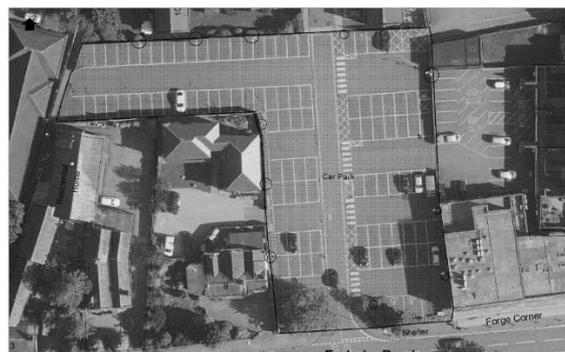


Car Parking Strategy 2022-2027



June 2022

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Executive Summary

The recommendations from the Car Parking Strategy 2022-27 review are as follows:

1. To install LED lighting in all car parks to contribute to the Council's Net Zero targets.
2. To ensure cycle racks are maintained and/or installed in all car parks to contribute to the Council's Walk/Ride priority.
3. To phase out payments by coin, subject to analysis, initially removing the coin option from one machine in Enderby Road, one machine in Johns Court, and completely from Narborough Station.
4. To progress a Blaby Village and Narborough Station Community Safety CCTV scheme and remove existing CCTV cameras from car parks.
5. To find suitable locations for further Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points, with a particular focus on encouraging behavioural change and siting chargers in areas where residents have limited or no off-street parking provision.
6. To review car park enforcement activity and maintain appropriate levels.
7. To retain four free parking days per year in Blaby and Narborough and to increase their marketing and promotion.
8. To continue the Council's strategy of disposal of car parks on a case by case basis.
9. To increase the fees and charges in order to achieve at least a position of cost neutrality.
10. To maintain three hours free parking for Disabled blue badge holders.
11. To maintain the opportunity for businesses to promote any ticket purchase/refund scheme.
12. To further engage with Parish Councils on all matters relating to car parking.

Introduction

In 2017 Blaby District Council adopted the Car Park Strategy 2017-2022 and has been delivering its service to the principles agreed for the past five years.

Key service developments within that strategy period include:

- Introduction of Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers for residential properties with no or limited off-street parking
- Introduction of new ticket machines with contactless functionality
- Introduction of pay by phone and pay through app payment services
- Disposal or transfer of 12 car parks to parishes or third parties

As the Strategy period is ending, it is timely to review and establish priorities for the service over the next five-year period. It is worth noting that during the last three years the car parks have experienced some significant events including the closure of a major retailer with a period of free parking, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and a complete suspension of charging. These events have reduced the Council's ability to acquire accurate baselines of usage, income, and expenditure.

For the reasons mentioned above, this document has been a light touch review of the 2017-2022 strategy and sets out recommendations for the way Blaby District Council will manage and regulate its car parks assets going forward.

The Council recognises that car parks play an important part in promoting the vitality and viability of village centres, assisting both residents and businesses. The Council also recognise the value of car parks in supporting leisure centres and open green spaces to promote healthy physical and mental wellbeing.

The Car Park Strategy cannot be viewed in isolation, having linkages and inter dependencies to the following corporate strategies:

- Climate Change Strategy
- Open Spaces Strategy
- High Street Action Plan
- Commercial Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council views that each car park should fulfil a specific purpose for the benefit of residents and businesses, but that an underused car park is a potentially wasted resource for which there may be a more appropriate use.

This Car Parking strategy focuses on off-street parking provision only and covers the next five-year period (2022-2027).

Previous Strategy 2017-2022

During the last five year period, the Council has successfully transferred several of its car parks to Parish Councils, relinquished leases, or managed disposals to third parties. These transfers have primarily protected the future of the car park land and allow for local decision making to be undertaken with regards to the future management of each site. The following car parks have been transferred.

Car park	Type of car park	Outcome
Wigston Road, Blaby	Pay and display	Lease ended, returned to landowner
The Grange, Narborough	Free with limited waiting period	Converted to private parking for tenants of the new Old Bank flats (remains within Order for enforcement purposes)
Winston Avenue, Croft	Free with limited waiting period	Transferred to Parish Council
St Michaels Court, Stoney Stanton	Free with limited waiting period	Transferred to Parish Council
Long Street, Stoney Stanton	Free with limited waiting period	Transferred to Parish Council
Stamford Street, Glenfield	Free with limited waiting period	To be sold to a third party
Station Road, Glenfield	Free with limited waiting period	To be sold to a third party
Central Street, Countesthorpe	Free with limited waiting period	Transferred to Parish Council
John Street, Enderby	Free with limited waiting period	Transferred to Parish Council
King Street, Enderby	Free with limited waiting period	Transferred to Parish Council
High Street, Whetstone	Leased to the Parish Council	Transferred to Parish Council
Castle Road, Kirby Muxloe	Leased to the Parish Council	Transferred to Parish Council

Current Position

The last two years have been unprecedented due to the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected the usage, income, and ultimately the viability of the pay and display car parks. It also makes comparison to previous years extremely difficult and does not allow an easy forecast of future usage and income as resident, workplace, and shopping habits have changed.

It is therefore timely to develop a new Strategy based on a post-COVID experience, considering the future use of the Council's remaining car park assets.

Car Park Strategy Aim

The Blaby District Council Car Parking Strategy 2022-2027 aims to ensure the car park assets are at the minimum operating to a cost neutral position whilst meeting the needs of residents, businesses, visitors, and commuters whilst contributing to making Blaby 'A great place to Live, Work and Visit'.

Key Actions

The Council will:

1. Ensure all car parks are well maintained, safe to use, and accessible for all.
2. Ensure the costs of delivering the car park service are met by users through the application of charges.
3. Support enforcement to ensure the appropriate use of each car park.
4. Ensure each car park has a specific purpose and deliver on this.
5. Make available information on the car park service through the Council's website.
Make provision for season tickets and residents parking permits where appropriate.
6. Establish a framework for the use of car parks for other purposes i.e. events, offering four free days annually for determination through local partnerships.
7. Support the provision of well-designed and secure cycle racks in all car parks.
8. Provide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in all appropriate car parks to contribute to the Council's aims for a carbon neutral District by 2050.
9. Remove CCTV system from all car parks except for Narborough Station.
10. Phase out coin payments in car parks in favour of contactless payments, with a view to moving to a mobile app/telephone payment system before 2028.
11. Work with Parish Councils and businesses in each car park area to maximise benefit and usage.

Car Park Principles

1. Ensure all car parks are well maintained, safe to use, and accessible for all

Maintenance Plan

The Council's Assets & Property Services team undertake annual surveys of each car park and itemise expenditure for the following five year period. This five year maintenance plan ensures the car parks are well maintained and usable including pothole repairs, line marking, and any associated works.

CCTV

The current CCTV cameras are considered end of life with some out of operation. They predominantly focus on the ticket machines and as such serve no real resident benefit. It is proposed to remove the CCTV from all car parks with the exception of Narborough Station. A separate work stream is underway to propose a Blaby Village Centre Community Safety CCTV system. There is a one-off cost associated with the removal of the existing CCTV equipment and a separate report will be taken to Council outlining a new system.

Parking for Disabled users

All of the Council's public car parks have dedicated disabled parking bays and blue badge holders can park in any pay and display car park free of charge up to a maximum of three hours. There are no plans to change this policy.

Car Park Lighting

The current car park lighting is not energy efficient and is not in support of the Council's Net Zero ambitions. As the Council is now embedding green actions within all of its refreshed strategies and policies, it is proposed to convert all car park lighting to LED. Upgrades to lighting will also make the car parks safer for all, particularly during the winter.

2. Ensure the costs of delivering the car park service are met by users through the application of charges

The Council currently operate the car park service at a loss as can be seen in the financial figures provided on page 14. Commitments were made in the previous Strategy to ensure that the service operates at a minimum of a cost neutral position. One method to achieve this is through the increase of pay and display charges whereby the users of the car parks cover the costs to the service, rather than relying on taxpayer subsidy.

3. Support enforcement to ensure the appropriate use of each car park

The Council has an enforcement service delivered in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and Harborough District Council. This helps to ensure the parking restrictions are enforced efficiently and promotes consistency across the county.

Hours for regulation and enforcement are 0800-1800 Monday to Saturday, including bank holidays. All pay and display car parks are patrolled daily to ensure they are considered safe, kept in good condition, and any issues can be quickly resolved. Due to the Council's transfer and relinquishment of some car parks, the level of enforcement required is currently being reviewed and savings are expected to be realised.

Use of On- and Off-Street Car Park income

Surpluses from on-street charges and on and off-street penalties can only be used for transport improvements although there are no such restrictions on income from off-street parking charges. The Council can use any surplus from off-street charges for any Council services.

On-Street Parking

On-street parking management and enforcement is a very important part of parking provision. Leicestershire County Council, as the designated Highway Authority, is responsible for on-street car parking provision within the Blaby District area. Requests for additional on-street restrictions and changes are made through Leicestershire County Council.

4. Ensure each car park has a specific purpose and deliver on this

Future Strategies for individual car parks

Car park	Purpose	Current position	Draft Proposal
Enderby Road & Johns Court, Blaby	Supports businesses and residents	Pay & display Resident use via parking permits	Retain as pay & display
Weavers Court, Narborough	Supports businesses, residents, and Council Office visitor parking	Pay & display Resident use via parking permits	Surplus to requirements, consider disposal
Station Road, Narborough	Supports commuting and reduce car use	Pay & display	Retain as pay & display, end of lease 23/09/2028
Leicester Road, Narborough	Supports village shops	Pay & display Resident use via parking permits	Surplus to requirements, consider disposal
Station Road, Glenfield	Supports businesses and residents	Pay & display Resident use via parking permits	Surplus to requirements, consider disposal
Stamford Street, Glenfield	Supports businesses and residents	Pay & display Resident use via parking permits	Surplus to requirements, consider disposal
Enderby Leisure Centre, Enderby	Support health and wellbeing	Free	Retain as free for leisure centre users in order not to impact on leisure contract
Pavilion Leisure Centre, Huncote	Supports health and wellbeing	Free	Retain as free for leisure centre users in order not to impact on leisure contract
Bouskell Park, Blaby	Supports village park and tourism (Ice House)	Free	Review in conjunction with Open Space Strategy
Jubilee Park, Enderby	Supports village park	Free	Review in conjunction with Open Space Strategy
Fosse Meadows, Sharnford	Supports Country Park	Free	Review in conjunction with Open Space Strategy
BDC Staff Car Parks, Narborough	Supports staff parking	Free to staff	Review as part of future use of Council Building
The Grange, Narborough	Supports private residents of flats	Permit holders only	Retain as Council asset

5. Make available information on the car park service through the Council's website

The Council has a dedicated section on its website explaining the services undertaken by the car parking team including information on charges, restrictions, permit schemes, pay by phone technology, and parking fines. The website will be updated and developed continually with new information for the benefit of residents and visitors.

6. Make provision for season tickets and residents parking permits where appropriate

The Council currently operates a chargeable Season Ticket and Resident Parking Permit schemes in the pay and display car parks. Officers are mindful of the impact on the number of visitor spaces if a large proportion are occupied by these permits, including employees of shops within the villages. It is felt appropriate that some level of season ticket and resident parking permit provision is appropriate.

7. Establish a framework for the use of car parks for other purposes i.e. events, offering four free days annually for determination through local partnerships

Events

The Council car parks have previously been used for a variety of events. However, as shopping behaviour and car usage evolves, flexibility in the usage of the car parks for other activities may be required. The Council will keep abreast of developments including autonomous vehicles, driverless car stations, car share clubs, drone delivery points, as well as the traditional events.

Free Car Parking Days

During the previous Strategy period, the Council introduced four days free car parking for Blaby and Narborough. It was proposed that the four free days be agreed in conjunction with Parish Councils and local businesses. These days have helped support events and typically include an Easter, Summer and two Christmas events.

8. Support the provision of well-designed and secure cycle racks in all car parks

Since the previous Strategy, the Council has made Walk and Ride Blaby a priority and has developed key policy documents such as the Blaby District Growth Plan, embedding the development of cycling and walking routes, infrastructure, and connectivity as key priorities. The Council's car parks can support this by ensuring secure cycle rack provision is made at all sites.

9. Provide Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points in all appropriate car parks to contribute to the Council's aims for a carbon neutral District by 2050

A total of 12 EV chargers with 24 dedicated bays have been installed since the previous Strategy, across both Narborough and Blaby villages. The chargers were

secured using central government funding matched with some input from the Council and are primarily installed to support those residents without off-street parking to facilitate home charging. The Council commits to actively seeking out additional locations to install further EV chargers and applying for grant funding to work towards the net zero target.

10. Remove CCTV from all car parks except for Narborough Station

The current CCTV cameras are at end of life with some out of use, they predominantly focus on the ticket machines and as such serve no real resident benefit. It is proposed to remove CCTV from car parks asap with the exception of Narborough Station. A separate work stream is underway to propose a Blaby Village Centre Community Safety CCTV system. There will be a one-off cost for removal of existing CCTV cameras/equipment and a separate report to Council on a new system.

11. Phase out coin payments in car parks in favour of contactless payments, with a view to moving to a mobile app/telephone payment system by 2028

The move towards cashless payments is evident in many parts of society and it is considered that the Council's car parks should also do this to reduce costs and realise the green benefits. A phased approach is proposed with any full move to cashless payments only to be considered after detailed analysis of car park payment trends to identify the appropriate time.

Usage statistics

The Wi-Fi usage in Blaby Village centre is a proxy indicator of footfall in the village centre and represents mobile phone access to the free internet service. It benefits the Council by highlighting trends of footfall within the village centre.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (draft)	2022/23 (forecast)
Ticket numbers	427,403	401,528	331,557	8,811	253,612	282,000
Wi-Fi usage	-	-	25,987	25,784	37,525	51,000

Further data on the split of payment methods shows that Narborough Station is already majority contactless, whereas only a third of visitors use it in Blaby.

BLABY	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (forecast)
Coin	326,919	143,826	3,107	171,844	177,576
Card	20,427	14,063	1,076	41,782	52,032
Payphone	-	-	397	14,184	23,262

NARB STATION	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (forecast)
Coin	1,830	1,590	25	62	138
Card	6,777	7,587	187	2,202	3,798
PayByPhone	-	-	47	1,192	2,604

Contactless/Telephone and Mobile App Pay

Usage of these services is encouraged to make the parking experience easier for shoppers and visitors. During the last Strategy period, contactless payments, telephone, and mobile app payment systems were all introduced. The data shows that over time more residents are using these systems as a method of payment. The move to cashless systems would also save the Council due to reduced cash collection fees, ticket costs, and Officer time to deal with machine issues.

The complete move to a telephone or mobile app only payment system would require no physical machines and could be considered when the existing terminals come to the end of their lease life in 2028/29. This would save the capital replacement cost of purchasing machines, as well as yearly maintenance and running costs.

12. Work with Parish Councils and businesses in each car park area to maximise benefit and usage

The Council recognises that its car parks are located within Parish areas and the transfer of some sites during the previous Strategy has given greater local ownership to allow for more targeted decision making with regards to their future use.

It is also recognised that several of our car parks support local businesses and working closely with those organisations on the future of the service is a priority to maintain their continued vitality.

It is proposed to continue discussions with local businesses to provide them the opportunity to operate a refund scheme, making visiting their premises more attractive by refunding the cost of car parking. The four free parking days per year linked to Parish and business events will be retained, dates to be agreed annually by these local stakeholders, the Council will look to provide enhanced promotion of the free parking days and associated events.

Costs of service

	2017-18 £	2018-19 £	2019-20 £	2020-21 £	2021-22 Forecast £	2022-23 Budget £
CAR PARK INCOME	(206,083.42)	(237,520.01)	(162,058.49)	(18,407.16)	(115,058.23)	(191,500.00)
DIRECT COSTS	146,834.77	137,865.83	134,025.16	132,427.67	113,998.54	132,767.00
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT TO CENTRAL COSTS	(59,248.65)	(99,654.18)	(28,033.33)	114,020.51	(1,059.69)	(58,733.00)
RECHARGED CENTRAL COSTS	56,153.70	64,654.67	110,446.12	125,804.71	140,168.00	103,358.00
LOAN REPAYMENT *	10,301.83	1,121.71	17,267.00	8,636.00	8,170.00	16,847.00
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	7,206.88	(33,877.80)	99,679.79	248,461.22	147,278.31	61,472.00

*Loan repayments cover ticket machines and previous car park resurfacing

Car Park service costs

The cost of running the Councils car parks is forecast to operate at a deficit of £61,472 in 2022/23.

Capital Car Park costs

The Council has a capital programme of works for its car parks which are recharged back to the cost centre through a loan repayment. There are currently over £400,000 of future estimated costs identified but not yet committed to, including approx. £200,000 for resurfacing and redesign of Bouskell Park car park and approx. £200,000 earmarked for Fosse Meadows car park.

Car Park Order

To make any changes to the fees and charges for a local authority there is a requirement to follow a legislative process. To implement the changes, an Off-Street Parking Places Order must be developed and consulted upon, requiring a minimum of three months to follow the legislative process. Costs are associated with this process, primarily through fulfilling advertising requirements.

Recommendations

Having considered the successes of the 2017-2022 Strategy, the following recommendations are proposed to develop the service further during 2022-2027:

1. To install LED lighting in all car parks to contribute to the Council's Net Zero targets.
2. To ensure cycle racks are maintained and/or installed in all car parks to contribute to the Council's Walk/Ride priority.
3. To phase out payments by coin, subject to analysis, initially removing the coin option from one machine in Enderby Road, one machine in Johns Court, and completely from Narborough Station.
4. To progress a Blaby Village and Narborough Station Community Safety CCTV scheme and remove existing CCTV cameras from car parks.
5. To find suitable locations for further Electric Vehicle (EV), with a particular focus on encouraging behavioural change and siting chargers in areas where residents have limited or no off-street parking provision.
6. To review car park enforcement activity and maintain appropriate levels.
7. To retain four free parking days per year in Blaby and Narborough and to increase their marketing and promotion.
8. To continue the Council's strategy of disposal of car parks on a case by case basis.
9. To increase the fees and charges in order to achieve at least a position of cost neutrality.
10. To maintain three hours free parking for Disabled blue badge holders.
11. To maintain the opportunity for businesses to promote any ticket purchase/refund scheme for their trade advantage.
12. To further engage with Parish Councils on all matters relating to car parking.