Report for Resolution

Report to	Executive 29 September 2010	10
Report of	Head of Transport	
Subject	Proposed revisions to car park fees and charges	

Purpose

To consider tariff changes to off-street car parks

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Approve the revised fees and charges as set out in ***Appendix C*** and ***Appendix D*** of the report, to take effect from 8 November 2010;

2. Absorb the increase in VAT from 17.5% to 20% which is due to take effect from 4 January 2011 and not to increase fees and charges accordingly

3. Authorise the Head of Legal Services to undertake the necessary statutory procedures to introduce the new fees and charges, by means of a Variation under Section 35C of the Road Traffic regulation Act 1984

Financial Consequences

The current income projection forecast for 2010/11 is £4.59m.

The recommended increases - if implemented on 8 November 2010 – would generate additional estimated income of £31,250 during the current financial year and £75,000 over a full financial year.

The effect of absorbing the increase in VAT to 20% on 4 January 2011 would be a projected reduction in income of £22,291 during the current financial year and £97,560 over a full financial year.

The combined effect of the two items above would see a projected increase in income of £8,959 over the remainder of the current financial year and a projected reduction in income of £22,560 over a full financial year.

There will be estimated costs of £2,000 for the preparation of notices, advertising and changes to signage.

Risk Assessment

- The Council car parks operational expenditure is subject to inflationary increases and the risk of not increasing tariffs means that operational surpluses will diminish. Any reduction in operational surpluses has a direct impact on the Councils budgets and its ability to re-invest in car parks and fund repairs and maintenance

- The parking market in Norwich is extremely competitive with sufficient capacity to prevent individual operators such as the City Council from setting tariffs without due regard to competition. Any substantial increases in tariffs - including increases in VAT - would be likely to cause significant migration to competitor car parks and subsequent loss of income

- Due regard has been taken in this tariff review to ensure recommendations are consistent with adopted local transportation strategies.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future" and the service plan priority to maximise income from off-street car parks.

Contact Officers

David Rogers, Strategic Parking Officer 01603 213456

Background Documents

None.

Report

Background

1. The City Council generates significant income from parking fees and charges currently projected to be £4.59m for 2010/11.

2. Parking capacity increased in the City Centre by 2028 spaces to over 10,000 public spaces during the course of 2005 and since that time there has been considerable competition for business between operators. This competition has had the effect of driving down major private operators tariffs (Chapelfield to match the Mall) leaving the City Council's car parks as the highest priced volume operator within the City centre.

3. Park and Ride now provides 6 sites operated by the County Council offering 4876 spaces at extremely competitive prices compared with City Centre car parking.

4. The City Council now has only 19% of the public off-street car parking serving the City. A full list of the public car parks serving the City forms ***Appendix E***.

5. A very competitive local market situation persists, but the numbers of visitors to the City is holding up well with operators reporting no significant variations to usage over previous years.

6. Despite this increased competition the City Council's car parks continue to deliver operational surpluses but in order to maintain both income and standards it will need to continuously re-invest in its car parks.

Car parks strategy

7. The City Council operates two multi-storey and 13 pay and display car parks. These are important income generators for the council and play a vital role in supporting the local economy.

8. In some cases their use as a pay and display car park is a secondary choice for the site. A primary use may have been identified within the Site Allocations Plan which outlines the Councils vision for the future growth and development of the City.

9. Where sites have been identified for redevelopment then our strategy is for key existing sites to be expanded to replace the lost parking provision and income that may occur in the future. This will be done through the use of a combination of the following routes:

   - Using capital receipts gained from disposals to fund expansion of key sites

   - Exploring possible joint ventures with developers to replace lost parking provision and income

   - Exploring opportunities for Prudential Borrowing to fund expansion of key sites

10. Car parks which have been identified as key sites are:

- St Andrews MSCP
- St Giles MSCP
- Rose Lane
- Barn Road
- Magdalen Street
- Rouen Road

11. Car parks which have been identified for potential future redevelopment are:

- Chantry
- Chapelfield East
- Colegate
- Monastery Court
- St Crispins
- Exeter Street
- Pottergate
- Westwick Street

12. In most cases, any future redevelopment will be some years away before it will be financially viable for developers to bring a suitable scheme forward. Wherever possible the council will continue to operate these sites itself rather than to sell to potential developers who may seek to land bank.

13. Queens Road car park is owned by the County Council and operated by the City Council under a profit share arrangement.

Proposed revisions to fees and charges

14. Parking tariffs were last revised by the City Council in June 2009 when charges for blue badge holders were introduced for our surface car parks. Prior to that, general charges were last increased in 2006.

15. Despite not increasing general charges since 2006 there remains very little scope within the current market for price increases. Consequently it is proposed only to make selective adjustments to charges where the market will permit this rather than across the board increases.

16. Officers met with the City Council’s Scrutiny review panel in November 2009 to discuss likely proposed revisions to charges that would be put forward in this report. The Scrutiny review panel supported both the general tariff

recommendations and the principles behind the proposals.

17. Since meeting with Scrutiny review panel in November the local market has changed and in particular Anglia Square MSCP has now re-opened. It has therefore been necessary to take account of this fact in the proposals which follow.

18. Officers have considered very carefully the option to apply a significant increase to the evening/overnight charge but feel that this would be counter productive given the significant capacity available at competitor sites at lower cost. It is felt that a modest increase to the evening tariff along with other selective increases is more sustainable and less likely to cause migration to competitors during the evenings which might be carried over to day-time parking habits.

Short and Medium stay proposals

19. Comparisons with local competitor short and medium stay charges are set out within ***Appendix A.***

20. Comparisons with other regional cities whilst of interest are not material factors given the local parking market in which the Council's car parks must compete.

21. Most city centre short stay facilities are priced at £1.00 per hour. Pricing competition has seen Chapelfield reduce its hourly tariff to £1.00 from £1.50. With the exception of two sites - NCP MSCP at St Stephens gate and Riverside MSCP - the City Council's short stay car parks are the highest at £1.40 per hour.

22. Given that the Council's City Centre car parks - when considered against the main private operators - are the highest price point, officers are not proposing an across the board tariff increase at this time as we believe this would be counter productive.

23. The following recommendations are made with regard to short to medium stay tariffs:

    - Increase St Andrews hourly rate to £1.30 (currently £1.20) per hour and multiples thereafter up to the maximum day-time rate

    - Increase the Hourly rate at Magdalen Street (currently 90p), Exeter Street (currently 80p) and St Crispins (currently 80p) to £1.00 per hour and multiples thereafter up to the maximum daily rate

    - In order to improve medium stay usage at St Giles car park it is recommended to reduce the limit on the maximum day-time charge to £8 (currently £15) and at Colegate car park to £7.00 (currently £1.10 per hour or multiple thereafter)

    - Increase the evening and overnight rate to £1.70 (currently £1.60).

24. A summary of the proposed tariff changes is set out in ***Appendix C*** to this report.

25. On-street parking is currently free of charge on Sundays and provides an

incentive to park on-street. A review of this policy is likely to take place during 2010.

Maximum stay proposals

26. Comparisons with competitor long stay charges and standard bus fares are set out within ***Appendix B.***

27. Competitor long stay surface car parks in the Anglia Square area offer all day parking at £3.50. NCP have recently reduced their long stay parking from £13.00 to £4.00 all day at their St Stephens gate multi-storey car park.

28. Park and Ride charges are currently £2 per person (rather than per vehicle) all day or £1.70 per person after 12.30. Further discounts are available for groups travelling in the same vehicle.

29. Equivalent bus fares for journeys into the City using Firstbus are currently:

- City Centre from/to Zones 1 = £2.20 round trip
- City Centre from/to Zones 2, 3 and 4 = £4.40 round trip
- City Centre from/to Zones 5 = £4.80 round trip

Zone 5 typically extends out to towns such as Wroxham and Aylsham to the North of the City and to Loddon, Long Stratton and Wymondham to the South.

30. Taking account of current usage trends, competitor tariffs and local transportation strategies it is recommended to increase the day time maximum stay rates at St Andrews to £5.20 (currently £5.00) and at Exeter Street and St Crispins to £3.50 (currently £3.00).

31. Barn Road car park is under utilised and it is recommended to introduce a maximum day-time tariff of £5.20 in order to increase medium stay users at the site. This will have benefits for St Benedict's Street traders by increasing footfall in the St Benedict's area between the car park and the City Centre.

32. A summary of the proposed tariff changes is set out in ***Appendix C*** to this report.

Season Tickets and Contract Parking proposals

33. Taking account of usage trends, competitor tariffs and local transportation strategies it is recommended to increase the following season tickets and contract parking tariffs:

- Increase the St Andrews Monday to Friday special offer season ticket to £912 pa (currently £868) and pro rata increases for Monday to Saturday and Monday to Sunday
- Increase the Category D Monday to Friday season ticket to £695 pa (currently £669.65) and pro rata increases for Monday to Saturday and Monday to Sunday
- It is recommended that the Strategic Parking Officer retains the authority to

negotiate price based on volume for organisations seeking to purchase season tickets or contract parking.

34. A summary of the proposed tariff changes is set out ***Appendix D*** to this report.

Effect of VAT increase

35. The emergency budget in June announced an increase in the rate of VAT from 17.5% to 20% with effect from 4 January 2011.

36. The Council did not reduce its charges when the rate of VAT reduced from 17.5% to 15%, and benefitted from a reduced liability during that time.

37. The effect of an increase in VAT to 20% with effect from 4 Jan 2011 will be to reduce income to the council for the remainder of the current financial year as follows:

Jan	£7095
Feb	£7129
Mar	£8067

A full year effect is likely to reduce income by £97,560

38. Automatic payment machines can only be increased in 10p increments and a 2.5% VAT increase on £1.40 (a typical hourly charge) is significantly less than that at 3.5p, it will not therefore be possible to reflect the changes in VAT exactly if any increase were to be passed on.

39. Car park income has held up extremely well during the current economic difficulties and is currently at an optimum level with only minor adjustments advisable.

40. Given the current extremely competitive parking market within Norwich officers believe it will be counter productive to pass on the cost of the VAT increase to customers and recommend that any increase in VAT levels should be absorbed. There is considerable risk that to pass on the increase could tip the balance and cause a migration away from the council's car parks to competitor sites with a corresponding reduction in income.

Review of On-site Payment Options

41. Officers continuously review payment methods available within the market place with a view to their suitability for the Council's car parks. Current options can be summarised as follows:

- **Pay and Display systems -** currently adopted at our surface car parks as a cost effective payment solution

- **Pay on foot systems** – currently in use at our multi-storey car parks with selected machines at each site also offering credit and debit card payment facilities

- **Credit and debit card payment -** can be built into both pay on foot and pay and display systems. There are additional costs associated with this method and it can not be assumed that its provision will generate additional customers

- **Payment by mobile telephone -** available through a contract with a specialist third party provider and suitable for off-street or on-street surface car parking. Not suitable for multi-storey/barrier controlled parking.

Credit and debit card payment

42. The council offers payment by credit and debit card at its multi-storey car parks and currently approximately 9% of customers choose to pay by this method. These are existing customers who have chosen to pay by this method rather than additional customers attracted by the option of the payment facility.

43. Because these customers choose not to pay by cash it is possible to reduce the cost of cash collections carried out at the MSCP's by approximately £1,750 pa. However, the costs associated with the processing of credit and debit card payment is higher at £9,040 pa. This covers the transaction processing management fee and bank merchant fees. There is therefore an additional cost to the council of £7,290 pa associated with the provision of this customer service improvement.

44. In addition to the impact on revenue that would be incurred, existing pay and display machines can not have card readers and chip and pin pads retro-fitted. Payment machines would therefore need to be replaced early in order to provide the facility. The estimated cost to replace half the machines (to have at least 1 on each car park) with new machines incorporating card payment facilities is estimated to be in excess of £60,000.

45. Given the additional costs involved an extension of the provision of credit and debit card payment systems to our pay and display car parks is not recommended at this time.

Payment by mobile telephone

46. As with credit and debit card payment this system does not generate additional customers in itself. There are low start up costs but because payment is by credit or debit card then merchant and payment processing fees are payable by the council which outweigh any reduction in cash collection costs that can be achieved.

47. There are also additional costs which are charged direct to the customer to use the facility on top of the council's own charges to park. Typically this would be 20p per transaction plus 20p to extend the parking period and a further 10p to receive a warning that the time purchased is about to expire. These additional charges would limit the council's ability to maximise its own charges if it were to implement such a system when customers are price sensitive.

48. Given the increase in costs that would arise it is not recommended to implement a payment by mobile telephone scheme at this time.

Advertising revenue

Advertising display panels

49. The council offers advertising opportunities through strategically positioned

advertising display panels at its multi-storey car parks. This is estimated to generate a projected £15,000 during 2010/11 and is currently managed in-house.

50. Officers continue to explore opportunities through agreements with agencies such as Adshel and J C Decaux which might generate greater income to the council. To-date this has not been seen as an attractive proposition by such agencies who generally are looking for more public advertising pitches and large shopping malls.

51. Officers will continue to maximise income from the current local advertising market whilst seeking interest from national advertising agencies in this field.

Advertising on tickets

52. Advertising is currently sold on tickets purchased by the council for its on-street pay and display machines. This type of advertising is generally sold by the ticket supplier in advance and has the benefit of reducing the purchase cost of the tickets.

53. At its off-street car parks – because of the greater volumes of tickets processed - the council has in the past encountered problems with advertising inks on tickets contaminating ticket readers causing malfunctions. This puts significant parking income at risk. For each day that we might lose income at St Andrews car park through malfunctioning equipment the council could lose £5,500.

54. Additionally when parking equipment fails for these reasons the maintenance agreements that the council has with its equipment suppliers do not cover the cost of diagnosis and repair and the council is then charged for these repairs as extras. The associated customer service problems and financial costs can very quickly overtake any financial benefit achieved through selling advertising space.

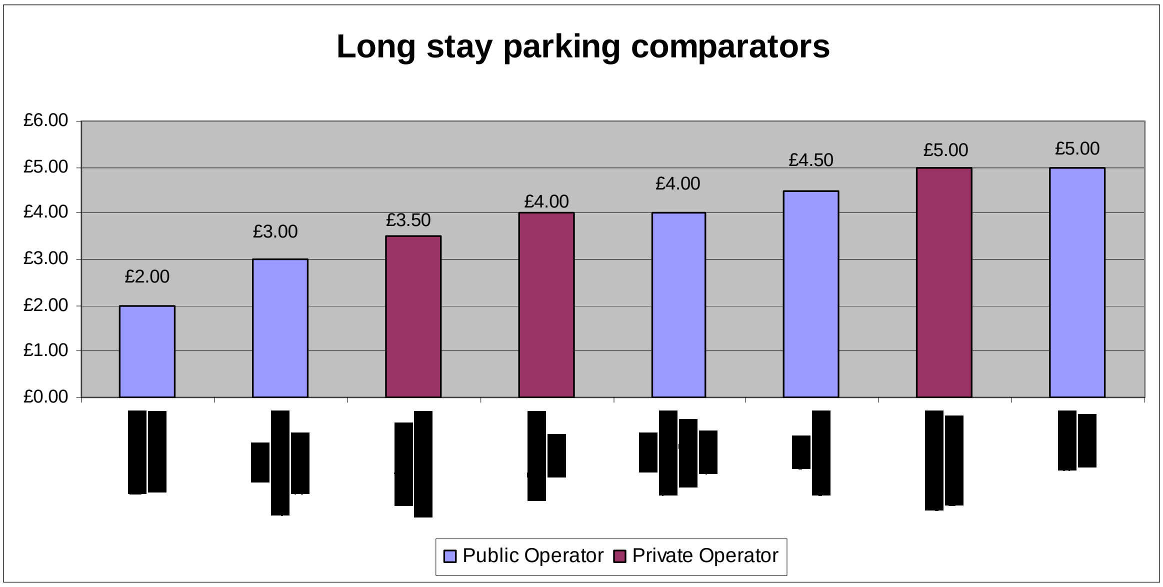
55. Officers are currently seeking to negotiate the supply of tickets with pre-sold advertising, through its maintenance contracts with equipment suppliers, which will deliver reduced ticket costs without compromising equipment reliability and maintenance costs.

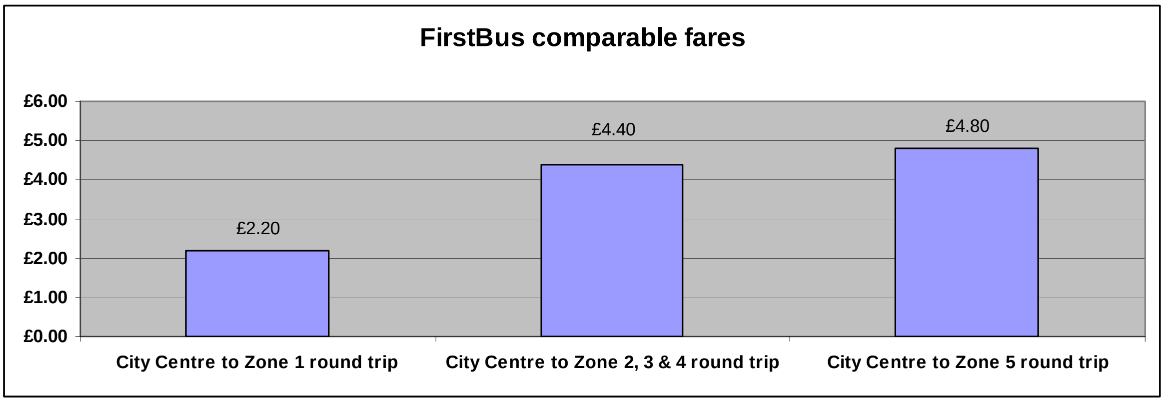
APPENDIX A – Norwich parking comparitors

Norwich Comparators		**Spaces**	**Mon to Saturday 0500 to 1830**						
Car Park	Operator		**1 hr**	**2 hrs**	**3 hrs**	**4 hrs**	**5 hrs**	**6 hrs**	**Eve.**
Botolph Street	Regional Car Parks	160	0.80	1.60	2.40	3.20	3.50	3.50	n/a

Anglia Square MSCP	Anglia Square/RCP	692 reduced to 300?	0.40	0.80	1.20	2.00	2.50	5.00	n/a
Anglia Square surface	RCP	138	0.80	1.60	2.40	3.20	3.50	3.50	n/a
Riverside MSCP (rail users £6 up to 24hrs)	X-Leisure (National Express)	738	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	8.00	n/a
St Stephens MSCP *** If arrive before 9am.**	NCP	270	2.10	3.10	4.00 *	4.00 *	4.00 *	4.00 *	3.00
Castle Mall MSCP	Mall Corporation	800	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	6.00	6.00	1.50
John Lewis MSCP (non-shoppers in brackets)	John Lewis	650	0.80 (1.00)	1.30 (2.00)	2.50 (3.50)	3.50 (5.00)	6.00 (8.00)	10.00 (12.50)	n/a
Forum	MillCo	206	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	7.00	8.40	1.60
Chapelfield	Capital Shopping Centres	1000	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	8.00	8.00	1.50 From 3pm
NCC Short stay	Norwich CC	647	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
NCC Medium stay	Norwich CC	1016	1.10 & 1.30	2.20 & 2.60	3.30 & 3.90	3.60 to 4.50	4.50 to 5.00	4.50 to 6.60	1.60
NCC Long stay	Norwich CC	170	80p & 90p	1.60 & 1.80	2.40 & 2.70	3.00 & 3.20 & 3.60	3.00 & 3.50 & 4.00	3.00 & 3.50 & 4.00	1.60
NCC St Andrews MSCP	Norwich CC	1084	1.20	2.40	3.60	4.80	5.00	5.00	1.60

APPENDIX B – Long stay and bus fare comparators





Zone 1 typically extends to Magdalen Street and Bracondale.

Zone 2 typically extends out to villages such as Spixworth, Rackheath, Blofield, Newton Flotman, Costessey and Horsford.

Zone 5 typically extends out to towns such as Wroxham and Aylsham to the North of the City, Easton to the West, Acle to the East and to Loddon, Long Stratton and Wymondham to the South.

APPENDIX C – Summary of proposed revisions to parking charges

Current and proposed parking charges for Council car parks				Mon to Sun & Bank Hols 0500 to 1830						Mon to Sun & Bank Hols
Car Park	Total spaces	Tariff type ***		1 hr	2 hr	3 hr	4 hr	5 hr	5hr +	1830 to 0500
St Andrews MSCP	1084	S/M	Existing	1.20	2.40	3.60	4.80	5.00	5.00	1.60
			Proposed	1.30	2.60	3.90	5.20	5.20	5.20	1.70
St Giles MSCP	330	S	Existing	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
			Proposed	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	8.00	1.70
Barn Road	147	M	Existing	£1.10 per hour or part of an hour						1.60
			Proposed	1.10	2.20	3.30	4.40	5.20	5.20	1.70
Chantry	78	S	Existing	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
Chapelfield East	17	S	Existing	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
Colegate	94	M	Existing	£1.10 per hour or part of an hour						1.60
			Proposed	1.10	2.20	3.30	4.40	5.50	7.00	1.70
Exeter Street	46	L	Existing	0.80	1.60	2.40	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.60
			Proposed	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	1.70
Magdalen Street	206	M	Existing	0.90	1.80	2.70	3.60	4.00	4.00	1.60
			Proposed	1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.70
Monastery Court	55	S	Existing	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
Pottergate	26	S	Existing	1.40	2.80	4.20	5.60	8.00	15.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
Queens Road	61	M	Existing	£1.10 per hour or part of an hour						1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
Rose Lane	204	M	Existing	1.20	2.40	3.60	4.50	4.50	4.50	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
Rouen Road	187	M	Existing	1.10	2.20	3.30	4.40	5.00	5.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70
St Crispins	74	L	Existing	0.80	1.60	2.40	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.60
			Proposed	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.50	3.50	3.50	1.70
Westwick Street	107	M	Existing	1.30	2.60	3.90	4.00	4.00	4.00	1.60
			Proposed	No change						1.70

*** Tarrif type S = Short M = Medium L = Long

Appendix D – Summary of proposed revisions to season ticket and contract parking charges

Current and proposed charges for Council car park season tickets			Price per annum		
Season Ticket	Car parks included		5 day/wk	6 day/wk	7 day/wk
St Andrews	St Andrews MSCP	Existing	£868.00	£1068.00	£1215.00
		Proposed	£912.00	£1094.00	£1276.00
Category A	Queens Rd, Barn Rd, Colegate, Rouen Rd, Magdalen Street, St Andrews, Rose Lane, Westwick St, St Crispins, Exeter St.	Existing	£2383.50	£2860.20	£3336.90
		Proposed	No change		
Category B	Exeter St, Magdalen St, St Crispins, Rose Lane, Westwick St, St Andrews.	Existing	£1191.75	£1430.10	£1668.45
		Proposed	No change		
Category C	Exeter St, Magdalen St, Westwick St, Rose Lane, St Crispins.	Existing	£908.00	£1089.60	£1271.20
		Proposed	No change		
Category D	Exeter St, St Crispins.	Existing	£669.65	£803.58	£937.51
		Proposed	£695.00	£834.00	£973.00

Current and proposed charges for Contract Parking		Price per annum		
Permit/car park		5 day/wk	6 day/wk	7 day/wk
St Andrews	Existing	£1375	£1650	£1925
	Proposed	No change		
Colegate	Existing	£2600	£3120	£3640
	Proposed	No change		
Barn Road	Existing	£1040	£1248	£1456
	Proposed	No change		
Westwick Street	Existing	£1040	£1248	£1456
	Proposed	No change		

City and County Council staff currently qualify for a 5% discount off the standard season ticket and contract parking charges listed above. The staff discount does not apply to special offer rates such as the St Andrews special offer season ticket.

Appendix E - Summary of public parking spaces available

	Car Park	Operator	Standard spaces	Disabled spaces
	On Street pay and display	City/County Council	650	59
	Sub Total		**650**	**59**
Multi-storey	St Andrews	City Council	1032	52
	St Giles	City Council	319	11
	Chapelfield	Capital Shop Centres	954	50
	Castle Mall – Farmers Ave	The Mall Group	76	5
	Castle Mall – Rose Lane	The Mall Group	685	25
	The Forum	Forum	195	11
	Riverside	X-Leisure	738	*36*
	John Lewis	JLP	635	15
	Anglia Square	RCP	500*	0
	St Stephens Gate	NCP	280	5
	Sub Total		**5414**	**210**
Off Street Pay and Display	Barn Road	City Council	143	4
	Colegate	City Council	92	2
	Chantry	City Council	75	3 rising to 4
	Chapelfield East	City Council	17	0 rising to 1
	St Crispins	City Council	74	0
	Monastery court	City Council	53	2
	Rose Lane	City Council	197	7
	Rouen Road	City Council	183	4 rising to 7
	Magdalen Street	City Council	196	7 rising to 9
	Pottergate	City Council	24	2
	Exeter Street	City Council	44	2
	Queens Road	City Council	59	3
	Westwick Street	City Council	105	2
	Assembly House	Assembly house	54	4
	Botolph Street	RCP	157	0
	Edward Street	RCP	23	0
	Lower Clarence Road	RCP	385	0
	Anglia Square	RCP	138	0
	St Helens Wharf	Jarrold	134	4
	Mountergate	RCP	150	0
	Hollywood Cinema	RCP	31	0
	Riverside surface		1062	27
	Sainsbury Queens Road	Sainsbury	370	17
	Toys R Us	Euro car parks	242	8
	Rear of NCFC	NCFC	400	18
	Sub Total		**4408**	**117**
Park & Ride	Postwick	County Council	500	25
	Airport	County Council	591	29
	Sprowston	County Council	741	36
	Harford	County Council	1039	49
	Thickthorn	County Council	690	36
	Costessey	County Council	1051	49
	Sub Total		**4612**	**224**
	Total		**15084**	**610**

* Reducing to currently unknown number