

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	03/03/2026
REPORT OF	Carolina Borgstrom Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Car Parking Strategy & Future Capacity Update
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The development and implementation of an updated Borough-wide Parking Strategy will contribute to the Council's priorities of creating a Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities. An evidence-led approach to parking provision supports economic vitality within Grimsby town centre and Cleethorpes by ensuring sufficient, accessible and well managed parking is available for residents, visitors and businesses. Effective parking management also supports the Council's climate ambitions by enabling the rollout of EV infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report updates the Panel on progress towards the development of a new Borough-wide Parking Strategy and summarises recent analysis of current and forecast parking demand in Grimsby and Cleethorpes following the commencement of multiple regeneration-based schemes.

The evidence indicates that overall parking capacity remains sufficient through to 2035 in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, subject to continued active management of peak seasonal demand and implementation of operational improvements.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

For members to note the findings of a car parking capacity review of Grimsby Town Centre and Cleethorpes, receive an update on both the wider parking strategy and details of a free 30-minute stay at Victoria Car Park in Cleethorpes.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. A study completed by transport consultants, WSP in August 2025 considered the implications of the ambitious plan of regeneration currently taking place in Grimsby Town Centre on medium and longer-term car parking to ensure sufficient capacity and accessibility for visitors, residents, and workers.
- 1.2. In addition to the WSP study for Grimsby town centre, the Council has undertaken an internal review of parking demand in Cleethorpes, particularly in light of the three ongoing regeneration schemes. The WSP findings have also informed the wider Borough Parking Strategy and helped validate internal assessments for Grimsby.

1.3. The report concentrated on:

- estimating how parking may shift over time (to 2035) with reference to the regeneration projects and other town centre development assumptions
- reviewing current car park capacity and utilisation
- forecasting impacts and consideration of different ways forward to ensure an appropriate level of car parking is maintained.

1.4. At the time of writing there were 2004 identified parking spaces in NELC owned car parks in Grimsby town centre and over 2500 further spaces in private car parks, mainly comprising a mix of staff and customer parking provision.

Current car park utilisation - Grimsby

1.5. Ticket sale data for 2023 and 2024 was shared with WSP by the Council's Parking Services team and used as the basis to determine current demand.

1.6. A further snapshot survey of private car park usage was carried out (in lieu of ticket sales data for these sites). Between them, the 10 sites surveyed showed a weekday utilisation rate of between 5% and 100% with the average being a utilisation rate of 63%. Weekend utilisation was lower at around 54%.

1.7. An assessment of car parking utilisation in resort car parks in Cleethorpes has also been carried out. There are approximately 906 car parking spaces in Council owned car parks in Cleethorpes north and a further 619 in the south of the resort around the Leisure Centre and Boating Lake area. Parking demand in Cleethorpes is highly seasonal, with demand peaking in the height of the summer tourism season.

Demand forecasting (to 2035) – Grimsby

1.8. The report looked specifically at the implications of:

- Closure of the Abbey Walk multi-storey car park
- Closure of the Market Hall Roof car park to facilitate the cinema and leisure development
- Closure of car parking at the Fishing Heritage Centre to facilitate the new housing site at Garth Lane
- Closure of the Garden Street car park to facilitate the development of the new Transport Hub.

1.9. In addition, future forecast modelling included bringing 'on-line' new parking provision by 2028 including:

- Ground floor Abbey Walk (~80 spaces)
- Queen Street (~ 50 spaces)
- Land between Sainsbury's and the Fishing Heritage Centre (~40 Spaces)
- Upper Burgess Street (~40 spaces).

1.10. The proposals for Abbey Walk car park may include the implementation of future proofing measures that would allow a first floor to be added at a future date should car parking demand necessitate this (increasing capacity to around 160 spaces).

- 1.11. Using the most likely 'Do something' scenario it is forecast that there will be sufficient car parking capacity within Grimsby town centre through to 2035. Average daily demand is forecast to peak at around 89% of capacity towards the end of the study period.

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026-2027	2028-2035
Car parking capacity	1,949	1,479	1,104	1,411	1,411
Daily average demand	59%	77%	104%	85%	89%

Current car park utilisation and future projections – Cleethorpes

- 1.12. An assessment of 2024 ticket sales data across Cleethorpes Council-operated car parks indicates that overall provision remains sufficient on an annual basis, notwithstanding pronounced seasonal peaks during the summer months.
- 1.13. Across the Cleethorpes estate, average annual utilisation was approximately 86%. However, demand is unevenly distributed between sites and reflects the resort's tourism-driven nature.
- 1.14. Core retail and promenade locations operate at significantly higher levels above 100%, reflecting very high turnover rather than sustained oversubscription and confirm the established pattern of strong short-stay and visitor demand in prime locations. In contrast, seasonal sites show lower annual utilisation. For example, Boating Lake recorded approximately 59% and Grant Street 45%. These car parks experience marked uplift during peak summer periods but operate with spare capacity for much of the year.
- 1.15. The data demonstrates that Cleethorpes does not experience a structural annual deficit in parking provision. Instead, pressure is concentrated in specific high-demand locations and during defined peak periods, particularly in summer and during major events. Outside of these peak times, overall capacity across the resort is adequate.
- 1.16. Beyond 2030 including the regeneration schemes in commencement, and without any material loss of parking supply, a stability-based projection was considered appropriate, therefore no modelling was carried out given parking demand in Cleethorpes has remained broadly consistent across recent years. Under this scenario, baseline annual demand is expected to remain broadly flat, with potential marginal growth in the order of 1–2% per annum.
- 1.17. Even allowing for regeneration based growth beyond 2030, existing underutilised sites provide sufficient headroom to absorb additional demand. The principal challenge therefore remains the management of seasonal peak circulation and redistribution between high-demand and lower-demand sites, rather than the need for substantial new parking provision.
- 1.18. Accordingly, while summer demand continues to generate short-term pressure

in core locations, the overall Cleethorpes parking portfolio is forecast to remain adequate through to 2035, provided that operational management and technology improvements continue to support effective utilisation of the full area.

Proposal to introduce a free 30-minute stay at Victoria Car Park.

- 1.19. The proposal to introduce a free 30-minute stay at Victoria Car Park would be implemented initially as a time-limited trial, with monitoring undertaken ahead of any permanent policy decision in 2026. Victoria Car Park operates in a location that supports short-stay retail and service visits.
- 1.20. Introducing a free 30-minute period is intended to encourage quick turnover, improve convenience for local shoppers and support nearby businesses. It may also help redistribute some short-duration parking demand away from higher-pressure sites such as St Peter's Avenue. From a demand perspective, the likely impacts are:
- Increased short-stay turnover, particularly for quick retail or visits.
 - Potential displacement of very short stays from other charged car parks into Victoria car park.
 - Limited impact on overall annual capacity, as the measure is targeted at short-duration use rather than long-stay demand.
- 1.21. There is a possibility that the free period could increase attractiveness and therefore usage levels at Victoria. However, given that Cleethorpes overall has sufficient annual capacity and that demand pressures are concentrated in specific core locations, this is unlikely to create a structural imbalance across the wider estate.
- 1.22. Operational considerations during the trial will include: i) monitoring occupancy and turnover rates; ii) assessing any parking revenue impact; iii) reviewing compliance and enforcement implications; iv) observing any displacement effects on adjacent streets or car parks. The trial approach provides an opportunity to gather evidence on behavioural change, economic impact and operational performance before any permanent decision is taken. This ensures that any longer-term policy is informed by measurable outcomes rather than assumptions.

Strategy Development

- 1.23. The current draft NELC Parking Strategy (2024-2027) includes a series of policy statements covering both on and off-street parking.

Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

- 1.25. Parking contraventions in North East Lincolnshire are enforced through a civil law regime as opposed to enforcement by police or traffic wardens in a criminal law context in line with Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 together with Statutory Instruments (S.I) made under that part of that Act.
- 1.26. CPE undertaken in the Borough combines the enforcement and management

of both on and off-street parking spaces and helps to maintain road safety, the free flow of traffic on the highway, manage kerb space and off-street parking fairly and transparently.

Parking standards

- 1.27 The council will seek to ensure that car parks meet safety and accessibility standards set by the British Parking Association (BPA). The car parks are inspected bi-annually for any defects. The consideration of larger parking bays should be made as many modern vehicles exceed the standard bay width and larger parking spaces are an attraction to many users. The council aims to meet the new benchmark for accessible, inclusive parking, and EV charging facilities – Park Access. Park Access is a new accreditation that will enable people with accessibility needs to identify car parks and facilities that they can use with ease.

Climate Change and sustainability

- 1.28 The policy aligns with the delivery of EV charging strategy, including expansion of Chargepoint provision and transition of fleet vehicles towards electric models. The council will also consider emission-based charging mechanisms and increase the use of digital permits and cashless systems where appropriate. Parking management is recognised as a tool in supporting cleaner transport and improving air quality.

Off-street parking

- 1.29 The strategy focuses on optimising existing off-street parking provision rather than expanding supply unnecessarily. Utilisation levels will continue to be monitored, and underused sites reviewed. Opportunities may be explored for enhanced use of certain car parks, including HGV and coach provisions, secure motorcycle parking, parcel lockers and potential mobility hub concepts. Where future development affects parking land, changes will be managed in a planned and proportionate manner.

On-street parking

- 1.30 Effective kerbside management remains a priority. The strategy includes reviewing taxi provision, considering dedicated space for short-term delivery activity and formalising parking bay suspension processes. Resident parking and controlled parking zone policies will be reviewed to ensure consistency and fairness. In certain locations, the introduction of charging may be considered where this supports turnover, congestion management and sustainable transport objectives.

Accessibility

- 1.31 The council will review provision for Blue Badge holders both on-and off-street to ensure compliance with current standards and best practice. This includes reviewing accessible bay numbers, installing accessible EV charging infrastructure and monitoring concession policies. The objective is to maintain

inclusive access while managing capacity effectively

Future technologies and how they may support smarter parking.

- 1.32 Technology is viewed as an enabler of improved customer experience and operational efficiency. The strategy supports modernisation through digitalisation and smarter management tools. This includes preparing for digital TROs, considering smart signage to reduce congestion and improve wayfinding, reviewing participation in the National Parking Platform and exploring EV bay pre-booking.

Next steps

- 1.33. Following the capacity review identifying car parking availability and forecast demand, the next steps will be for the Council to update and produce a new parking strategy for the Borough.
- 1.34. Amongst the task to be completed are:
- Study into the implementation of roadside smart signage and real-time parking data to drivers, potentially reducing search time, traffic congestion, and vehicle emissions.
 - Investigations into how key car park sites can be transformed into ‘mobility hubs’ with the aim of providing seamless, sustainable, and convenient, first- and last-mile connectivity, reducing reliance on private cars, easing congestion, and fostering inclusive, vibrant, and accessible public spaces that supports integration between travel modes and encompasses additional facilities including secure bike parking, EV charging, parcel lockers, real-time information and small scale commercial opportunities.
 - Review of appropriate HGV and coach parking areas to minimise their input on residents’ quality of life.
 - Review of policies surrounding civil enforcement practices and resources.
 - Consideration of the implications of the Government’s emerging policies around obstructive footway parking.
 - Ensure that Council car parks continue to reach or exceed safety standards set out by the British Parking Association.
- 1.35. It is anticipated that these works will be undertaken during the remainder of 2026 with a consultation early 2027 followed by formal adoption by April 2027.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1. The key risks associated with the updated parking strategy are:
- Changes in travel behaviour or economic conditions impacting demand forecasts
 - Reputational risk if seasonal pressures are not effectively managed
 - Public concern regarding charging policies, particularly around Blue Badge provision or emission-based charging
 - Wider economic impacts if insufficient capacity is available.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 There are potential positive and negative reputational implications associated with the Parking Strategy.
- 3.2 Positive implications include demonstrating that the Council is proactively managing parking provision to support regeneration, economic growth and climate objectives, whilst ensuring long-term capacity remains sufficient. The evidence-based approach provides reassurance that there is no structural parking deficit in either Grimsby or Cleethorpes.
- 3.3 Potential negative implications could arise if tariff reviews, charging proposals or operational changes are perceived as restrictive or revenue-driven. Similarly, seasonal pressures in Cleethorpes may attract public comment if not actively managed in the long run. An action plan will be agreed with the Council's Communications Team to support the publication and adoption of the strategy. This will include:
- Transparent communication of any trial measures (e.g. Victoria Car Park);
 - Engagement with local businesses and stakeholders;
 - Use of digital and traditional communication channels where appropriate.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Any Parking Strategy proposed measures will be delivered primarily through existing revenue streams generated or through infrastructure based capital funding where applicable. Key financial considerations include:
- Potential capital investment linked to regeneration projects and EV infrastructure (including LEVI funding);
 - Monitoring of revenue impacts associated with tariff reviews and the Victoria Car Park trial;
 - No immediate call on Council reserves is anticipated in relation to adoption of the strategy.
- 4.2. The approach prioritises optimisation of existing assets before consideration of new capital expenditure, thereby supporting value for money.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

This report is not expected to have any significant implications specifically for children and young people.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The delivery of the Council's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) scheme will see the introduction of around 60 22kW electric vehicle chargepoints across

the Council's car parking estate and a further 600 7kW on-street lamp post chargers by 2027/28. This will support the transition to local EV ownership which in turn will have climate change and local environmental benefits such as cleaner air associated with the reduction in petrol/diesel vehicles.

- 6.2 The potential for emission-based car parking charges, would, if introduced, see drivers with higher polluting vehicles pay more for parking, this in turn could encourage a shift to clearer, more sustainable and less environmentally harmful travel patterns.

7. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

There are unlikely to be any significant implications on public health, health inequalities and marmot principles as a result of this report. The resultant parking strategy for North East Lincolnshire will be subject to a full suite of impact assessments including a health-based assessment as part of the development process with appropriate mitigation being sought where there is considered to be detrimental impacts.

8. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

9. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The report focusses on car parking in Grimsby and Cleethorpes town centres which are mainly covered by West March & Park wards (Grimsby) and Sidney Sussex & Croft Baker wards (Cleethorpes).

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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