method of attracting footfall into the town centre but needs to be managed sensitively as it can also be taken up by commuters to the detriment of other users. However, as costs are still being incurred in maintenance, cleaning, rates and enforcement it was recommended that tariffs need to be set such that these costs are still covered by the appropriate level of revenue. Furthermore, being free of charge or cheaper, and therefore more attractive to users than other Council operated car parks within the same catchment and may reduce revenue to the Council which could be used to support other parking or transport-related measures.

The Council has recently submitted a business case which proposes to reduce the discount offered on Low Emission permits from 100% to a 67% discount on the annual Mon – Fri Town centre permit price. This would see the annual charge increase to £360 for low emission (Band A) vehicles. The existing £10 permit would be maintained for zero emission vehicles only.

It is estimated that Stockport currently forgoes parking receipts of approximately £200,000pa to support the existing 'Low Emission' initiative. If unchanged it is estimated that this permit type will offer a 100% discount to an increasing number of eligible vehicles further increasing this forgone income.

1) **There is a need to ensure that tariff structures in Council-owned car parks are consistent, and competitive with privately operated car parks**
2) **The Council needs to maintain a minimum level of revenue to operate the parking service**
3) **There is an opportunity to develop new parking offers to induce new businesses to use Council-owned car parks**

3. Where we want to be

3.1 Future Development Proposals

One of the key issues to be addressed by the Strategy is the need to plan and manage an expected increase in demand for car parking as a result of proposed future developments within the study area. Through discussions with key stakeholders at SMBC and their Property Services Provider Carillion, a number of proposals for significant new developments within the Town Centre over the next 15 years have been identified.

In total, details of 56 potential developments have been identified through these stakeholder discussions. Of these, 50 are considered likely to have an impact on Town Centre parking, whether in terms of reducing provision, increasing demand, or both. The development proposals comprise of up to 3,800 new residential dwellings, approximately 50,000 sqm of office space, and approximately 20,000 sqm of retail / leisure uses.

A full analysis of the likely impacts of these developments with regards to the likely demand for parking each will generate, the likelihood that a development will include on-site parking, and whether on-site parking will be sufficient to accommodate the forecast demand, is provided in the accompanying Technical Note 'Stage 2: Strategy Development – Demand Forecasting', which is included as **Appendix B** to this report. For analysis purposes, the study area was divided into a number of zones. The zones were defined based on a combination of the location of existing car parks, the distribution of anticipated new developments, and the geography of the town centre. The extent of each zone is illustrated on Drawing Reference 60532715-REF-CT-002 in **Appendix E.**

The next section summarises the impacts.

3.2 Impact of Future Developments on Parking Supply and Demand

The impact of the proposed and potential development sites with regard to parking is two-fold. Every development site will potentially have an impact with regard to increased demand for car parking. Several sites are located on existing car parks, so will additionally result in a reduction in the baseline availability of car parking stock in the Town Centre. However, there are also a number of potential new car park sites that have been identified through the stakeholder discussions, which will provide a net increase to the baseline parking supply. An assumed timeline of the forecast changes to the baseline parking supply and the impact on the residual Town Centre off street parking stock is presented in **Appendix B.**

Based on the assumptions set out in **Appendix B**, it is forecast that the net effect of the anticipated changes to car park provision will be an increase of approximately 1,200 publically available off-street parking spaces over the next 15 years. However, many of the proposed new spaces are intended to support parking demand associated with specific developments, and as such may not fully address the demand for new parking generated by the proposed developments identified.

It should be noted that the estimated level of demand generated by new developments represents a hypothetical 'worst-case' scenario, which assumes that the peak level of demand for both residential and non-residential developments occurs at the same time. In reality the periods of maximum parking demand for these two types of development are unlikely to overlap. Likewise, further variation can be expected within the broad 'non-residential' category, for example between office and retail developments. The demand forecasts also represent a worst-case assessment, assuming unconstrained demand and a relatively high car mode share. The estimates do not take into account factors such as reductions in car mode share due to availability of public transport, or limited on-site parking provision.

The analysis of the zones highlights that there is:

- A likely shortfall in provision of approximately 235 spaces in the Town Centre South East zone in the short term. This is largely a result of existing baseline demand combined with the closure of car parks for development sites. This shortfall is forecast to increase to around 300 spaces in the medium term, and around 535 spaces in the long term, due to demand generated by new developments. There is an existing issue with parking being displaced onto adjacent residential roads.

- A current reliance on Heaton Lane Multi Storey Car Park as a multi-use car park in the Town Centre North West zone. There is an ongoing issue with the condition of Heaton Lane Car Park and the potential that it requires improvement.

- A potential shortage of parking spaces in the Higher Hillgate zone in the medium to long term resulting from new residential developments in that area. However, there is a degree of uncertainty regarding some of these development proposals, and it is possible that some or all of the forecast additional demand could be accommodated by on-plot car parking within each development site.

- A reliance on private, store-based car parks in the Town Centre North East zone, but no short to medium term requirement for additional spaces. The impact of new commercial and residential demand in the area will need to be monitored, and there may be a longer term need to identify alternative provision for commercial and residential users.

- A shortfall in the Town Centre South West zone in the longer term, principally a result of the additional demand anticipated from the full build out of Stockport Exchange. However, this is a worst-case assessment, assuming unconstrained demand and a relatively high car mode share. The Transport Assessment which supported the planning application for Exchange assumed a lower level of demand based on limited provision of parking and close proximity to public transport services. This concluded that the available parking within the existing Exchange MSCP and the proposed expansion of CP1A would be sufficient to accommodate all of the expected demand for parking generated by the Exchange development.

- In the Edgeley zone, the principal demand for parking is generated by the potential development sites identified within the Stockport Station Masterplan but there is already displacement of parking onto adjacent residential roads. It should be noted that the Masterplan provides a potential schedule of development for a number of plots, but does not identify any car parking that might be provided to support these developments. It is possible that as part of the detailed design of these Station Masterplan sites, sufficient on-site parking would be provided to accommodate some or all of the forecast additional demand.

1) There will be demand for additional spaces provided in the Town Centre South East zone and parking provision as part of the Station Masterplan proposals will be required.

2) There is an opportunity to improve the quality and condition of Heaton Multi-Storey Car Park

3) Unrestricted parking is a particular challenge in the Town Centre South East and Edgeley zones and there is an opportunity to review the existing residential permitting scheme and town centre CPZ.

3.3 Development of Key Objectives

Having identified the likely impact of future changes in car parking supply and demand, the following objectives have been identified:

Objective 1 – Ensure an appropriate supply of car parking to meet future demands in the town centre through the provision of flexible, adaptable multi-use parking solutions that suit the requirements of a variety of users

The appropriate location and level of parking within the Town Centre has a crucial part to play in its economic vitality. Research undertaken identified that the availability of parking at destinations is an important factor affecting car use, however high levels of car parking provision within the town centre may be an inappropriate use of valuable land which may contribute to car dependency. Where possible it was recommended that larger off street car parking facilities, where required, would be located on the fringes of the town centre to release smaller sites within the town centre for development and other uses. In addition, consideration must be given to the provision of parking for all users, including disabled drivers, parking for powered two-wheelers, electric vehicle parking, and parking spaces set aside for car club vehicles and cyclists.

Objective 2 – Optimise the usage of existing capacity whilst minimising displacement into adjacent residential neighbourhoods.

Whilst there is a recognised need to provide additional parking to cater for forecast demand shortfalls over the strategy period, it is also important that parking is not over-provided, both to help reduce the amount of capital expenditure required for new car parks, and to help to suppress any over-reliance on car usage, and encourage travel by sustainable modes. It is, therefore, important to make the most efficient use of existing parking facilities wherever possible, through accommodating a variety of users. For example, peak demand for residential parking generally occurs at a different time of day to that for

commuter parking, or retail parking. This therefore creates the opportunity to utilise the same car park for these different groups of users, rather than providing individual parking for each group.

Objective 3 – Improve accessibility and signage to car parking within the town centre and from key surrounding routes so as to reduce the need for unnecessary traffic circulation in the town centre.

The provision of high quality and safe car parks is an important element of the strategy, as often the car parking provision contributes to a visitor's first impression of the town.

Enhanced provision of parking information and its quality should be sought and attractive facilities for those with limited mobility or with families should be provided. There is a need to work with stakeholders to improve the quality of parking and information available, ideally through technology and in particular develop a new parking signage and information system that supports parking and wider aspirations, for example contributing to improved traffic flow, and related improvements in air quality, by reducing the time people are driving looking for a parking space.

Objective 4 – Optimise income generation from car parking whilst supporting the vitality and economic attractiveness of the town centre to visitors, investors and developers.

The provision of free or cheap car parking as a method of attracting footfall into the town centre needs to be balanced with the ongoing costs of maintaining and enforcing parking provision. Any additional income to the Council generated from increased parking charges needs to be balanced against the likely adverse impact on the attractiveness of the town centre as a competitive visitor, business and investment location when compared with competing offers in the region.

Tariff setting is of crucial importance in influencing demand for car parking, and hence helping to achieve the overall objectives of the parking strategy. The use of parking tariff controls will be important in managing demand for station car parking, and for controlling future conflicting demands for residential and commercial parking, particularly with regards to managing on-street parking, as developments are brought forward in the Town Centre.

4. Strategy Action Plan

4.1 Parking Strategy Action Plan

The following paragraphs identify specific actions and measures that will underpin the strategy and support each of the objectives.

4.2 On and Off-Street Provision

4.2.1 Short Term (2017 – 2019)

In the short term there are known shortfalls in parking provision, particularly with regards to long-stay parking within the Town Centre South East Zone in the areas surrounding Wellington Street and Piccadilly. This shortfall is created by a combination of the historical and future loss of existing car parks that have been or will be turned over to development, such as the former private car park at Archer House and the London Place permit holders' car park. In addition long stay parking that occurs on street in the Covent Garden area will also be displaced when the Covent Garden Village development begins.

To counteract the issues foreseen in this area it is recommended that approximately 300 off-street parking spaces should be provided in the short term in this zone. This would provide adequate provision to cater for anticipated demand in the short and medium term in this area. It is recommended that these spaces are provided in a single new car park, in order to reduce land take and consolidate forecast parking demand into a single location, to act as a capture car park in order to reduce traffic circulation in the Town Centre. Two potential locations for new car parks have been identified on Wellington Street, one on the north side adjacent to Hempshaw House, and one on the south side close to the junction with Churchgate. Both of these sites would allow easy access by intercepting vehicles travelling from St. Mary's Way via Spring Gardens, without the need to travel through the Town Centre.

In terms of accessibility on foot, the location of the new car park should be determined by the designated users of the car park. For short stay (less than 1 hour) the parking facility should ideally be located within 5 minutes' walk time of the attractor (approximately 400metres). For stays of between 1 and 3 hours the facility should ideally be located within 10 minutes' walk time (800 metres) and for those greater than 3 hours a walk of more than 10 minutes is acceptable.

With regard to the cost implications and potential viability of options for providing these additional spaces, new surface car parking could be provided for approximately £1,000 per space. The cost of construction of a new multi-storey car park would be approximately £6,500-8,500 per space, while an intermediate decked car park solution would be in the region of £2,500 per space. A smaller surface car park may, therefore, be cheaper to construct and easier to achieve a high average occupancy, thereby offering a better rate of return than a larger, multi-decked car park.

However, based on the predicted need and potential land availability, provision of surface car parks in this case is likely to require more than one site, therefore increasing land take, reducing future regeneration potential, and potentially increasing vehicle movements circulating between car parks, as well as ongoing maintenance costs. As land in the town centre is finite, solutions which maximise the

number of spaces and minimise land take will be preferable land to be made available for other uses. A full business case would therefore be required, to identify a preferred option for the location and design of a new car park, taking into account both the headline capital costs of construction, any indirect costs as outlined above, and potential rates of return. Given the central location of any new facility, consideration should be given to ensure that high quality design is considered as part of the proposals.

Recommendations:

1. Develop business case for new parking provision in the Town Centre South East zone.

4.2.2 Medium Term (2020 – 2024)

In the medium term the demand for parking in the areas surrounding Wellington Street and Piccadilly is forecast to increase further primarily due to new residential development. The exact level of additional demand is not easy to quantify at this stage, due to uncertainty regarding the exact number of new dwellings that might be built over the strategy period, and because of changing trends in car ownership. As such, it is recommended that residential demand is accommodated by providing parking on-plot where possible, or by provision of permits for use in dedicated areas within off-street car parks if necessary. Further detail on recommended proposed standards for provision of residential parking is included in section 4.8 below.

There are no forecast issues with regard to parking provision in the north of the Town Centre in the medium to long term. However, the available provision is heavily reliant on Heaton Lane MSCP being used as a multi-use car park for residential, commercial, leisure, hotel and retail users. This will require 24 hour access to the car park, and there is a likelihood that the car park will need rebuilding in the medium term to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This provides an opportunity to ensure that high quality design is delivered at this prominent location.

There will be a need to manage the displaced demand from Heaton Lane within alternative car parks while the MSCP is reconstructed. There is likely to be sufficient spare capacity to accommodate existing Heaton Lane demand within the Redrock/Merseyway MSCP for a temporary period. There is also an area to the west of the new Heaton Lane MSCP plot which is identified as a potential 100-space surface car park for contract parking. This plot could be used as a temporary car park for the Travelodge hotel during the reconstruction of the MSCP. It is recommended that the reconstruction of Heaton Lane takes place prior to the proposed developments at the Interchange, Weir Mill and Stagecoach Depot.

There will also be a potential shortfall in parking provision within Higher Hillgate due to new residential development. However, all these sites could reasonably be expected to provide adequate on-site car parking, and this should be enforced through the planning process, in line with recommended parking standards.

As reported in the Initial Findings report, there are currently around 475 on-street pay and display parking spaces within the Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). Within the study area there are also a large number of streets outside of the CPZ where unrestricted parking is available. With regards to the future management of parking within the study area, the key locations where intervention is likely to be necessary are:

2. East of Middle Hillgate;
3. West of Stockport Railway Station; and
4. Covent Garden, Massey Street and Banbury Street.

In order to complement wider strategic aims, on-street parking provision will need to be managed in these locations in particular in order to help ensure that parking occurs in appropriate locations. At present a large proportion of the on-street parking in these locations is commuter parking for nearby offices and businesses, and in Edgeley due to drivers seeking free railway station parking.

The future development proposals are likely to create increased demand for parking, and as such it is important that the strategy for on-street parking helps to control this demand. The strategy for managing on-street parking will be to ensure that, where there are conflicting demands, controls are implemented to ensure that on-street parking is prioritised for short-stay parking for local retail centres.

In the medium term, it is possible that an extension of the Town Centre CPZ will be needed, to include the area bounded by Canal Street and Higher Barlow Row. This should be complemented by the extension of the existing residents permit scheme to cover any additional streets which may be experiencing displacement parking. This would reinforce and encourage smarter travel choices for commuters and encourage more appropriate parking patterns.

The extension of existing zones and/or introduction of new zones will have significant implications in terms of time and resources, given the lengthy TRO and consultation processes which would be necessary. It is therefore proposed that a review of the existing CPZ is undertaken to assess operational issues and any displacement parking issues. A more detailed investigation is required into parking habits in areas not currently covered by a Zone, in order to establish any benefits to introducing the new Zone or extending an adjacent existing one.

Recommendations:

2. Review business case for redeveloping Heaton Lane car park to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

3. Review case for extending Town Centre CPZ with complementary extension of existing residential permit scheme to cover any additional displacement parking as a result.

4.2.3 Long Term (2025 – 2030)

In the long term the new developments and background growth is forecast to further increase the demand for parking in the Town Centre South East zone in the areas surrounding Wellington Street and Piccadilly. There is a forecast long-term need for approximately 250 off-street parking spaces in this area, in addition to the 300 identified in the short term. As with the considerations set out in the short-term recommendations above, a full business case would be required to identify a preferred option for the location of the new car park(s).

As noted above, there are no forecast issues with regard to parking provision in the north of the Town Centre in the medium to long term. However, as well as reliance on Heaton Lane MSCP, there is also a potential reliance in the long term for accommodating residential parking within the Merseyway MSCP.

As such, in the longer term there may be a need to identify alternative provision for commercial and residential users.

Over the long term, there is forecast to be sufficient capacity within the refurbished Heaton Lane MSCP to accommodate the peak demand for parking generated by proposed residential developments at the Interchange site, Weir Mill and the Stagecoach Depot site, with adequate spare capacity parking by other users, without the need for further additional new parking in this area. However, it may be necessary to identify alternative parking provision in this area in the event that Heaton Lane MSCP is not redeveloped as a car park.

A site for a proposed new 400 space MSCP at Exchange Street has been identified, to be constructed in conjunction with the redevelopment of former Stagecoach Depot and Royal Mail Sorting Office sites. This could also potentially support parking demand in the Town Centre North West zone in the medium to long term, as well as providing overflow parking for Stockport Exchange. However, it will be necessary to closely monitor parking trends at Stockport Exchange and the railway station.

The later phases of Stockport Exchange and the proposed Station Masterplan development area will generate a demand for parking in the long term in the south west of the Town Centre, and in the Edgeley zone to the west of the railway station. However, the exact extent of this demand is difficult to quantify at this stage. The existing Exchange MSCP and expanded CP1A car park should provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the later phases of Stockport Exchange, but this is dependent on a relatively low level of car usage. Likewise, the regeneration zones included in the Station Masterplan include a number of specific developments that have already been accounted for in the demand forecasts, which therefore include a degree of double counting. Given the location of these developments adjacent to the railway station, car use should be low, although there will potentially be a need to provide further parking to accommodate a growth in the number of rail passengers.

The Station Masterplan proposals should therefore include a detailed consideration of the likely car parking requirements, and should provide adequate provision of parking spaces within a new MSCP within the masterplan area, to cater for both development-generated demand and future increased demand for railway station parking.

Recommendations:

4. Develop business case for additional car parking provision at Exchange Street.

5. Identify longer term opportunities to provide additional off-street spaces in Town Centre South East zone.

6. Review potential for new MSCP as part of Station Masterplan proposals.

4.3 Provision for Disabled Parking/ Electric Vehicles/ Car Clubs

4.3.1 Disabled Parking Bays:

As noted in section 2.1, the existing off-street disabled parking provision is primarily located within the Heaton Lane, Merseyway and Stockport Exchange MSCPs. The existing provision equates to approximately 3.5% of the overall total of off-street parking provision managed by SMBC.

It is recommended that disabled parking provision should be enhanced in all Council operated car parks. For car parks intended for shopping, leisure and recreation use, a provision of 4 disabled bays plus 4% of the overall parking stock is recommended for car parks larger than 200 spaces, in accordance with Department for Transport guidance note TAL 05/95 "*Parking for Disabled People*". For car parks smaller than 200 spaces, 6% of capacity (or a minimum of 3 bays) should be designated as disabled bays. This should also be implemented in conjunction with the delivery of any new car parks identified in the Demand Management Strategy, so as to provide an adequate number of disabled bays.

Recommendations:

7. Enhance provision of disabled parking through delivery of additional spaces in Council-operated car parks.

4.3.2 Electric Vehicle Provision:

A number of dedicated electric vehicle parking spaces have already been installed on-street in the Town Centre. Electric car registrations in the UK have increased by almost 20% in the first half of 2017[1], compared to the same period in 2016. Furthermore, major manufacturers are increasingly concentrating on production of electric vehicles, for example the recent announcement by Volvo for all new models to be plug-in or hybrid electric cars by 2019[2]. As such, the demand for electric car charging spaces is likely to increase significantly over the strategy period.

In the short term the usage of existing electric parking bays should be monitored in order to fully understand current local trends in electric car ownership, and continue to roll out charging facilities as required. In the medium to long term the proportion of spaces set aside for electric vehicles will need to be further increased, in both on-street and off-street parking areas.

The actual number of spaces required will depend on future trends in electric vehicle ownership. Given the potential future requirement for charging points, in order to reduce the reliance on siting charging points within Council-owned car parks, the introduction of a parking standard which obligates developers to provide a minimum number of electric vehicle bays may be necessary.

It should be noted that the provision of disabled bays and electric vehicle charging bays are not mutually exclusive and consideration needs to be given to ensure that there is appropriate charging infrastructure available in disabled bays as demand for electric vehicle charging increases over time. However,

[1] http://www.nextgreencar.com/electric-cars/statistics/
[2] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jul/05/volvo-cars-electric-hybrid-2019

consideration will need to be given to make sure that any electric charging facilities in disabled bays are not used to the detriment of users needing to park in disabled bays.

Recommendations:

8. Continue to monitor usage of existing electric parking bays and enhance provision (including for disabled bays) as required

9. Review opportunities for introducing minimum parking standards for electric vehicles

4.3.3 Car Club Parking

SMBC has recently introduced a Car Club scheme for staff site visits, in order to provide an alternative to staff using their own vehicle for work purposes, and reduce the need for staff vehicle parking. In order to help reduce the wider demand for Town Centre car parking, similar schemes should be encouraged for new residential and office developments in the Town Centre, with appropriate dedicated parking spaces provided. Car clubs are now recognised as a key tool in providing for urban mobility needs by offering a realistic and economical alternative to private car ownership. However the success of a Car Club scheme could be dependent on how they are planned into new residential developments. Car Club schemes should be encouraged at new developments through the planning process, in order to ensure that dedicated parking bays are considered as an integral component of scheme design, and are provided in convenient locations where people easily see them, rather than being introduced at the end of the planning process when they may be much less well-located.

As with electric vehicle parking, the actual number of spaces required will depend on future trends in car club membership, but in the medium to long term the introduction of a parking standard obligating developers to provide a minimum number of car club bays may be necessary.

Recommendations:

10. Review opportunities for introducing minimum parking standards for Car Club parking

11. Continue to monitor roll-out of car club schemes and increase on and off-street parking provision as required.

12. Continue to work with major employers and stakeholders in the town centre to expand car club schemes.

4.4 Routeing, Access and Signage

SMBC is currently in the process of implementing the Town Centre Access Plan (TCAP), a series of highway improvement schemes aimed at easing congestion for buses and general traffic, and improving pedestrian and cycle access. The full TCAP scheme will include a number of route improvements, in particular the creation of a new link road between the A6 and Travis Brow, which will help improve access to key development sites including Redrock and Stockport Exchange, as well as Heaton Lane car park. Another key element of TCAP will be the implementation of an upgraded Town Centre Signage Strategy.

A key part of the analysis of future parking demand set out in section 4.2 above was the identification of a Town Centre zoning system, which segregated the centre into discrete zones for the purposes of identifying where the key focus of future demand would be located. It is recommended that the TCAP signing strategy should take into account this notional zoning strategy with regard to directional signage to car parks. This will help to ensure that drivers are guided along suitable routes to an appropriate car park within their intended destination zone. In conjunction with the new signing arrangements, these 'core routes' for drivers could then have focused spending on maintaining access to car parking, reducing the impact of the car on the Town Centre environment, reducing 'dead miles' and improving local air quality.

Examples of proposed options for core routes to parking zones, taking into account anticipated TCAP alterations to the existing highway network, are included in **Appendix E.**

In the long-term it would also be possible to widen the use of information and vehicle management technologies across the Town Centre. Further consideration of possible new technologies that could be implemented in the long-term to improve vehicle routeing to car parks is included in section 4.7 below. It is important that the introduction of new technology aimed at improving efficiency and enhancing the parking experience should take into account the car park routing strategy, so for example ensuring that sat-nav directions do not direct drivers along inappropriate routes.

Recommendations:

13. Implement strategic car park signing on key routes into the Town Centre routing and access strategy being implemented in conjunction with TCAP signing.

14. Update vehicle wayfinding strategy to reflect any changes to traffic routes in town centre linked to Station Masterplan redevelopment.

4.5 Tariffs

In order to identify potential options for revising tariffs in conjunction with other strategy actions, a review of existing parking tariffs within the study area has been undertaken, to identify potential revenue uplift and manage demand appropriate to the location of each car park. The review has been cognisant of the challenges surrounding parking tariffs and the unintended consequences which could arise from any changes. This is included as **Appendix C** to this report. Based on this review, the following options for tariff revisions have been identified as being worthy of further exploration:

Option	Opportunity	Detail	Benefits	Threats
1	Amend town centre tariff bands to introduce 2 hour minimum stay band	Remove one hour tariff band and add minimum stay of 2 hours for £1.60. Other charges to remain unchanged.	Increased income Promotes longer town centre visits	Could stymie an increase in visitor numbers. Potential transfer of shorter stay visitors to cheaper / free private car parks
2	Harmonisation of Town Centre tariffs	Bring Churchgate in line with other Town Centre car parks	Consistent pricing policy in Stockport will reduce cross town traffic	
3	Extend parking charges from 6am – 6pm		Increased income	Hotel visitors will be charged additional amounts

Option	Opportunity	Detail	Benefits	Threats
4	Amend district centre tariff bands	Remove 1 hour option and increase minimum charge to 50p	Increased income	Increased displacement in district centres
5	Harmonise charging mechanism at all Council-owned car parks near railway stations and used by commuters	Ensure consistency across all council-owned car parks	Increased income	Increased displacement to surrounding residential streets Lack of alignment with wider policy to encourage use of public transport

It should be noted that this review was based on a limited range of available data regarding ticket sales and occupancy. Further detailed analysis of existing ticket sales and length of stay data at a wider range of car parks would be required in order to determine appropriate revisions to the current tariff structure.

Tariffs at the proposed new car parks identified in Section 3.2 above should be set at levels appropriate to their location and intended use, in line with tariffs already in place at nearby existing car parks.

Further work is required to review the impact of the options presented in the table above, and to test their viability against the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Recommendations:

15. Complete review of existing tariff structure at Council-owned car parks in order to identify optimum solution from options presented

16. Continue to regularly monitor impacts of tariffs, and formally review tariffs on an annual basis, amending if required in accordance with local and national economic trends.

4.6 Payment Systems and New Technology

The increasing use of new technology is providing significant opportunities for reducing administrative and operational costs, whilst at the same time improving the customer experience. Pay by Phone (RingGo) was introduced in Stockport in 2012 and provides customers with the ability to pay with a debit/credit card and eliminate the need to find the correct change. Despite some research indicating that this form of payment is generally unpopular and avoided[3], the increasing shift towards an overall cashless economy[4] means that demand for pay by phone is likely to further increase in the future.

There are two main areas of activity; continued integration of facilities and functions, and take up of smart phones for both payment and information by the user and for enforcement purposes. This is resulting in the need for fewer points of contact between the user and the service provider and in enabling the CEO to have greater control of ticket issue (in real time logging environments) and immediate responses, leading to greater ease of use and customer satisfaction, and a consequent reduction in both PCN issue and appeals and representations together with associated costs.

Options for further improving the parking experience for both the user and the provider include integrated database management and increasing smart phone use or facilitating credit/debit card

[3] http://www.bbc.com/news/business-40866201
[4] https://www.theguardian.com/money/2017/jul/12/cash-contactless-payments-uk-stores-cards-british-retail-consortium

payments, supported by a range of payment software applications. In the short term to medium term, however, the use of pay and display should also be retained in order to enhance the parking experience by providing users with a full choice of payment methods, and reduce the risk of users being deterred by being forced into cashless payment, and hence choosing to park elsewhere or visit alternative destinations. Where appropriate, provision should be made for P&D machines to accept a full range of payment types, including debit and credit card payments, in order to improve user convenience and dwell times, and reduce operating costs. However, given the high installation and staffing costs, pay and display is unlikely to provide a cost effective long term solution given the trend for increasing smart phone use.

At proposed new MSCP sites, pay on foot would be a strong recommendation, but this would depend on future use characteristics for the proposed car park. Pay on foot is expensive to install compared to other payment systems, but provides benefits in terms of user convenience, encouraging longer dwell times (and hence income capture), and improves the efficiency of traffic flows on entry and exit. Generally Pay on Foot is most suited for car parks greater than 100 spaces, where there is a high turnover of vehicles.

In the long-term, the cashless parking offer could be supplemented and supported by the introduction of bay sensing technology. This approach is starting to be introduced in the UK, with Cardiff recently introducing over 3,000 vehicle detection sensors in both on and off-street locations. These sensors are linked to strategically-placed variable message signs and a parking locator app, with drivers able to see the real-time availability of parking spaces. Such a system has also been implemented by Westminster Council. The principal benefit of such a system is to reduce congestion and carbon emissions by enabling more efficient movement of traffic, with vehicles spending less time looking for a parking space. At the same time, Penalty Charge Notices can be issued more efficiently, as CEOs can instantly see the locations of vehicles with expired parking sessions. However, since similar benefits can also be provided by the existing pay by phone offer, and given that the typical life cycle of sensors at present is around 5 years, the introduction of this type of smart parking technology in Stockport is likely to be a long-term measure.

Recommendations:
17. Introduce payment machines offering chip and pin or contactless debit/ credit card payments, whilst retaining pay by cash options.
18. Review effectiveness of pay by phone and consider wider implementation
19. Utilise electronic media (including website and apps) to provide more information for visitors
20. Review opportunities to integrate parking payment and management technologies with information systems within a single comprehensive system.
21. Consider implementation of bay sensor technology linked to parking software application.

4.7 Parking Standards

A significant proportion of the forecast future development within Stockport Town Centre comprises new residential developments. The management of residential parking will therefore be an important factor in meeting the aims of the Parking Strategy, and helping to achieve wider policy objectives.

The currently adopted parking standards for Stockport identify a maximum provision of 1.25 spaces per dwelling for town centre residential developments. However, in order to balance the provision of sufficient parking with the wider policy aims of reducing car travel and encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport, there is the potential to consider reducing this maximum provision standard.

The most recent guidance in Manual for Streets and the Residential Car Parking Research undertaken by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2007, indicates that car parking for residential developments should be based on demand for parking over the Local Plan period, and make use of local car ownership and demand predictions. Furthermore, the guidance also emphasises the distinction between allocated spaces per dwelling, and non-allocated parking provision for use by residents and visitors. The encouragement of the use of residents' parking permits in off-street car parks will help to make more efficient usage of parking spaces. It is likely that in the future there will be a decreasing trend in personal car ownership, particularly for those people who choose to live in a Town Centre location. Increasing usage of car clubs, improvements in public transport, the proximity to Town Centre facilities, and in the longer term the increasing tendency towards self-driving vehicles will all play a part in helping to reduce the need for dedicated parking spaces allocated to individual dwellings.

The recent Manchester Residential Quality guidance advises that 'providing sufficient car parking in an appropriate manner is important in ensuring that cars do not dominate the street'. It also identifies that the need for residential parking provision is likely to vary depending on the target market for a development. For example, build to rent developments aimed at younger demographic are likely to require higher levels of cycle parking and / or provision of car club parking, while higher end developments may need more internal parking spaces.

In the short term it is recommended that consideration be given to parking standards for residential developments being amended to permit a maximum of 1 allocated space per dwelling across a defined Town Centre area (e.g. within the Town Centre CPZ). In order to achieve a greater efficiency of parking, and balancing this with future trends with regard to demand and car ownership, it is recommended that developers are encouraged to provided unallocated parking where appropriate.

Where possible, parking should be provided within the boundary of a development site. For developments involving listed buildings or conversions of older sites where provision of parking on-site or on-street is likely to be impractical, a more holistic approach may be needed. In these instances spaces should be provided within the nearest MSCP. These spaces should be supplied in the form of permit allocation to a specific car park, rather than through the allocation of a specific number of reserved parking spaces, which may not all be required.

In order to encourage sustainable travel, it is recommended that cycle parking at new residential developments is provided in excess of 50% provision relative to apartment numbers, with a recommended minimum provision of 4 cycle spaces per car parking space. Cycle storage should actively encourage use, and be designed, located and managed in such a way that residents feel that their bike is in a safe and secure location, and that they feel safe using it.

Detail on increasing cycling provision outside of private developments is considered as part of the Council's draft Cycling and Walking Strategy.

Recommendations:

22. Review and implement guidance on residential parking standards to ensure parking for new developments is delivered in line with current best practice.

23. Encourage private car park operators to invest in their facilities to achieve the Park Mark standard

4.8 Strategy Actions Summary

Drawing on the Strategy Action Plan set out in section 4, this section summarises the principle actions that comprise the Town Centre Car Parking Strategy. This Action Plan should be reviewed regularly depending on identified trends and changes to requirements, with proposed measures either brought forward or delayed accordingly.

Objective	Action
1) Ensure an appropriate supply of car parking to meet future demands in the town centre through the provision of flexible, adaptable multi-use parking solutions that suit the requirements of a variety of users	• Develop full business case for new parking provision in the Town Centre South East zone by Autumn 2018 • Review and implement guidance on residential parking standards to ensure parking for new developments is delivered in line with current best practice • Encourage private car park operators to invest in their facilities to achieve Park Mark standard • Review business case for redeveloping Heaton Lane car park to ensure it remains fit for purpose • Develop business case for additional car parking provision at Exchange Street. • Identify longer term opportunities to provide additional off-street spaces in Town Centre South East zone. • Review potential for new MSCP as part of Station Masterplan proposals
2) Optimise the usage of existing capacity whilst minimising displacement into adjacent residential neighbourhoods	• Review case for extending Town Centre CPZ with complementary extension of existing residential permit scheme to cover any additional displacement parking as a result. • Enhance provision of disabled parking through delivery of additional spaces in Council-operated car parks. • Continue to monitor usage of existing electric parking bays and enhance provision as required • Review opportunities for introducing minimum parking standards for electric vehicles • Review opportunities for introducing minimum parking standards for Car Club parking • Continue to monitor roll-out of car club schemes and increase on and off-street parking provision as required. • Continue to work with major employers and stakeholders in the town centre to expand car club schemes.
3) Improve accessibility and signage to car parking with the town centre and from key surrounding routes so	• Implement strategic car park signing on key routes into the Town Centre routing and access strategy being implemented in conjunction with TCAP signing.

as to reduce the need for necessary traffic circulation in the town centre.	• Update vehicle wayfinding strategy to reflect any changes to traffic routes in town centre linked to Station Masterplan redevelopment • Utilise electronic media (including website and apps) to provide more information for visitors • Consider implementation of bay sensor technology linked to parking software application
4) Optimise income generation from car parking whilst supporting the vitality and economic attractiveness of the town centre to visitors, investors and developers	• Complete review of existing tariff structure at Council-owned car parks in order to identify optimum solution from options presented in Table 6 • Review tariffs on an annual basis and amend if required in accordance with local and national economic trends. • Introduce payment machines offering chip and pin or contactless debit/ credit card payments, whilst retaining pay by cash options. • Review effectiveness of pay by phone and consider wider implementation • Review opportunities to integrate parking payment and management technologies with information systems within a single comprehensive system.

It is recognised that it is not possible to implement all the proposed measures overnight, particularly since many of the interventions will be made in response to the impact of future new developments. The table below categorises the actions into short, medium and long term timescales.

Timescales	Strategy Delivery
Short (2017-2019	• Develop full business case for new parking provision in the Town Centre South East zone by Autumn 2018. • Review and implement guidance on residential parking standards to ensure parking for new developments is delivered in line with current best practice • Encourage private car park operators to invest in their facilities to achieve Park Mark standard • Enhance provision of disabled parking through delivery of additional spaces in Council-operated car parks. • Review opportunities for introducing minimum parking standards for electric vehicles • Review opportunities for introducing minimum parking standards for Car Club parking • Continue to monitor usage of existing electric parking bays and enhance provision as required • Continue to monitor roll-out of car club schemes and increase on and off-street parking provision as required. • Implement strategic car park signing on key routes into the Town Centre routing and access strategy being implemented in conjunction with TCAP signing. • Complete review of existing tariff structure at Council-owned car parks in order to identify optimum solution from options presented in Table 6 • Introduce payment machines offering chip and pin or contactless debit/ credit card payments, whilst retaining pay by cash options. • Continue to work with major employers and stakeholders in the town centre to expand car club schemes.
Medium (2020-2024)	• Review business case for redeveloping Heaton Lane car park to ensure it remains fit for purpose • Review potential for new MSCP as part of Station Masterplan proposals • Review case for extending Town Centre CPZ with complementary extension of existing residential permit scheme to cover any additional displacement parking as a result. • Utilise electronic media (including website and apps) to provide more information for visitors

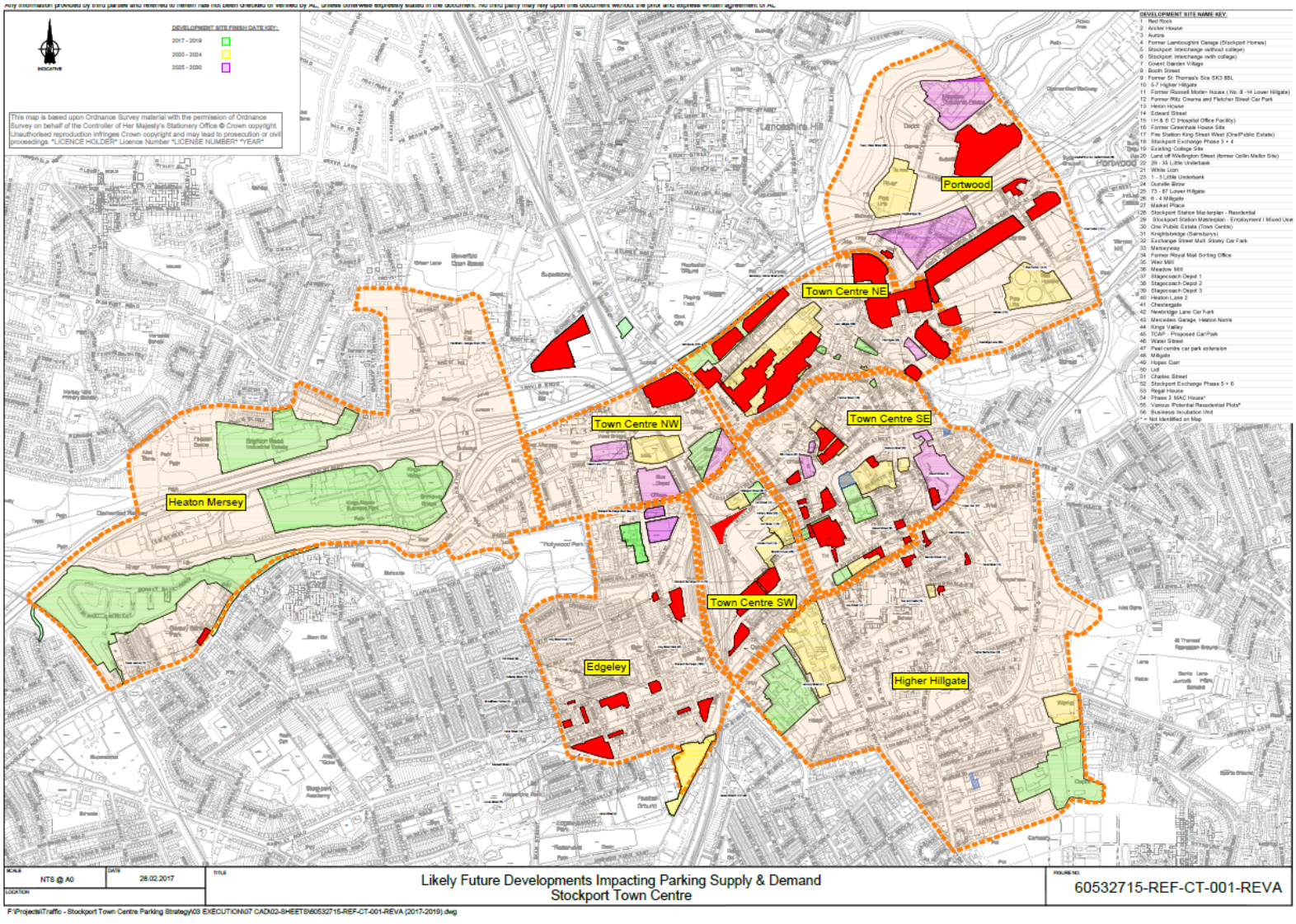
	• Review tariffs on an annual basis and amend if required in accordance with local and national economic trends. • Review opportunities to integrate parking payment and management technologies with information systems within a single comprehensive system. • Review effectiveness of pay by phone and consider wider implementation
Long (2025–2030)	• Develop business case for additional car parking provision at Exchange Street. • Identify longer term opportunities to provide additional off-street spaces in Town Centre South East zone. • Update vehicle wayfinding strategy to reflect any changes to traffic routes in town centre linked to Station Masterplan redevelopment • Consider implementation of bay sensor technology linked to parking software application

Appendix A Baseline Findings Report

Appendix B Demand Management Forecast

Appendix C Tariff Options

Appendix D Demand Forecast Zones



Appendix E Proposed Strategic Access and Routing

Figure 1. Proposed Strategic Access and Routing Plan – Town Centre North West

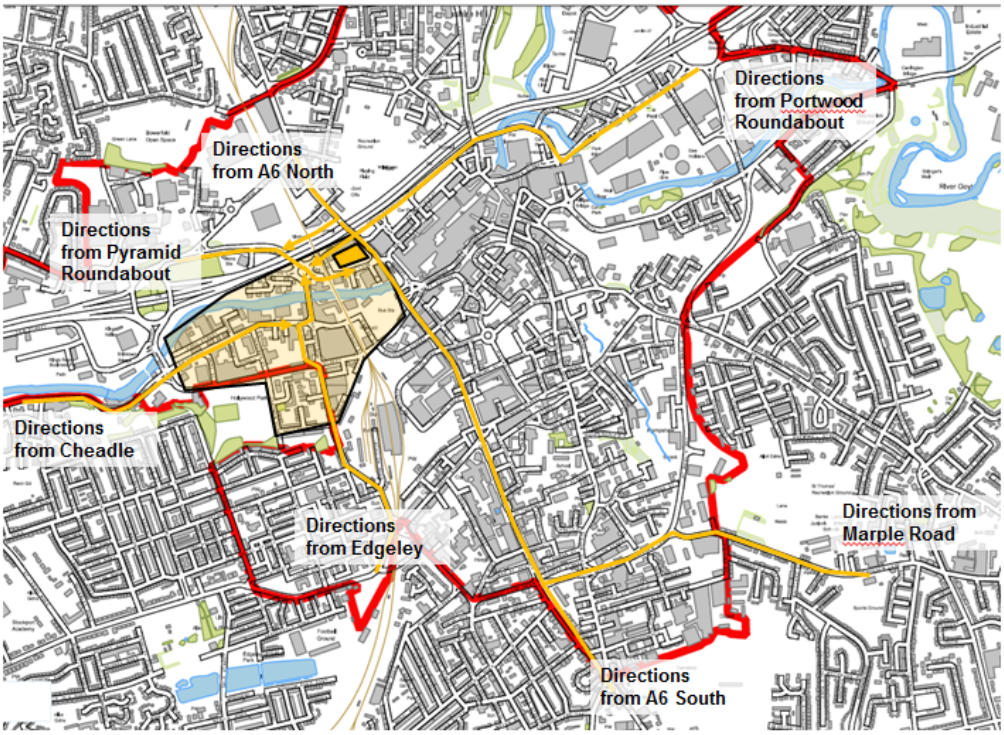


Figure 2. Proposed Strategic Access and Routing Plan – Town Centre North East

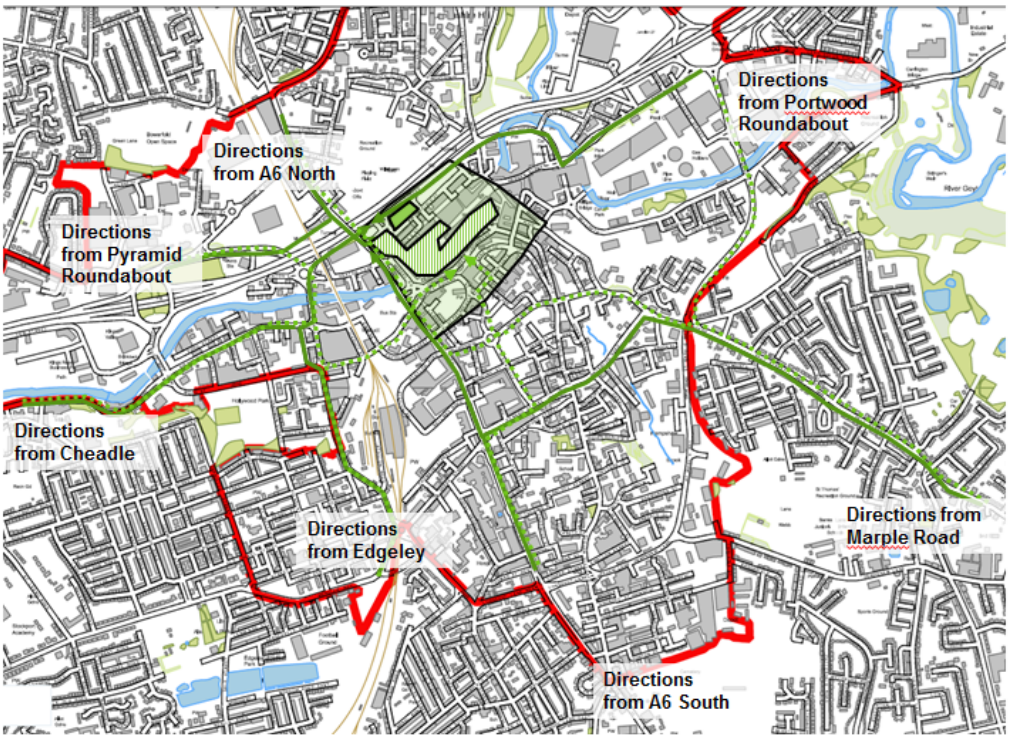


Figure 3. Proposed Strategic Access and Routing Plan – Town Centre South West

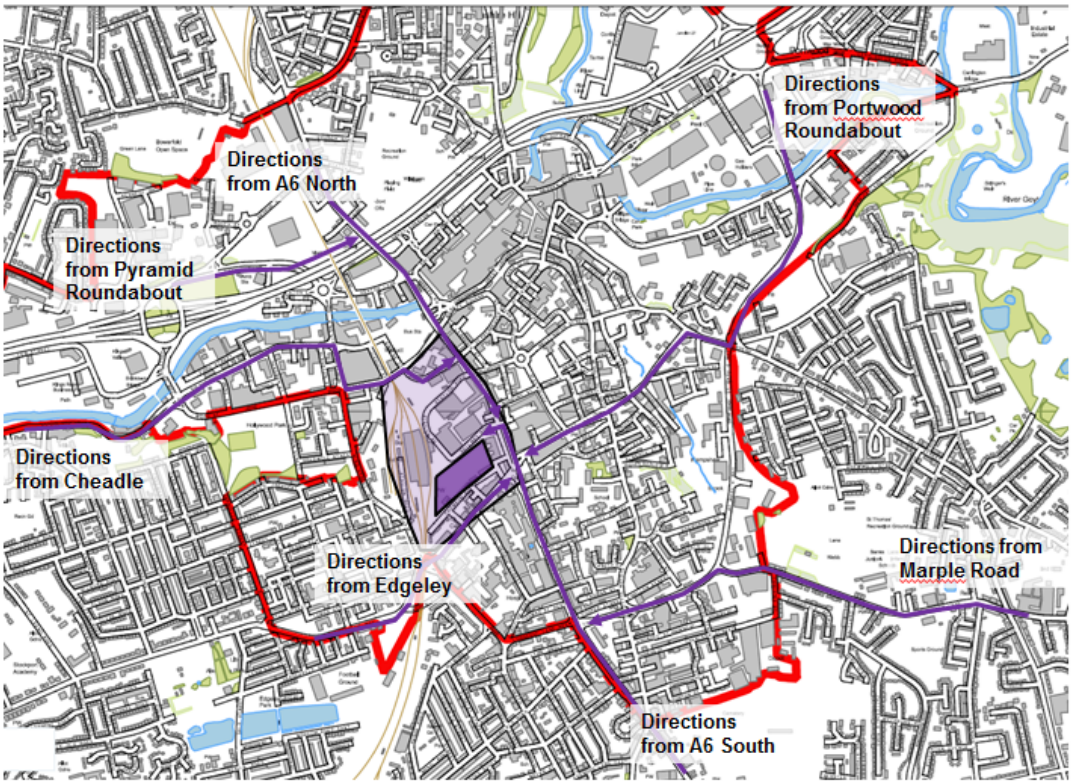


Figure 4. Proposed Strategic Access and Routing Plan – Town Centre South East