London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
Public Off-Street Parking Demand Study for Barking Town Centre
Stage 2 Report - Parking Strategy

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Summary of Findings From Stage 1 Report</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Issues and Options Considered</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options for Addressing Additional Parking Demand</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Provision of Additional Parking Spaces</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Demand Management Options</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the Parking Experience</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Parking Guidance and Information (PGI) Systems</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Pedestrian Signage</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Providing more Blue Badge parking</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Evening opening of car parks</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Information and marketing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (LBBD) commissioned Hyder Consulting to undertake a Public Off-Street Parking Demand Study for Barking Town Centre, to be carried out in two parts. The aim of Stage One was to assess the adequacy of existing public off-street parking to meet current needs and to assess the future level of demand in the context of substantial levels of new development in the period up to 2024. Stage Two of the study is aimed at making recommendations about the future supply and management of public off-street car parking spaces in the town centre.

Stage 1 of this study identified that redevelopment of Barking Town Centre had been responsible for a net loss of 166 public off-street parking spaces since 2003 (when the figure was 1,563). It went on to identify that there would be a peak demand for 1,586 public off-street parking spaces on a weekday in 2024, which exceeds the existing number of spaces (1,397). The AAP Preferred Options Report identified four possible sites for additional parking provision:

1) Construction of a multi-storey car park on the site of the existing Axe Street car park;

2) Incorporation of a basement car park within the London Road/ North Street redevelopment;

3) An extension to the existing Vicarage Field multi storey car park;

4) An extension to the existing London Road multi storey car park (rejected).

With the rejection of proposal 4 (London Road multi-storey car park extension), this study rates the three alternate proposals against one another, taking into account cost, location, economic benefits, accessibility, longevity (expected lifespan) of the development. The final choice will depend on a range of factors including funding opportunities and regeneration plans. As such, we have simply highlighted potential issues and opportunities with each site to aide the decision making process.

The Basement car park within the London Road/North Street scheme would have a key advantage of being associated with a large food or non-food store and would be well positioned in relation to the town centre, in particular East Street. It could also help to increase footfall in the surrounding area, provided that the pedestrian environment is improved. However, this is the most expensive scheme.

A new multi-storey car park within the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development would be well positioned in relation to the town centre in particular the Abbey Sports Centre, the Broadway Theatre, the Barking Learning Centre and the Children’s and Family Health Centre. It is likely to be cheaper to build than the London Road/North Street basement car park. Access for motorists to the existing Axe Street car park is relatively good and is directly off the primary road network. However proposed traffic calming along Abbey Road, or its eventual closure, would respectively reduce accessibility by car or isolate the site. Conversely choosing to locate a new multi-storey car park at this site might contradict efforts to reduce traffic along Abbey Road, as the car park will attract additional trips.

The extension of the Vicarage Field car park would build on the existing success of the site and good accessibility from routes into Barking. However, locating additional parking here may
concentrate shoppers in this area to the detriment of other parts of Barking. There were
corns by local business over the safety of pedestrian routes linking the car park to other
parts of the town at night.

The amount of additional car parking that can be provided in Barking Town Centre is finite and
the street network is already congested. Appropriate car parking charges must be introduced to
ensure additional car parking spaces are not attractive to commuters. Measures and incentives
to encourage travel by other modes and to encourage alternatives to travelling should also be
introduced in parallel to provide workers with viable alternatives to driving. In order to support its
sustainable transport objectives and support the Barking Town Centre Movement Strategy, the
Council should also envisage targeting measures at shoppers & visitors, whose numbers are
set to increase with growth in retail and households.

Parking charges have been used by a number of local authorities to influence travel behaviour
and meet policy goals. Pricing is an effective tool as motorists appear to be particularly
sensitive to parking prices because they are a direct charge. Similarly, the choice of car park
and utilisation can also be affected by variable pricing. The council may wish to consider one of
a number of different variable parking charges as outlined in this report, including increasing
charges in very popular car parks, emission and congestion based charging schemes.

Barking Town Centre enjoys high public transport accessibility. There appears to be a
significant potential for a switch to alternative modes of transport in the area, which could be
encouraged using the range of soft measures including ‘Workplace Travel Plans’, ‘Car Clubs’,
‘Travel Awareness Campaigns’, ‘Personalised Travel Planning’ and ‘Home/shopping delivery’.

Methods to improve the quality and parking experience in Barking Town Centre were
considered. The introduction of Variable Message Signs linked to a Parking Guidance
and Information system will improve the
parking experience. Studies have shown PGI
systems to influence drivers’ choice of car
park and reduce the time spent looking for a
parking space. This affects traffic flows and
queuing outside popular car parks. Nine
VMS parking signs would cover the
significant entry routes to Barking town
centre, providing excellent coverage. PGI
system quotes ranged from £160-170k for
installation, and £15-21k per annum for
maintenance.

Improving the quality of pedestrian signage in Barking town centre (as set out in AAP Draft
Policy Statement 15) will contribute to modal shift by encouraging more people to walk, and will
also make it easier for pedestrians to find their way to and from car parks.

Finally, issues have been raised in consultation and through site visits relating to the quality of
some of the off-street parking provision. The report recommends a number of options including
introducing pedestrian walking maps at all car parks, and refurbishments of the London Road
MSCP and Linton Road car park.

A complete list of options for improving the parking experience in Barking Town Centre can be
found on page 29.
1 Introduction

The London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (LBBD) commissioned Hyder Consulting to undertake a Public Off-Street Parking Demand Study for Barking Town Centre, to be carried out in two parts. The aim of Stage 1 is to assess the adequacy of existing public off-street parking to meet current needs and to assess the future level of demand in the context of substantial levels of new development in the period up to 2024. Stage 2 of the study is aimed at making recommendations about the future supply and management of public off-street car parking spaces in the town centre. This report presents the findings of Stage 2 of the study.

In making recommendations about the future supply and management of public off-street car parking we have borne in mind the multiple roles that parking plays, including:

- Providing a public service
- Supporting the prosperity of the town centre
- Supporting a range of land uses including retail, employment, community and residential
- Supporting accessibility and social inclusion via the provision of blue badge bays
- Supporting alternative modes of travel via the provision of motor cycle and cycle parking
- Freeing up road space that can be put to other uses (bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.) and helping to maintain the free flow of traffic
- A factor in a person’s decision of how to travel to Barking Town Centre (by car or another mode) or whether not to travel or travel elsewhere (e.g. the Lakeside Shopping Centre)
- Providing a source of revenue that the Council can reinvest in the borough’s transport infrastructure.

Barking Town Centre is already undergoing significant change with the recent completion of phase 1 of the Town Square scheme including the new Barking Learning Centre and phase 2 underway. The AAP proposes substantial levels of new development up to 2020 including 6,200 additional homes, educational facilities, hotel development, and a significant increase in retail floor space. As such this parking strategy is framed by both regeneration and environmental concerns.

Off-street parking is defined as parking areas that are not on the public highway. This study includes both public off-street car parking that is operated by the Council as well as private publicly available off-street car parking. Private publicly available off-street car parking is included in this study based on it being available to use by everyone. This study does not consider private residential and Private Non-Residential (PNR) parking.

The main purpose of this study is to become part of the evidence base for the Barking Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and to inform its policy development about car parking. The study will also inform reviews to the Local Implementation Plan and the content of the development brief the Council is producing for the Axe Street area of the town centre. It will also assist the Council in its management of on-street and off-street parking and making decisions on major planning applications in the Town Centre which could include public off-street parking.
Chapter 2 of this report reiterates the key findings from the Stage 1 report, which found that parking demand is likely to exceed supply if no action is taken. Chapter 3 explores different options for accommodating this extra demand, via the provision of a new car park and/or demand management measures. Chapter 4 explores options for improving the quality of existing car parks, and Chapter 5 concludes the report.
2 Background

2.1 Summary of Findings From Stage 1 Report

The aim of Stage 1 of this study was to assess the adequacy of existing public off-street parking in Barking Town Centre to meet current needs and to assess the future level of demand in the context of substantial levels of new development in the period up to 2024. To assess the adequacy of existing public off-street parking we collected and analysed parking survey data and carried out consultation with local stakeholders.

The analysis of parking data collected in February 2009 has shown that whilst overall it appears that there is sufficient capacity in public off-street car parks to meet current demand, the Axe Street, London Road/North Street, Vicarage Field and Lidl car parks are full or nearly full for considerable periods of the day on a Friday and/or Saturday. In contrast the London Road Multi-Storey car park is nearly empty on a Saturday.

Local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce whom we consulted told us that signage to car parks is inadequate and that people may not know about the existence or exact whereabouts of the London Road Multi-Storey car park, which could explain in part why it is underused on a Saturday. However, as shown in Chapter 4 this perception may not match reality.

Comments made by local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce indicate that there is a general feeling that existing public off-street car parking does not meet current needs, in particular that there is a shortage of short-stay car parking and that parking charges are too high. This perception, however, is not entirely borne out by our findings. The analysis of parking data indicates that there is an inefficient use of car parks particularly on a Saturday, with some car parks being close or at capacity whilst the London Road Multi-Storey car park has plenty of empty spaces, which is why people may perceive there to be a shortage of short-stay car parking.

Based on our forecasts of future parking demand, there would be a peak demand for 1,586 public off-street parking spaces on a weekday in 2024, compared to a peak demand for 1,300 spaces on a Saturday. Based on current levels of public off-street car parking, overall demand would exceed capacity on a weekday (demand over capacity ration of 112%), and reach capacity on a Saturday (overall utilisation of 97%).
## 2.2 Issues and Options Considered

The Stage 1 report highlighted several issues regarding the provision of off street parking in Barking Town Centre. Table 1 below outlines these issues, as well as options to address these that will be examined in this report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Option</th>
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<tr>
<td>Under utilisation of London Road Multi Storey on Saturdays / lack of</td>
<td>Modify pricing&lt;br&gt;Improve signage&lt;br&gt;Information and Marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>spaces in other car parks</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demand for additional parking spaces in the future (especially peak</td>
<td>Modify pricing&lt;br&gt;Reduce number of long-stay permits&lt;br&gt;Reduce demand</td>
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<tr>
<td>demand at lunchtimes)</td>
<td>through use of soft measures&lt;br&gt;Increase the supply of car parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of off-street car parking in the evenings</td>
<td>spaces in the evenings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insufficient parking for disabled persons</td>
<td>Provide more blue badge bays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue badge bays not situated close to facilities they serve</td>
<td>Position blue badge bays closer to car park entry/exits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate motor cycle parking</td>
<td>Provide more motor cycle parking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of information on availability of car parking spaces</td>
<td>Variable Message Signs indicating number of empty spaces and real-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>information available on the Council’s website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty in finding car parks</td>
<td>Variable Message Signs and new road signs/improvements to existing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>road signs/road markings. Pedestrian wayfinding system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate routes to/from the car parks for pedestrians</td>
<td>Reduce severance caused by busy roads. Improve footways (removal of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>street clutter, localised widening).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate information</td>
<td>Improve the quality and amount of information provided on public off-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>street parking.</td>
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*Table 1: Issues Identified in Stage 1 report and Options*
3 Options for Addressing Additional Parking Demand

Stage 1 of this study identified that in 2024 there would not be sufficient car parking spaces to meet estimated demand. This section of the report puts forward two options to address this issue:

- Provide additional public off-street parking spaces;
- Manage demand for parking using pricing and soft measures.

To support the future viability and vitality of the town centre and meet the Council’s sustainable transport objectives we suggest a combination of the two options. Whilst we recommend the introduction of more demand suppression measures this does not take away the case for additional public off-street car parking spaces.

3.1 Provision of Additional Parking Spaces

Stage 1 of this study identified that due to the redevelopment of Barking Town Centre there has been a net loss of 166 public off-street parking spaces since 2003 (when the figure was 1,563). It went on to identify that there would be a peak demand for 1,586 public off-street parking spaces on a weekday in 2024, which exceeds the existing number of spaces (1,397). It should be noted that the peak 2024 demand figure of 1,586 represents a very modest increase over the number of spaces that existed in 2003 (1,563).

In Stage 1 it was also noted that the underlying assumptions on future retail demand were considered to be on the conservative side and that the creation of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in the Gascoigne Estate is likely to increase parking pressure in adjacent areas such as the town centre.

The AAP Preferred Options Report identified four possible sites for the provision of additional parking:

5) The construction of a new multi-storey car park on the site of the existing Axe Street surface car park

6) The incorporation of a basement car park within the London Road/ North Street redevelopment scheme

7) An extension to the existing Vicarage Field multi storey car park

8) An extension to the existing London Road multi storey car park

Option 4 has already been rejected as being unrealistic due to the high cost. The relative advantages and disadvantages of the three remaining options are discussed below, taking into consideration factors such as price, location and accessibility. Prices are indicative and were based on a simple assumption of the cost of providing one parking space\(^1\). Further work would be needed to estimate potential costs more accurately.

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\(^1\) Indicative prices based on estimates given by 'Building', a leading construction industry magazine. Based on 2007 prices. [http://www.building.co.uk/story_attachment.asp?storycode=3101340&seq=5&type=T&c=1](http://www.building.co.uk/story_attachment.asp?storycode=3101340&seq=5&type=T&c=1)
Option 1: Construction of new multi-storey car park at Axe Street

Indicative Cost: £2.25m to £4.13m (250 spaces @ £9,000-£16,500 per space)

Location: The site of the existing Axe Street surface car park (also known as the Wellington Street temporary surface car park) is well positioned in relation to the town centre in particular the adjacent Broadway Theatre, Barking Learning Centre (where UEL evening courses are run), the Children’s and Family Health Centre, and the Abbey sports centre (which the Council would like to expand).

Utilisation: Stage 1 of this study found that the existing Axe Street car park is very popular and is full at certain times of the day. Given that parking charges are the same across all council car parks, the high level of utilisation suggests that people find Axe Street to be a convenient place to park. The Council has aspirations to develop an evening economy centred around East Street and for further hotel developments. These would likely benefit from the provision of a new multi-storey car park on the Axe Street site.

The Council has received comments from the Broadway Theatre and from users of the Abbey Sports Centre regarding a shortage of parking in the evenings, something which a new multi-storey car park would provide a solution to.

Accessibility: The site offers relatively easy access for people coming in from the East (via Ripple Road and St Paul’s Road) or West (via Abbey Road). Unlike the other car parks this site could be accessed straight from the primary road network. We understand that the idea of introducing traffic calming along Abbey Road or possibly closing it to vehicles has been put forward. Traffic calming would benefit non motorised users but could make access to the Axe Street site for motorists more difficult. The closure of Abbey Road would isolate the Axe Street site. The site is currently inaccessible from London Road due to the one-way system on a section of North Street.

Other advantages: the current Axe Street surface car park is due to be redeveloped as part of the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development. A new multi-storey car park could be incorporated into the development and designed in such a way as to minimise the visual impact on the surrounding area. Developer contributions could be used towards the construction of the car park.

Impact on overall distribution of parking: A new multi-storey car park on Axe Street could help to relieve parking pressure on Saturdays at Vicarage Field but could also reduce the utilisation of the London Road MSCP, which already has a very low level of utilisation.

Option 2: Basement car park within the London Road/North Street scheme

Indicative Cost: £8.05m to £14m (350 spaces @ £23,000-£40,000 per space)

Location: A key advantage is that it would be associated with the large food/non-food store to be built on the London Road/North Street site. It would also be well positioned in relation to the town centre, in particular the East Street shopping area and relocated street market.

Utilisation: Stage 1 of this study found that the existing London Road/North Street car park is very popular and is full at certain times of the day. Given that parking charges are the same across all council car parks, the high level of utilisation suggests that people find London Road/North Street to be a convenient place to park. Local businesses consulted as part of this study confirmed this. A new car park within the London Road/North Street development is likely to be well utilised given that the current car park is well utilised and given that it would be associated with a large food/non-food store.
Accessibility: Proposed traffic calming along Abbey Road, or its eventual closure, would as noted above respectively reduce accessibility by car or isolate the site. Proposed access to the new development would be from the south-western corner (by the Bull Public House). The one-way system on North Street also currently reduces accessibility by car, but will be modified to accommodate the new development. The potential impacts of this change are being investigated through use of a traffic model. The Council has also investigated possible improvements at the London Road/North Street junction to improve vehicular and pedestrian access.

Impact on overall distribution of parking: this choice of site could impact efforts to increase utilisation of the London Road MSCP on a Saturday, which would have revenue implications.

Option 3: Extension to existing Vicarage Field Multi-Storey car park

Indicative Cost: £2.25m to £4.13m (250 spaces @ £9,000-£16,500 per space)

Location: The Vicarage Field car park is well positioned in relation to the town centre, in particular the adjacent shopping centre, as well as the East Street and Ripple Road shopping area. However it is less well positioned than other car parks in relation to the Broadway Theatre, Barking Learning Centre and Abbey Sports Centre. Local businesses that we consulted said that people do not like to walk to/from the Vicarage Field car park at night time because they do not feel safe.

Accessibility: Vicarage Field has excellent access from the North (via Longbridge Road and Station Parade), South (via St Paul's Road, Ripple Road and Vicarage Drive) and East (via Ripple Road and Vicarage Drive). Station Parade and Ripple Road suffer from congestion. Vicarage Drive provides access for motorists coming from the South or East as well as providing access for pedestrians. Pre-application discussions are currently underway to build over the existing ramp from Station Parade. In future, all access will be off Ripple Road. A busy zebra crossing situated close to the junction of Vicarage Drive and Ripple Road interrupts the flow of traffic whilst a pinch point created by the presence of gates at the car park entrance is not pedestrian friendly.

Impact on the road network

The potential impact of increased traffic flows on the local street network as a result of the provision of additional parking spaces would need to be investigated. The town centre and approaches already suffer from congestion. The Area Action Plan notes that routes into the town centre experience minor levels of congestion during peak hours. The ‘Lighted Lady’ and A406 junctions can be heavily congested and buses delayed on Station Parade and Longbridge Roundabout. In addition the Mayor of London has set a target of limiting traffic growth in the borough to less than 6% between 2001 and 2011.

As the additional car parking would be aimed at shoppers and visitors it is unlikely to impact significantly on the weekday morning and evening peak hours when congestion typically occurs. In terms of mitigating the impact of additional car parking, consideration could be given to varying car park charges by time of day to encourage people to visit the town centre when traffic is lighter.

The Area Action Plan Draft Policy Statement 13 seeks to encourage traffic to remain on the primary road network, and to reduce traffic on Abbey Road, St Pauls Road, and Gascoigne Road, the eventual aim being to close Abbey Road. As noted above this could impact on the accessibility of a new multi-storey car park within the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development.
A diagram showing future Traffic Management in Barking and off-street parking locations is shown below:

**Figure 1 Existing and planned Traffic Management in Barking Town Centre**

**Summary**

The Basement car park within the London Road/North Street scheme would have a key advantage of being associated with a large food or non-food store and would be well positioned in relation to the town centre, in particular East Street. It could also help to increase footfall in the surrounding area, provided that the pedestrian environment is improved. However, this is the most expensive scheme.

A new multi-storey car park within the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development would be well positioned in relation to the town centre in particular the Abbey Sports Centre, the Broadway Theatre, the Barking Learning Centre and the Children’s and Family Health Centre. It is likely to be cheaper to build than the London Road/North Street basement car park. A new multi-storey car park within the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development is likely to be well utilised both during the day and in the evenings given that the current car park is well utilised and given the mix of land uses in close proximity. Access for motorists to the existing Axe Street car park is relatively good and is directly off the primary road network. However proposed traffic calming along Abbey Road, and its eventual closure as envisaged in the Area
Action Plan, would severely reduce accessibility by car. Conversely choosing to locate a new
multi-storey car park at this site might contradict efforts to reduce traffic along Abbey Road, as
the car park will attract additional trips.

3.2 Demand Management Options

The amount of additional car parking that can be provided in Barking Town Centre is finite and
the street network is already congested. In addition the Council’s has set out sustainable
transport objectives and targets that will require some form of demand management. This
section explores what options are available to the Council to manage demand for parking in the
future.

3.2.1 Background

The Council already manages to a certain extent demand for parking in Barking Town Centre
through setting parking charges for both on-street and off-street car parking and through on-
street parking controls (Controlled Parking Zone). The Council will also start charging council
staff a modest fee to park in the London Road MSCP from April 2010. We do not think that a
modest fee will lead to a reduction in staff parking.

The Council has also adopted various policies on sustainable transport and car-free housing
that are underpinned by the concept of demand management. The number of parking spaces
currently available also has an influence on parking demand.

Stage 1 of this study identified that anticipated growth in housing and retail floor space is likely
to lead to a shortfall in parking spaces in 2024. The previous section examined where
additional spaces might be provided to fill this gap. It also identified that whilst a majority of car
parks are fully utilised at certain times of the day, the London Road MSCP is under-utilised
throughout the day on Saturdays.

The Council’s policy is to discourage commuter car parking in favour of short-stay parking for
shoppers and visitors. This policy is supported by local businesses although they do believe
that their staff should be able to park in the town centre. In order to ensure that any additional
car parking spaces are not attractive to commuters will require the use of appropriate car
parking charges.

Measures and incentives to encourage travel by other modes of transport and to encourage
alternatives to travelling should also be introduced in parallel so as to provide workers with
viable alternatives to driving. In order to support its sustainable transport objectives and support
the Barking Town Centre Movement Strategy, the Council should also envisage targeting such
measures at shoppers and visitors as well, in particular as the number of shoppers and visitors
is anticipated to increase in line with growth in retail floor space and households.

A survey carried out a number of years ago indicated that the car mode share of shoppers and
visitors to the town centre was around 15%. Whilst this may have increased in line with the
increase in car ownership levels, it shows that it is not unrealistic to think that shoppers and
visitors can travel to the town centre by public transport or by foot (according to the survey this
represented 30% of the modal share). The town already enjoys good public transport links,
which are soon to be further improved with the introduction of East London Transit (ELT).
However, the Mayor of London has abandoned ELT phase 2, which will now be replaced by the
Barking to Royal Docks bus corridor. This will follow the same alignment as ELT 2, except it
continues to Creston House where it would link with Crossrail.
Measures have also been introduced to improve the pedestrian environment and further measures are envisaged by the Council as part of the implementation of the Barking Town Centre Movement Strategy and LIP programme.

Whilst retailers in the town centre believe that motorists spend more and would wish to attract motorists for this reason, the Town Centres Survey (2004) commissioned by TfL found that people travelling by alternative modes do not spend less. The study included 3,179 on street interviews in locations including Bromley, Kingston and Ilford. The main findings were that bus customers spent £63 a week, car drivers £64, and walkers £91. Walkers and bus riders also visited the town centres more regularly at 15 days a month for walkers and 7 days a month for car drivers.

As noted in Stage 1 of this study the underlying assumptions on retail demand are considered to be conservative. It may therefore be that in the future there could be a greater demand for parking than envisaged in this study. The supply of car parking in the town centre is finite and parking spaces take up valuable land that could be devoted to other uses such as retail, housing or green spaces. The Council may therefore need to consider at some stage in the future demand management measures over and above what can be achieved by the charging regime alone. Putting aside revenue generation, these are likely to be a more cost effective solution to building additional parking facilities.

In the context of a finite parking supply the Council may wish to consider to which groups of people it should give priority. A car parking hierarchy could be developed in order to inform the decision making process. This could take the following form:

1. Blue badge parking
2. Short-stay shoppers and business needs (up to 2 hours)
3. Longer-stay shoppers and business needs (up to 4 hours)
4. Employment parking (in excess of 4 hours)

As noted above the London Road MSCP is currently under-utilised on a Saturday whilst other car parks are oversubscribed. This represents not only a waste of parking spaces but also a loss of potential revenue for the Council at a time when revenue from other sources may be constrained. Utilisation of the London Road MSCP is unlikely to increase and may even decrease in the future when additional parking spaces are provided elsewhere in the town centre (for example within the London Road/North Street development).

One way of improving utilisation of the London Road MSCP would be to review the car parking charges so as to make them more attractive to shoppers and visitors and to actively promote it to these users. In tandem with this, improvements should be made to signage for pedestrians and motorists so that the London Road MSCP is easier to find.

### 3.2.2 Pricing

Parking charges have been used by a number of local authorities to influence travel behaviour and meet policy goals. Pricing is an effective tool as motorists appear to be particularly sensitive to parking prices because they are a direct charge. Compared with other out-of-pocket expenses, parking charges have a greater effect on vehicle trips. For example, a £1 per trip parking charge is likely to cause the same reduction in vehicle travel as a fuel price increase that averages £1.50 to £2 per trip (VTPI 2009).
The choice of car park and utilisation can also be affected by variable pricing. At present car park charges are uniform across council car parks. To manage demand more effectively, the Council could increase charges in very popular car parks, and decrease charges in the least popular. There is evidence from the Stage 1 report to suggest that car park charges in Axe Street and London Road/North Street could be increased, and charges in the London Road MSCP decreased, to achieve a better distribution of car parking around the town centre and relieve pressure on the very popular car parks.

Whilst decreasing charges in the London Road MSCP would mean less revenue per customer, the rules of supply and demand suggest that lower charges would increase the number of pay and display customers, which is currently very low. The revenue implications of this approach could be examined using a financial model.

Another type of variable charging that the Council might wish to consider in support of its sustainable transport objectives is carbon-dioxide-based variable charging. For example, Richmond and several other London Boroughs operate variable parking charges based on CO2 emissions of vehicles, increasing charges by 25% for the most polluting cars, and working towards climate change policy goals.2 The Council may wish to further investigate this measure as part of its plan to reduce CO2 emissions by 20% by 2011.

Several local authorities such as Birmingham and Surrey County Council are investigating or have implemented variable charges based on congestion levels or time of day. The scheme in Birmingham consists of discounted ‘shoppers’ rates, and discounted off-peak rates on evenings and Sundays.3 In Barking prices could be adjusted according to the time of day, with higher charges during the lunchtime peak aimed at reducing demand for parking at this time. The underutilisation of the London Road Multi-Storey car park, especially on Saturdays could be mitigated by reducing parking prices on a Saturday.

The revenue implications to the Council of implementing this regime could be assessed using a financial model.

3.2.3 Soft Measures

As described in the Stage 1 Report, Barking Town Centre enjoys a very high level of public transport accessibility, which is soon to be further improved with the introduction of East London Transit (ELT). As such, there appears to be a significant potential for a switch to alternative modes of transport in the area, which could be encouraged using the range of soft measures discussed below. The Council already recognises this potential, with various plans and strategies including the AAP, LDF Core Strategy, and Local Implementation Plan setting out proposals for soft measures, as discussed in the Stage 1 report.

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2 More information on Richmond's parking charges:

3 More information on Birmingham’s parking charges:
http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/GenerateContent?CONTENT_ITEM_ID=71177&CONTENT_ITEM_TYPE=0&MENU_ID=14085&EXPAND=12077
Soft measures work best when they are introduced alongside real improvements in public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure. The introduction of ELT and plans to improve interchange facilities at Barking Station would provide an effective catalyst for soft measures. Additional measures such as the introduction of MobiHubs (community level transport interfaces centred on local facilities), improvements in cycle parking facilities and pedestrian signage (a pedestrian wayfinding system) would further add to the desirability of these modes, acting to further reduce demand for parking.

Workplace Travel Plans

“A workplace travel plan can be described as a package of measures put in place by an employer to try and encourage more sustainable travel.” (DfT 2005, p23)

On average Travel Plans reduce car commuting by 18%, with the most successful being implemented by Orange Temple Point which achieved a 66% reduction in commuter cars. As such, promoting the adoption of workplace travel plans could significantly reduce the demand for parking in Barking Town Centre.

The Council is currently preparing its own travel plan which is likely to seek to reduce staff car journeys to work, although no concrete information on targets is yet available. In an effort to reduce car journeys to work the Council plans to introduce a charge of £12.50 a month for council staff to park at the London Road Multi Storey car park in April 2010. While this is likely to have a small effect, we believe this charge is not high enough to have a significant impact on demand for parking at the site. If there is no appetite to raise the charge from £12.50 a more effective approach may be maintain free parking, and then charge workers £12.50 for a single day each month. This would act as a far greater incentive to travel by alternative means on the one day they have to pay the charge. Another approach used by Devon County Council is to have designated no parking days, with each employee only able to park for 4 days out of every 5. Free parking for car-sharers could also be considered as a way to encourage modal shift.

The presence of workplace parking restrictions is the only factor that has a significant bearing on the success of a travel plan, appearing to double the impact (ibid).

Car Clubs

It is generally considered that one car club takes six private cars off the road. Smarter Choices (DfT 2005) estimates that car club members reduce their mileage by about a third compared to car owners. Promoting the use of car clubs in the borough could help to reduce the number of privately owned cars and therefore demand for parking spaces. Many schemes are now self-financing and expanding without any external support. TfL and carplus have recently launched www.carclubs.org.uk to provide a comparison of using a car club car compared to owning a car.

Barking Council is already considering introducing a car club in the town centre (as set out in AAP Draft Policy Statement 14), which is likely to contribute to sustainable travel and town centre vitality goals. Such a car club could be utilised by both workers, including council staff, and residents. Due to the under utilisation of London Road Multi-Storey car park, one option could be to allocate some spaces in the car park to the car club. In general car club operators prefer on-street bays because they are more visible and accessible, but this could be overcome through good signage and marketing.

Travel Awareness Campaigns
“Travel awareness campaigns such as ‘Travelwise’ and ‘In Town Without My Car’, use a wide range of media aimed at improving general public understanding of problems resulting from transport choices, and what can be done to solve these problems including changing their own behaviour.” (DfT 2005, p161)

Travel awareness campaigns can utilise a range of media, including posters, websites, leaflets, promotional events, TV/Radio adverts, and even the use of VMS. Travel awareness campaigns are one of the most cost effective soft measures and lead to a direct reduction in car trips among the targeted population of around 1%. They also work in synergy with other Smarter Choices initiatives, increasing the take-up of workplace travel plans, car clubs, and public transport use. Nottingham, Sutton, and Camden are among the local authorities implementing successful travel awareness campaigns.

Some local authorities have recognised the importance of delivering travel awareness messages when drivers are experiencing negative feelings about driving, and are therefore more likely to listen to information about alternative modes. For example, displaying messages on the backs of buses (to target drivers in traffic jams), sponsoring adverts at peak times on local radio (to target commuters in traffic jams), or on pub beer mats (to target drivers who would like one more drink but can’t). One particularly effective tool is to use the backs of parking tickets. For example giving discounts on bus trips, or describing the money saving benefits of cycling.

Personalised Travel Planning

Personalised Travel Planning is a particularly effective soft measure used to reduce car trips in areas with good transport links such as Barking. The introduction of a PTP scheme could significantly reduce demand for parking in Barking Town Centre.

“Personal Travel Planning (PTP) is a technique that delivers information, incentives and motivation to individuals to help them voluntarily make sustainable travel choices… PTP has been implemented overseas since the 1980s (most notably in Australia, where it has now become a mainstream transport planning activity) and was first introduced in the UK in the late 1990s. In 2003, the Department for Transport (DfT) part-funded 14 pilot projects to examine how effective PTP could be in reducing reliance upon the private car. These pilot projects targeted households, schools and employers, with the results from the household projects in particular showing significant reductions in overall car use in urban areas.” (DfT 2005)

PTP programmes typically cost between £20 and £38 per targeted household, leading to reductions in car trips in the region of 10-15%. International experience of cost–benefit analysis of PTP has demonstrated that, over a 10-year period, PTP offers a £30 return for every £1 invested. Sutton and Richmond have both recently introduced PTP schemes.

Home Shopping / Delivery

Smarter Choices (DfT 2005) estimates that Home Shopping / Delivery could reduce national traffic figures between 0.08% and 0.3%. Working in partnership with ASDA and Lidl to increase

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4 More information on Nottingham, Sutton, and Camden campaigns can be found at the following websites:
http://www.thebigwheel.org.uk/index.php - Nottingham Travel Awareness Website
http://www.smartertravelsutton.org/home - Sutton Travel Awareness Website
http://www.travelcamden.info/ - Camden Travel Awareness Website
the uptake of Home Delivery could reduce the need for parking at Vicarage Field and other car parks, but this may be to the detriment of other local shops and businesses as passing trade would be reduced.
4 Improving the Parking Experience

This section explores how the quality and parking experience in Barking Town Centre could be improved. The Stage 1 report identified that there are a range of issues surrounding car park signage and the layout of car parks.

4.1 Parking Guidance and Information (PGI) Systems

AAP Draft Policy Statement 19 states, “The Council will seek to implement a Variable Message Signing system to make motorists aware of the availability of spaces in the Town Centre car parks”. The introduction of Variable Message Signs linked to a Parking Guidance and Information system will improve the overall parking experience in Barking town centre and may help reduce the problem of London Road Multi Storey car park being underutilised.

A typical PGI system consists of monitoring equipment to establish the flow into and out of the car park, a central computer to process the counts and control the dissemination of information to the public via VMS or other media such as radio or a web site. VMS displays should be located at suitable decision points on the network, so that a driver’s journey time to a vacant space is minimised.

The aim of PGI systems is to manage the available parking spaces in highly populated urban areas more efficiently. Studies have shown that PGI systems can influence drivers’ choice of car park and reduce the time spent looking for a parking space. This affects traffic flows and queuing outside the most popular car parks. The overall effect is a reduction in congestion and air pollution which will lead to enhancement of urban areas.

Benefits from a PGI system are greatest when the demand for off-street parking is approximately equal to supply, as is the case in Barking. In other cases where there is an excess demand for off-street spaces, PGI is expected to have little impact on problems caused. This is because the signs continuously would show ‘no space’. Also, if demand is sufficiently less than supply and spaces are easy to find, the system provides little benefit.

A study of Southampton’s PGI system in 1994 found that 8% of parkers claimed to have changed their parking destination as a result of the information, cutting search times and therefore congestion. Typical environmental benefits are 2% reductions in emissions of Carbon Monoxide (CO) and Hydrocarbons (HC) and 1% in emissions of Nitrous Oxides (NOX) and particulate matter smaller than 10 microns (PM 10S) (KONSULT 2009). However, there is also a potential danger that by helping the motorist, PGI systems can reduce the probability of drivers using an alternative mode (DfT, 2003).

4.1.1 Implementation in Barking Town Centre

As shown in the diagram below, a total of 9 VMS signs for parking would cover all the significant entry routes to Barking town centre, providing an excellent level of coverage. The locations shown are indicative, and further work would be required to pin-point the exact locations based on existing street furniture and safety requirements.
Based on desktop research into VMS costs in Worthing and Romford\(^5\) we estimate such a scheme would incur the following costs:

Purchase and Installation cost: £150,000 to £200,000  
Maintenance cost: £15,000 to £35,000 per annum  

Indicative quotes were obtained from G24 and DataDisplayUK regarding the costs of installation and maintenance of the system shown above. Quotes ranged from £160-170k for installation, and £15-21k per annum for maintenance. The indicative quote from DataDisplayUK below shows a breakdown of the likely costs involved in installing and maintaining such a system:

\(^5\) Romford has 16 VMS linked to 5 car parks. A larger number of VMS were required due to extensive coverage of the surrounding ring road. The maintenance costs in Romford are stated at £34,000 per annum. Worthing introduced their scheme in 2001, paying £120,000 for 10 VMS signs. The stated maintenance costs in 2001 prices were £23,000 per annum. Further details from: [http://www.siemens.co.uk/traffic/pool/documents/press_releases/2007/romford_july.pdf](http://www.siemens.co.uk/traffic/pool/documents/press_releases/2007/romford_july.pdf) and [http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cs/mis/080501com79.pdf](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/cs/mis/080501com79.pdf)
### Table 2 Indicative Quote for Installation and Maintenance of VMS in Barking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 off VMS</td>
<td>£63,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of Concrete Bases &amp; Posts  9 off</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation of VMS onto poles  9 off</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Power to Locations  9 off</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection from Car Parks  5 off</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle Sensors In &amp; Out of each Car Park  5 off</td>
<td>£12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Database?</td>
<td>£20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications from Car Parks to Central Database</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications out to VMS Sites</td>
<td>£9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Control</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (Purchase and Installation)</strong></td>
<td><strong>£160,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Maintenance</strong></td>
<td><strong>£15,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed site locations for the VMS signs were investigated during a site visit to Barking. It was noted during the site visit that there are a large amount of signs for parking and other means around Barking Town Centre. People searching for a parking space may be confused due to too much signage, rather than too little. As such, the introduction of a VMS system could be used to rationalise the existing signage provision. This is particularly an issue along North Street / Broadway, where there are five signs for London Road Multi-Storey car park in a 300m stretch. The diagram below shows road and pedestrian signs relating to parking in the town centre.
4.2 Pedestrian Signage

Improving the quality of pedestrian signage in Barking town centre (as set out in AAP Draft Policy Statement 15) will contribute to modal shift by encouraging more people to walk, and will also make it easier for pedestrians to find their way to and from car parks. This could be particularly significant when tackling the problem of under utilisation of the London Road Multi-Storey car park. A survey of off-street parking facilities revealed that no council run car parks have pedestrian maps at the exits to enable parkers to orientate themselves. In the case of London Road Multi Storey this is particularly important as the pedestrian routes to the town centre are not immediately obvious.

The site visit also revealed that some existing pedestrian signs in the town centre need to be modified. For example, the sign at the top of East Street (marked in red in Figure 2) includes an arm marked ‘Multi-Storey car park’ but this points in the wrong direction. Another sign down East street has two snapped arms (shown in Figure 3 below).
In general many people are put off walking by inconsistent, confusing signage and misconceptions over the distances between areas. Wayfinding projects in Bristol and areas of London aim to tackle these issues by providing better information. The pilot phase in London was in the Bond Street area in November 2007, and is now being expanded to Lambeth and Southwark, Camden and Westminster, and Richmond and Twickenham. The pilot phase in Bond Street showed journeys were quicker by an average of 16%, with two thirds of respondents saying the new system would encourage them to walk more.6

The Barking and Dagenham Local Implementation Plan outlines a Walking Strategy which will set out a programme of actions including:

- Providing wayfinding signs and panels at key locations in the borough (funding and details are set out in Proposal Form 22)
- Producing a printed walking map aimed at residents, visitors and businesses (see Proposal Form 34)
- Updating information packs for the public on the borough’s 8 ‘Just Walk’ Routes (see Proposal Form 34)

A total of £25,000 has been allocated for the project in 2009/10. We would recommend that town centre car parks are identified on wayfinding signs and panels and on any walking maps produced. The wayfinder style map outside Barking Town Hall (shown below) already includes details of town centre car parks.

Figure 3 Wayfinding outside Barking Town Hall and in Central London

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6 More information at: http://www.legiblelondon.info/wp01/?page_id=10
4.3 Providing more Blue Badge parking

Department for Transport (DfT) guidelines stipulate that provision should be made for car parking spaces for disabled motorists (Blue (formerly Orange) Badge holders) wherever conventional parking spaces are provided. Table 3 below sets out the number of parking bays for Blue Badge holders currently provided in the town centre’s public off-street car parks. As can be seen from this table not all public off-street car parks provide adequate parking bays for Blue Badge holders. The current provision in those car parks that do provide adequate parking bays for Blue Badge holders is insufficient by reference to the DfT’s guidelines (TAL 5/95), with the exception of the Axe Street car park that provides a higher number of spaces than the minimum recommended by the DfT for that type and size of car park.

Table 3 Blue Badge Parking Bays at existing car parks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car Park</th>
<th>Total Spaces</th>
<th>Recommended No. of Blue Badge Spaces</th>
<th>Actual No. of Blue Badge Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London Road MSCP</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>26*</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarage Field</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axe Street</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Road/North Street (old)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linton Road</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lidl</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB. The recommended no. of spaces does not include spaces for disabled employees, which must be additional.

*An average of the recommended number of spaces for employment premises and car parks associated with shopping areas was used given that the London Road MSCP is used by workers and shoppers.
4.4 Evening opening of car parks

Several businesses, and in particular the Broadway Theatre, have expressed an interest in car parks opening in the evenings to encourage more people to make use of their facilities. One suggestion has been to open the London Road MSCP in the evenings/overnight. Whilst this would incur additional costs, these might be offset by the additional revenue. The revenue implications of opening the London Road MSCP in the evenings could be examined using a financial model.

4.5 Information and marketing

Information and marketing could be a particularly useful tool to increase the utilisation of the London Road Multi Storey car park and reduce the pressure on other car parks.

We are unaware of any maps of parking facilities currently being made available to the public showing details of off street parking facilities in Barking Town Centre, and recommend that one is created. A best practice example of a parking map from Edinburgh is shown in Appendix A.

A parking map can also include mobility management information such as locations of car clubs. This tactic was used in Italy in the town of Mestre (Venice), which also highlighted park and ride facilities in the area. A campaign with brochures was carried out in order to inform citizens and commuters of the possibility of park & ride and the position of the interchange parking. A map of the Mestre and Marghera area was produced showing the interchange car parks and alternative mobility possibilities available (car sharing, hire of electric vehicles and bicycle hire).7

Promotional materials and maps could be distributed in the Council’s magazine for residents, The Citizen, local papers, and made available on websites including the Council’s own website.

Partnering with local restaurants or theatres for promotions may be another way of increasing awareness of the London Road Multi Storey car park. For example, a ‘Park and Dine’ promotion could be initiated with a local restaurant, where customers get free parking with their meal.

‘Parking free days’ have recently been used by a number of towns in the UK as an incentive to shoppers and visitors. A parking free day in combination with activities promoting the town centre’s retail and leisure offering could be used as a way of increasing the number of regular visitors to the town centre.

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4.6 Issues at specific car parks

**Lidl**

Figure 4 LIDL car park

Although the Lidl car park is included in the off-street parking provision, the site is supposed to be for Lidl shoppers only. Parkers must pay a £1 deposit that is returned at the till in the Lidl store. There is a maximum stay of 1½ hours.

On the car entrance, the lanes are on the wrong side of the road. The entrance is on the right and exit on the left. However, due to the one way system in operation this situation works to reduce conflicting movements outside at the entrance to the car park. Overall the car park is in good condition and, as it is overlooked, security is good.

Recommendation: The lane directions are an issue and could be raised with Lidl

**Vicarage Field**

Figure 5 Vicarage Field car park
The car park is well signed from the road, although the Station Parade entrance may benefit from clearer signing. Either via a bigger road-side sign or markings on the road. However, this will not be necessary if the plans to build over the Station Parade entrance are implemented.

The overall quality of the car park is excellent. Security is good with lighting and CCTV. The lifts are in good condition, and payment is via a card system (shown above).

Pedestrian signage around the Vicarage Field site is poor, although this may improve when the ELT scheme is completed.

Access from the north and south of Barking is particularly good compared to other car parks.

Recommendation: Make the Vicarage Drive entrance more pedestrian friendly.

London Road/ North Street

The overall quality of the car park and surrounding environs is very poor. Furniture is tatty and old and space markings are mostly invisible. The site feels very insecure despite the presence of street lighting.
Payment is via a parking meter. The car park is signed from North Street. Access from the North of Barking is limited due to existing road layout. Pedestrian signage of routes to key destinations is non-existent.

Recommendation: Address highlighted deficiencies as part of the London Road/North Street redevelopment scheme

London Road Multi-Storey Car Park

The car park is well signed from the road, but could be improved with a bigger marking immediately outside on the street. The surrounding environs are quite run down and unwelcoming. Access from Abbey Road and the Northern Relief Road is limited due to banned turns, but generally good.

There is no pedestrian signage directly on exit from the car park and the car park could benefit from pedestrian maps at exit points as it is not clear where to go. Better defined pedestrian routes linking to the town centre would improve also the quality of parking experience. The crossing facilities at the front of the car park that link to the cut-through to East Street are poorly positioned and people were witnessed crossing the road when not at the designated
crossings. The pedestrian sign at the top of East Street points in the wrong direction, which may cause confusion.

There are a large number of signs inside the car park, which could be rationalised. Some are very worn, but most in good condition.

Stairs and lifts are dirty with some graffiti, but in adequate condition. Could do with an occasional clean and spruce up.

There are 3 Electric Vehicle spaces at the rear. The Council may wish to extend this innovative initiative to other car parks. There is a barrier and card system operating for a small section of the car park. Payment is via a parking meter. Spaces are well marked. Security is reasonable with CCTV and lighting, but the dirt and unkempt areas makes it feel less secure.

The utilisation of the car park could also be increased by various measures highlighted in this report including VMS signs, pricing and marketing activities such as discounted shoppers rates and off peak rates.

Recommendation: Refurbish the car park. Rationalise signage. Introduce a card and barrier payment system and priority parking for car sharers and car club members. Improve pedestrian information and links to the town centre.

Axe Street

Figure 10 Axe Street car park

Overall the car park is in very good condition. It is signed from the road, but access from the north is poor, and will be made worse from the south with the introduction of traffic management (and closure) of Abbey Road. It is well lit and overlooked giving a good sense of security.

Pedestrian access to the town centre is excellent, although it could benefit from pedestrian maps near the payment meters.

The disabled spaces appear to be at the wrong end of the car park and are furthest away from the Barking Learning Centre and Town Hall.

Recommendation: Introduce pedestrian maps and signage and consider moving the disabled spaces closer to the Barking Learning Centre and Town Hall.
Linton Road

Figure 11 Linton Road car park (left), and access on Linton Road (right)

The car park is not signed at all from the road and is in poor condition. The bollards and barrier are in very poor condition and appear to have limited use. The space markings are also very poor. Payment is via meters. Overlooked and feels secure despite no CCTV or lighting. No pedestrian maps or signs.

Recommendation: A refurbishment would improve the quality and attractiveness of the car park. A sign immediately opposite the car park entrance on Linton Road (shown in the picture above right) could be modified to include a parking logo. Introduce pedestrian map.
5 Conclusions

Stage 1 of this identified that there would be a peak demand for 1,586 public off-street parking spaces on a weekday in 2024, which exceeds the existing number of spaces (1,397) and represents a modest increase above the 2003 level of parking. The peak demand figure is based on estimates of demand for retail floor space that are considered to be conservative. Furthermore the proposed introduction of a CPZ in the Gascoigne Estate is likely to increase parking pressure in adjacent areas such as the town centre.

In this report we considered two options to address the increase in demand, namely providing additional parking spaces and introducing further demand suppression measures. To support the future viability and vitality of the town centre and meet the Council’s sustainable transport objectives we have suggested a combination of the two options. Whilst we have recommended the introduction of more demand suppression measures this does not take away the case for additional public off-street car parking spaces.

The choice of new parking facilities will depend on a number of factors, and is strongly linked to other redevelopment plans. As such, we have not made recommendations on a preferred choice, but have instead raised potential issues and opportunities associated with each site.

The Basement car park within the London Road/North Street scheme would have a key advantage of being associated with a large food or non-food store and would be well positioned in relation to the town centre, in particular East Street. It could also help to increase footfall in the surrounding area, provided that the pedestrian environment is improved. However, this is the most expensive scheme.

A new multi-storey car park within the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development would be well positioned in relation to the town centre in particular the Abbey Sports Centre, the Broadway Theatre, the Barking Learning Centre and the Children’s and Family Health Centre. It is likely to be cheaper to build than the London Road/North Street basement car park. A new multi-storey car park within the Axe Street/Abbey Sports Centre development is likely to be well utilised both during the day and in the evenings given that the current car park is well utilised and given the mix of land uses in close proximity. Access for motorists to the existing Axe Street car park is relatively good and is directly off the primary road network. However proposed traffic calming along Abbey Road, or its eventual closure, would as noted earlier in the report respectively reduce accessibility by car or isolate the site Conversely choosing to locate a new multi-storey car park at this site might contradict efforts to reduce traffic along Abbey Road, as the car park will attract additional trips.

Other options relating to the quality and management of off-street car parking are shown in the list below:

New car park options

1. Further investigate the traffic impacts of new car park options
Demand Management options
2 Continue Council policy to discourage commuter car parking in favour of short stay parking
3 Develop a car parking hierarchy

Pricing options
4 Increase charges in very popular car parks, and decrease charges in the least popular
5 Carbon-dioxide based variable charging
6 Shopper rates, and time of day variable charging
7 Assess revenue implications of pricing changes using a financial model

Soft measures
8 MobiHubs and improvements to cycle facilities
9 Move from monthly to one day a month charging regime for workers
10 Designated no parking days and / or free parking for car sharers
11 Allocate car-club only parking spaces (esp. at London Road MSCP)
12 Use backs of parking tickets to promote travel awareness campaigns
13 Introduce PTP scheme
14 Work with ASDA and LIDL to increase uptake of home delivery

Improving the Parking Experience
15 Introduce VMS system
16 Rationalise existing signage in and around the town centre
17 Continue introduction of wayfinder style maps and include parking facilities and car club locations
18 Ensure disabled parking facilities meet parking standards guidelines
19 Evening opening of London Road MSCP
20 Distribute promotional materials and maps in The Citizen
21 ‘Park and Dine’ style promotions
22 Parking free days

Issues at specific car parks
23 Review the lane directions
24 Address the deficiencies highlighted at the London Road/North Street car park as part of the redevelopment of the site
25 Refurbish London Road MSCP and rationalise signage
26 Introduce a card and barrier payment system in the London Road MSCP
27 Improve pedestrian links between the London Road MSCP and the town centre
28 Introduce pedestrian maps at all car parks
29 Refurbish the Linton Road car park. Add a parking logo to the sign opposite the car park entrance
30 Introduce designated car sharing spaces at all Council run car parks

The amount of additional car parking that can be provided in Barking Town Centre is finite and the street network is already congested. Appropriate car parking charges must be introduced to ensure additional car parking spaces are not attractive to commuters. Measures and incentives to encourage travel by other modes and to encourage alternatives to travelling should also be introduced in parallel to provide workers with viable alternatives to driving. In order to support its sustainable transport objectives and support the Barking Town Centre Movement Strategy, the Council should also envisage targeting measures at shoppers & visitors, whose numbers are set to increase with growth in retail and households.

Parking charges have been used by a number of local authorities to influence travel behaviour and meet policy goals. Pricing is an effective tool as motorists appear to be particularly sensitive to parking prices because they are a direct charge. Similarly, the choice of car park and utilisation can also be affected by variable pricing. The council may wish to consider one of
a number of different variable parking charges as outlined in this report, including increasing charges in very popular car parks, emission and congestion based charging schemes.

Barking Town Centre enjoys high public transport accessibility. There appears to be a significant potential for a switch to alternative modes of transport in the area, which could be encouraged using the range of soft measures including ‘Workplace Travel Plans’, ‘Car Clubs’, ‘Travel Awareness Campaigns’, ‘Personalised Travel Planning’ and ‘Home/shopping delivery’.

Methods to improve the quality and parking experience in Barking Town Centre were considered. The introduction of Variable Message Signs linked to a Parking Guidance and Information system will improve the parking experience. Studies have shown PGI systems to influence drivers’ choice of car park and reduce the time spent looking for a parking space. This affects traffic flows and queuing outside popular car parks. Nine VMS parking signs would cover the significant entry routes to Barking town centre, providing excellent coverage. PGI system quotes ranged from £160-170k for installation, and £15-21k per annum for maintenance.

Improving the quality of pedestrian signage in Barking town centre (as set out in AAP Draft Policy Statement 15) will contribute to modal shift by encouraging more people to walk, and will also make it easier for pedestrians to find their way to and from car parks. The Barking and Dagenham Local Implementation Plan outlines a Walking Strategy which will set out a programme of actions to help address parking signage issues in Barking town centre.

Information and marketing could be a particularly useful tool to tackle car park utilisation issues. We are unaware of any maps of parking facilities currently available to the public showing details of off street parking facilities in Barking Town Centre, and recommend that one is created. Promotional materials and maps could be distributed in the Council’s magazine for residents, The Citizen, local papers, and made available on websites including the Council’s own website. Likewise, Partnering with local restaurants and/or theatres for promotions may be another way of increasing awareness of the London Road Multi Storey car park. Lastly, ‘Parking Free Days’ (in combination with promotional retail/leisure activates) have been trialled successfully by a number of towns as a way of increasing the number of regular visitors.

Finally, issues have been raised in consultation and through site visits relating to the quality of some of the off-street parking provision. The report recommends a number of options including introducing pedestrian walking maps at all car parks, and refurbishments of the London Road MSCP and Linton Road car park.

5.1 Future work and implementation

The study has highlighted a number of areas where future research may be necessary in order to aide the decision making process and move towards implementation. These include:

- Develop a financial model to examine pricing changes
- Cost estimates of other options
- Identify funding sources and grant schemes
- Further investigate the effect of new parking on the road network
- Rationalise street signing and introduce VMS signs
• Agree which options are to be carried forward, and draw up a timetable for implementation based on existing and foreseen regeneration plans. Assign actions and responsible body for each option.

**Financing**

A Business Improvement District (BID) is one potential funding source for parking measures including a VMS system. In order to proceed down this route, a BID would have to be established in Barking Town Centre (which has been highlighted as a potential BID area. Discussions are currently underway with local businesses), and the member businesses would have to vote for VMS as their preferred scheme. Once voted for, the levy becomes mandatory on all defined ratepayers and is treated as a statutory debt. The plan voted for has a lifespan for 5 years and further proposals will have to be reaffirmed through a vote. Therefore, it would be beneficial to seek to include VMS in the early stages of the creation of a BID.

The LIP states, “Currently the Council does not generate any net parking revenue. The temporary loss of parking spaces during the redevelopment of Barking Town Centre could lead to a decrease in parking revenue over the next few years. The Council will invest any net parking revenue into transport schemes”. As such this is not currently a potential funding source. However, if the pricing regime is reassessed funding may become available.

The LIP goes on to state, “Based on TfL’s Business Plan 2005/06 – 2009/10 and indications given by TfL, the level of funding awarded annually by TfL is unlikely to change significantly between 2006 and 2010. Whilst the LIP recognises that the overall amount of TfL funding for boroughs is unlikely to change, there is a potential to increase Barking and Dagenham’s share of the funding, which has been amongst the lowest in London in recent years. The Council believes that Barking and Dagenham should be a priority for investment given that the borough is forecast to see a large increase in the number of homes and residents between now and 2025 (around 25,000 new homes and 60,000 new residents), which will put pressure on the transport system”. Indeed the last LIP allocation did see a small increase for Barking & Dagenham and this is another potential funding source.

Other potential sources of funding for larger projects include the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the European Union (EU), the London Development Agency, the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC), and developer contributions.

**TfL’s View**

TfL were contacted as part of the research for this project. The information received indicated there is currently no specific standpoint regarding off street parking provision in Barking Town Centre, but their standpoint will follow the parking standards set out in the London Plan and addressed in the Stage 1 report.
6 References


Appendix A: Edinburgh Parking Map