



CRYSTAL
Market Research

**Parking Charges in Bath & North East
Somerset**

Qualitative Research

REPORT

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1. Introduction

CH2M has been commissioned by Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) to develop a new Parking Strategy for the local authority area. In order to consider all aspects of parking in B&NES and to ensure that the strategy is well informed and based upon up to date information, a range of consultations has been undertaken by CH2M with the various stakeholders: residents associations; parish councils; local business organisations; other groups such as disabled users, taxi operators and HGV bodies; private car park operators; and Council Officers.

The consultation process has, amongst other things, produced a number of possible proposals related to parking charges. To inform decision making on which proposals to pursue, **the Council** wishes to learn the views and likely reaction of B&NES residents to the potential parking charges proposals. To this end it has **commissioned Crystal Market Research** through CH2M **to conduct a small research study among residents, including some representatives from local business.**

1.2 Research Methodology

The research approach was qualitative rather than quantitative. Qualitative research enables in-depth exploration of issues and is a means to understanding why and how people think and behave in a particular way. In this respect a qualitative research approach was ideally suited to investigating residents' likely reaction to possible parking charges proposals. However, unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not generate numerical data and or quantify issues.

4 focus groups with residents of B&NES were conducted end November/early December 2017; 2 groups with **Bath** residents, 1 with **Keynsham** residents and 1 with residents living in **Midsomer Norton** and its environs (Radstock, Peasdown St John, Hayden, Westfield). For ease, these respondents will be described throughout the report as 'Midsomer Norton residents'.

A total of **37 residents took part** in the research, representing a good cross section of B&NES residents in terms of gender, age, socio economic group, home location (e.g. residents living in central Bath and the outskirts of Bath were included), and working status, occupation and location. Local business was also represented in that 3 of the participants were local business owners and a further 5 worked in retail outlets in Bath. 8 had experience of using Blue Badges (either with immediate or extended family). Because many of the proposals were connected with Bath, all participants were required to visit Bath at least once every few months. A sample profile and recruitment questionnaire is appended.

The Bath focus groups took place at the Guildhall on 6 December 2017, the Keynsham one at Somerdale Pavilion in the Chocolate Quarter on 30 November 2017, and the Midsomer Norton one at Midsomer Norton Town Hall on 27 November 2017. Each focus group lasted 90 minutes and, with the permission of participants, was audio recorded. The discussion guide is appended. All participants were informed of the confidential nature of the discussion and signed a confidentiality agreement.

2. Summary

There are no perceivable differences by gender or age in behaviour around and attitudes towards parking and parking charges. The main differences centre on where participants live within B&NES. All the participants were encouraged to look at parking issues and the new charging ideas from all perspectives – as residents, local business owners, commuters and visitors.

2.1 Backdrop

2.1.1 Going in to Bath and Elsewhere

- ◆ Bath is the focal point for our research participants who live in Bath and Midsomer Norton, but not so much for Keynsham residents, who identify closely with Keynsham itself. However, they all ‘go into’ rather than ‘visit’ Bath and distinguish themselves from tourists and other visitors.
- ◆ **Most trips to Bath are short**; always under 4 hours, often under 2 hours and, for Bath residents who ‘pop in’ regularly for essentials, under an hour.
- ◆ **Mode of transport to Bath varies according to where people live**; central Bath residents walk whereas those living further out tend to drive in (or walk); Keynsham residents get the train (or drive); Midsomer Norton residents the Park & Ride at Odd Down (or drive).
- ◆ **Keynsham residents closely identify with the town**, using it for everyday necessities, more significant shopping and going out in the evening. A few residents who live in northern Bath also shop there.

2.1.2 Parking in Bath

- ◆ The **unanimous view** is that it’s **very difficult to park in Bath**. There is a **lot of driving around trying to find a parking space**, especially on a Saturday, when it’s the Christmas Market or Bath rugby is playing. It’s recognised as being even more difficult for visitors who don’t know Bath. Lack of parking spaces is more of an issue than price.
- ◆ Residents living outside Bath use car parks, often private ones like Southgate and the Podium. Bath residents (when they do drive in to the centre) park on-street, ideally in free spaces.
- ◆ There is a **widespread view that parking in Bath is expensive** – although this comes with a certain amount of resignation. **What annoys residents more is that the charges appear to discriminate against locals popping in for essentials or short visits**, in that you often have to pay for longer than you need.

- ◆ There is a general sense of the level of prices but this is not exact. Our research participants do not automatically differentiate between Council and private car parks and, in some cases, don't know which is which. People mostly differentiate between the parking options by minimum length of stay rather than price (apart from it being free).

2.1.3 Parking in Keynsham and Midsomer Norton

- ◆ **Keynsham residents feel** it's getting more **difficult to park** in the town because **Keynsham is expanding** and getting **busier**.
- ◆ A couple of Bath residents are attracted to Keynsham to shop because of the low parking charges as well as the facilities there.
- ◆ Parking in Midsomer Norton isn't a problem for residents and they expect it to remain free.

2.1.4 Park & Rides

- ◆ There is **strong approval for Park & Rides**. They are used by residents (especially Midsomer Norton residents) but seen as being aimed mostly at commuters and tourists.
- ◆ **The pay per person pricing structure is the main deterrent to higher resident usage**, as it means it's more cost effective to drive into Bath if there are more than 2 people in the car, especially for a short trip.

2.2 Reaction to Fundamental Principles of New Parking Strategy

- ◆ **All the principles** are regarded as **sensible**. No one principle stands out as being more important than another; they all have their validity.
- ◆ However, they are observed as not all being consistent with each other; there is a conflict between increasing the turnover of parking spaces to enable a steady flow of customers for businesses and reducing the number of vehicles being brought in to Bath, reducing congestion and improving air quality.

2.3 Reaction to Parking Charges Ideas

2.3.1 Preferential Parking Charges for B&NES Residents

- ◆ Unsurprisingly this is the **idea** that **received** the most widespread and **wholehearted support**, being interpreted as preferential parking in Bath. The justification is that residents pay Council tax, they live and work in Bath and, most importantly, contribute (overall more than tourists) to Bath's economy. The idea clearly **meets the fundamental principle of 'putting residents first'** and it was also noted that similar prioritisation happens for residents elsewhere.
- ◆ It made people think of the Bath Discovery Card, of which they all strongly approve.
- ◆ It was felt it could have a **positive effect on residents' behaviour** in that it would **encourage use of car parks** rather than driving around looking for free on-street parking. It could also result in popping in even more often – though the downside to this would be more vehicles in the centre of Bath.

2.3.2 Increase Cost of Hotel Permits in Bath

- ◆ This measure is thought to be **consistent with putting residents first**, in this case ahead of tourists.
- ◆ It was also felt that the Council could 'get away with' this increase as **tourists will regard it as part of the cost of their visit** and, if they're staying in a central hotel, will be able to easily afford it.

2.3.3 Charge for Motorbikes in Car Parks

- ◆ This idea received a **fair amount of support** and **no firm opposition**. A lot of participants had always assumed motorbikes paid for parking anyway.
- ◆ The **rationale** given for motorbikes paying is that **they take up space**, use the roads and **cause pollution** and, so, should be treated like cars.
- ◆ A lower tariff than cars is advised as being fair.

2.3.4 Increase Tariffs for Long Stay Parking in Keynsham

- ◆ There was a **general, though not strong, view** (even among Keynsham residents) that it would be **acceptable to raise prices from such a low base**. But not to Bath levels.

2.3.5 Increase Short Stay Car Park Tariffs in Bath

- ◆ As users of short stay car parks there was **strong opposition** from our research participants to this idea. There was an almost **universal reaction of feeling that local people are being victimised for ‘popping into’ Bath**, over which many have no choice. Also Bath is ‘their city’ so it’s not unreasonable to be going there frequently for short periods of time.
- ◆ There is a prediction that prices will keep rising as the Council will continue to follow suit with the private car parks.
- ◆ There is a strong view that Council car parks are a public service and shouldn’t be run as private, money-making businesses.
- ◆ On the other hand, the **theory of short stay price increases resulting in greater use of Park & Rides and other sustainable forms of transport, and equitable pricing spreading out demand** was noted.

2.3.6 Increase Long Stay Tariffs in Bath

- ◆ **Increasing charges for long stay over short is preferred** for 2 main reasons; it is recognised it **will deter commuters** from driving in and discourage people from parking for too long, thereby **increasing flow of customers to local businesses**.
- ◆ However, the main **downside** is that it would **drive commuters to parking around the city**, thus moving the parking problem out there.

2.3.7 Differential Charging Based on Vehicle Emissions

- ◆ This idea **polarised opinion**. The obvious **benefit** is to **air quality** in central Bath. However, there was **concern** that it would **penalise poorer** residents who **tend to have older vehicles with high emissions**.
- ◆ There was a recognition that this measure would be in line with wider government policy.
- ◆ There were queries about how easy it would be to enforce, as it requires sophisticated technology.

2.3.8 Charge for On-Street Parking on Sunday in Bath

- ◆ **There were strong** feelings against this idea, especially from Bath residents. The view is that **parking isn't a problem on Sunday because of the availability of single yellow line parking**. Perhaps more importantly instituting parking charges would **change the character of Sunday in Bath** from being a relaxed, family, locals day to being more like a stressful Saturday.
- ◆ However, there is **some sympathy** (from Midsomer Norton and Keynsham residents especially) **for Bath parking permit zone residents** not being able to park outside their house on a Sunday. That said, the 2 participants who live in a permit zone maintain Sunday is the one day they can park easily.

2.3.9 Flat Fee to Park Overnight in Bath Car Parks

- ◆ There were **mixed views** about this idea. Bath residents were opposed as it is perceived as being **anti going out in the evening in Bath**. However, **others felt** that a **nominal charge** would be **acceptable**.

2.4 Parking Charges in a Wider Context

Residents were adamant that parking should not be considered in isolation but needed to be part of a wider transport strategy. The idea that parking charges can influence travel behaviour independently of other travel options was wholeheartedly rejected.

In particular, there were strong feelings about not only encouraging use of Park & Rides by altering the pricing structure to make them more attractive than parking in Bath but also reducing bus fares generally, especially for children.

3. Main Findings

Throughout the discussions, participants were asked to look at the wider picture and consider the parking charges ideas from all points of view. Despite that, personal perspectives did, unavoidably, dominate. However, across the sample there were participants who were also commuters into Bath or worked in retail or as local traders, so were able to 'put on several hats'.

3.1 The Backdrop

In order to understand responses to the parking charges ideas, it is important to be aware of how frequently and why participants go into Bath and other centres in B&NES, and the modes of transport used.

3.1.1 Frequency and Purpose of Going Into Bath

The first point to make is that **B&NES residents**, wherever they live, **do not see themselves as visitors to Bath**; they do not use the term 'visit', **they 'go into' Bath**. It is the purpose of their trip to Bath that distinguishes them from tourists. Many work there (15 of our sample work or study in Bath) or they go to Bath to shop, to the theatre, cinema, restaurants, cafes etc. Bath residents are different from most of those living elsewhere in that they 'pop in' to Bath to do errands and pick up necessities.

"I do go to Bath, weekends mostly. Again, it's for a bit of retail therapy."
Midsomer Norton resident

"I go into Bath once or twice a week, depends, for food or drinks with friends. And for shopping obviously." Midsomer Norton resident

"I go there socially and for a night out." Keynsham resident

"We're popping in to get stuff all the time." Bath resident

Bath is obviously the focal point for people who live in Bath and it is too for Midsomer Norton residents (other than for necessities), but not so much for Keynsham residents. **Bath residents go into Bath very frequently** (typically daily or several times a week), **Midsomer Norton residents reasonably frequently** (typically once a week, more if they work there) and **Keynsham residents relatively infrequently**, ranging from once a week to once every 6 weeks or so (no one in our Keynsham sample works there).

Because **Bath residents frequently 'pop into' Bath** they are often there for a short amount of time - **for an hour, 30 minutes or sometimes even less**. Some Midsomer Norton residents also go in to Bath for an hour or so but more commonly for a few hours. Keynsham residents do not seem to 'pop into' Bath; their trip is likely to be more of an event and take a more significant amount of time, though not necessarily the whole day.

3.1.2 Mode of Transport to Bath

Mode of transport into Bath for non-work activities varies depending on where people live. Among our sample, **Bath residents living centrally always walk** whereas **those living on the outskirts of Bath** e.g. Weston, Twerton, Landsdown, sometimes walk but more **often drive**. The **preferred mode** of transport for **Keynsham residents is the train**; though in certain circumstances they will drive. **Midsomer Norton residents often use the Odd Down Park & Ride, or drive.**

"I live in Oldfield Park and work in a retail store in the centre of town. I come in 5 days a week, mostly I walk, it takes 15 minutes. Also socially I walk. I never drive in." Bath resident

"I tend to go to Bath on a weekend for shopping. More often than not I'll go on the Park & Ride but it depends if I'm on my own. Otherwise I'll park in Southgate car park." Midsomer Norton resident

"Most people would say why would I bother to drive into Bath when we've got a really good train at Keynsham." Keynsham resident

"Shopping I take the train, visiting friends I drive and use a friend's visitor permit." Keynsham

Among our sample there were only 4 people who commute into Bath; 2 from Midsomer Norton (1 drives and the other, a student, gets the bus) and 2 from Weston, Bath who drive in. A further 10 work in Bath, though not all full time; some drive whilst those living more centrally walk or cycle.

3.1.3 Going to Keynsham and Midsomer Norton

Keynsham residents appear quite self sufficient and to **identify closely with** and be proud of **the town** - "a lot of people are moving to Keynsham and why wouldn't you." They use Keynsham itself for their everyday necessities, more significant shopping and going out in the evening as well e.g. to restaurants. Otherwise, they go equally to Bristol, Bath and, even, Longwell Green and Avonmeads; because of the location of Keynsham they are spoilt for choice.

"You can go up to Longwell Green as well. And you can go to the cinema there. You can go to Avonmeads. Bristol. So anyone in this room would probably sit there and think where do I want to go. If I want to go to the theatre I might go to Bath or the Hippodrome in Bristol. If it's the shops it may be Longwell Green, or the multiplex, or Avonmeads for the cinema. You've got a choice, you can go to every place." Keynsham resident

A few Bath residents, (those living on the northern outskirts of Bath) go to Keynsham as there are shopping attractions like Waitrose, and it's cheap to park!

Midsomer Norton respondents use Midsomer Norton for everyday items but more significant shopping and leisure and entertainment is done in Bath. None of our Keynsham or Bath respondents goes to Midsomer Norton.

3.2 Overview of Parking in B&NES

The following is an account of people's experiences and perceptions of parking in B&NES. Please note that there may be misperceptions and ignorance of the actual situation on the ground. It is important to understand how people view the parking situation currently in order to make sense of their reactions to the new parking charges ideas.

3.2.1 Ease of Parking in Bath

Parking in the centre of Bath is not an easy task. If people can easily avoid it they will, for example, residents who live close enough will walk in, Keynsham residents will get the train, Midsomer Norton residents will use the Park & Ride. However, all participants still have personal experience of driving into and, therefore, parking central Bath. **The main issue is trying to find a parking space.** Residents are very aware of the difficulty of this - especially on a Saturday, while the Christmas Market is on or Bath rugby are playing at home - and adjust their behaviour accordingly.

"This is the busiest time of year so it's a massive no for everyone. That's why a lot of people use the Park & Ride." Bath resident

"It's a kind of unwritten rule that you don't come in to Bath when it's the Christmas Market. You definitely don't bring the car!" Bath resident

"It makes a difference if the Bath rugby is on. If that's on you haven't a hope in hell of parking there." Midsomer Norton resident

"Weekends I come in later (in the evening) because it's free in some of the car parks but on a Friday and Saturday people stay later so you're never going to get a space." Bath resident

"If you get in early enough that's different ...on a Saturday (if you get in) by quarter to nine you can pick your parking spot." Bath resident

There is **a lot of driving around Bath looking for a space.** On occasion people have given up and either gone out to a Park & Ride or gone somewhere else entirely!

"You just wouldn't go there on a Saturday." "I did once and I regretted it and ended up parking miles away. So you drive around for ages looking for a spot and then you pay loads for it." Keynsham resident

"On occasion I get in to Bath and can't find a parking space. So I abort and go elsewhere!" Bath resident (lives in Weston)

"I've been, when if Southgate is closed and Avon Street as well, I'll go to Bristol ... not to park in Bristol (!) but just to go somewhere else." "I must admit I've done that." Midsomer Norton residents

"I've driven in before and driven back to the Park & Ride at Newbridge, half way back to Keynsham!" Keynsham resident

It is notable **that residents living out of Bath tend to park in car parks** whereas **those living in Bath itself, and not just centrally, park on street**. Southgate car park seems to be the place of choice for our Midsomer Norton respondents. People have certain places they tend to park, either connected with where they're going in Bath, the direction from which they're entering Bath, or places they know are likely to be available or free.

"In the park you can park, I've done that a few times." Bath resident

"Last weekend I came in on a Sunday and parked at the top of the golf course, the top of the park, so it was free on the road, and I just walked in so it was fine ... though walking back was a bit more of a struggle." Bath resident

"I use Charlotte Street because if you're going shopping that's the one in the centre. Though it depends on where you want to go." Keynsham resident

"You can't find (on-street parking)." *"You'd drive around for ages trying to find one."* *"There's a bit of on-street parking in Milsom street."* *"But you're lucky to find it."* *"Yes very lucky to find it."* Midsomer Norton residents

Respondents sympathise with outsiders who don't know Bath as well as they do.

"As a newcomer it's very difficult to find somewhere, but once you know, you know." Bath resident

"It's OK if you know Bath well, you can generally find somewhere. But if you come from outside the area then it's very difficult." Midsomer Norton resident

One of the stresses of parking in Bath is getting back to your car in time. One of the criticisms of the parking system is having to predict how long you will be away. Systems like Ringo or being able to increase your stay via a text is what people want.

Bath residents - those living centrally, on the outskirts and near popular places like the RUH - are also on the receiving end of other people's parking, commuters especially.

"We're potentially going to get resident parking in Bear Flat because the residents want it because the commuters come and park there, why wouldn't you." Bath resident

"We have a big problem in our road because it has access to a school and hospital staff park in our road as well. We very seldom find it easy to park in our road which is very frustrating." Bath resident

Respondents who live very centrally in residents' parking zones talk of extreme difficulty in finding a space to park by their house and others are known to leave their car elsewhere or decide against having one.

"I don't have a residents' parking permit because outside my house there's never anywhere free, so there's no point in me buying a permit. And you can still pay for a couple of hours in the spot." Bath resident

"I just can't find a space. Even if I did have a permit, it would be completely full." Bath resident

"I know someone who lives opposite the Assembly Rooms, they leave their car at their dad's in Bitton." Bath resident

3.2.2 Parking Charges in Bath

Bath parking is regarded as very **expensive and unbalanced** in its pricing. There is **a strong feeling that the pricing discriminates against locals popping into Bath for essentials or short visits.**

"It's rubbish and it's really expensive." "The prices are shocking, it's just a total rip off." Keynsham residents

"It doesn't help locals. If you just want to pop in for something quick, you have to pay for longer than you probably need, so it doesn't offer that flexibility. If you want to drop off something, you have to pay for at least an hour." Bath resident

"A lot of people want to pop in for just an hour. You can't do that, it's almost impossible to do that. You're forced to pay for longer." Bath resident

"It's the same with Charlotte Street as well. If you want to pop into the centre of Bath in a lunch break or something, you have to pay for 2 hours. For 40 minutes." "I'd like to see an hour option, so if you did want to pop in you're not having to pay £3.50."

"They're quite crafty in the car parks, they don't do 1 hour, 2 hour, 3 hours. I think it goes from 2 to 4. It's wrong." Bath resident

However, our participants were not always clear about the exact prices for different types of parking or for the different car parks in terms of private v Council, and long v short stay; there was a certain amount of vagueness. **People mostly differentiate the parking options by minimum length of stay rather than by prices so, apart from it being free, differential price levels are not the main influencing factor in choice of type of parking.**

Generally, the subject of current prices resulted in respondents asking each other for information, seeking confirmation of what they think they know and not always being entirely accurate about the situation. Overall though, they did seem to have a reasonable sense of the order of magnitude of parking charges.

There was a large amount of **scepticism about how the Council uses money raised by parking charges.** Even though participants were informed that it is not a money making exercise, it was clear from their responses and throughout the discussion that misconceptions had not been entirely dispelled.

"It just goes straight into the Council pot, pays for pensions and stuff."
Midsomer Norton resident

"That (statement) is utter rubbish. It's just money making." Keynsham resident

3.2.3 Park & Rides

The **principle of Park & Rides is strongly approved of**. It is the transport mode of choice for Midsomer Norton residents and is also sometimes used by Keynsham residents. Although residents do use Park & Ride it's seen as being mostly aimed at commuters and tourists (although tourists come in coaches too).

"I've used it twice from Landsdown, I think it's marvellous, it's like I've just discovered something. You can be in town as long as you like, you don't have to worry about the 2 or 3 hours. I think if there was a discount for residents, more might use it." Bath resident

The **main problem with the Park & Rides is the pricing**. Because you pay per person it's **not cost effective for a car load**, especially if the trip is a short one. Residents maintain that it would be used more by locals if prices were lowered. There is also thought to be an illogicality in that it's **more expensive to catch a Park & Ride bus en route into Bath than catching it from the Park & Ride car park**.

"I drive, usually right in to the centre because it's cheaper to do that than Park & Ride if I've got other people in the car." Midsomer Norton resident

"If you're only going in for a couple of hours I think it's actually cheaper (to park) even if there's only 2 people in the car." Midsomer Norton resident

"Surely it would make more sense and get more people if they knocked the price down to say £2 rather than £3 whatever it is." Midsomer Norton resident

"Lots of (tourists) use the P&R which I think is great but only if there's 1 or 2 of you. If you've got 4 people in a car that's £12 plus, that's a lot of money. You could go to car parks which are expensive but similar. That's a lot of money on the Park & Ride but that's where they want people to go as it saves congestion in the middle. Park & Ride is a really good idea but they've put the prices up a lot in the last few years." Bath resident

"I'm not very far from the P&R and I'd think about it if it was a reduced price." Bath resident

"The Park & Ride is at the top of the hill and I live down the hill and I can get the bus into town but it costs me more than if I drive up to the top and park there. If I was going to do that every day could get a 10 journey discount but because I'm not actually using the Park & Ride I'm not eligible for it, they won't let me have that card. That incenses me, I think it's ridiculous." Bath resident

3.2.4 Parking in Keynsham and Midsomer Norton

Our **Keynsham respondents will often walk in to Keynsham** rather than drive. If they drive Tesco seems to be the car park of choice as it's free (though pricing is not something that's otherwise mentioned). There are some complaints about difficulty of parking in the town, the **main issue being that the place is expanding and therefore having to cope with more cars.**

"Since they've done the new builds all around, it's got horrendous." "Now they've build the new estate it's chocca." Keynsham residents

"You're circling the car park on a Saturday, you won't find a space." Keynsham resident

Although our Midsomer Norton respondents do not visit Keynsham, some of the Bath residents do and are aware that it's an up and coming area and that the parking is much much cheaper than Bath.

"It's like a bigger version of Moreland Road, it's got small shops and bigger shops. Moreland Road's a great to shop in if you don't want to be in town." Bath resident

"It's getting busier by the minute."

"I don't (go there) but I know a lot of people who do."

HL why? *"It's so cheap to park there."*

"It's 40p for 4 hours."

"80p for 8 hours." Bath residents

Parking in Midsomer Norton seems to be easy for locals. There's plenty of parking space, including supermarket car parks, it unlimited and free. There is a **strong view it should stay free** as the town isn't a place non-locals visit.

"In Norton you just turn up, put your car in and leave it there." Midsomer Norton resident

The **only issue** in the area mentioned is in **Radstock where commuters are now parking on the road rather than in the main car park behind the library because it's no longer free all day.**

"Lots of people who used to park there and then go on the bus to work or actually work in Radstock, but now there's a 4, 5 hour limit they're parking on the roads and blocking them." Midsomer Norton resident

3.3 Underlying Aims of Parking Strategy

There is a **fair amount of support for all the underlying principles behind the new parking strategy.**

“All seem pretty sensible.” Midsomer Norton resident

Different people have different priorities; **no one principle stands out as more important than another.** Arguments can be made for all of them as important to aim for, for example:

“Because I cycle so much it’s B (reduce the number of vehicles being brought in to Bath) for me.” Bath resident

“Obviously A (reduce congestion). I can’t explain how slow it gets in the centre, especially from Batheaston once you get to the Morrisons that’s it, you’re just there for ages.” Bath resident

“I like this business thing because I think a lot of smaller shops thrive on the fact people can pop in and pick up something.” Bath resident

“I’d probably say D (put residents and disabled users first). Although it’s not relevant to me I hear a lot of frustrated people who can’t park outside or anywhere near their home.” Bath resident

It was **observed** in 3 of the 4 groups that **principle E contradicts A, B and C, i.e. increasing the turnover of parking spaces to enable a steady flow of customers for businesses is in conflict with reducing the number of vehicles being brought in to Bath, reducing congestion and improving air quality.**

“Because you want to keep a steady flow of people coming in and out of car parks (E) but you still want to reduce the congestion, reduce the number of vehicles and improve the air quality in Bath. You can’t do all that with that (E).” Keynsham resident

One of our commuters felt workers in bath were missing from the equation.

“Why aren’t we taken in to consideration. Bath doesn’t run without us, we work there.” Midsomer Norton resident

There were also some caveats about supporting tourism at the expense of local people.

“I like ‘support tourism’ but not at the expense of local people. Forget the fact that Bath is providing a lot in to the B&NES pot, it’s regular people going in to Bath. Are they going to suffer because of that. ... we’re not tourists, it’s somewhere we have to go. So I do wonder about G.” Midsomer Norton resident

3.4 Main Parking Charges Ideas

The focus groups were presented with a total of 11 new ideas for parking charges in B&NES. Five key ideas were presented first, followed by 6 secondary ideas. So that participants could assess the ideas as individuals rather than a group, the first task was to complete a short questionnaire, assigning a score out of 10 (where 10 is the top score), and giving positive and negative comments on each idea. The average score for each group is shown below. Caveat: the scores are based on very small samples and should be regarded as purely indicative. Participants were asked to consider each idea from all perspectives and to take the fundamental aims of the new parking strategy into account when making their judgement. In random order each of the ideas was then opened up in turn for general discussion.

3.4.1 Charge for On-Street Parking on Sunday in Bath

Idea 1: Charge for on street parking on Sunday in Bath (it is currently free). The charges will match Mon-Sat charges. The operational hours of residents parking zones will therefore include Sundays.

Group	Average
Bath 1	2.5
Bath 2	1.6
Keynsham	3.1
Midsomer Norton	3.5

There were **strong feelings against** this idea, especially from Bath residents themselves. Their view is that **Sunday is the one day when parking isn't a problem in Bath as single yellow lines provide extra on-street parking.**

"I've never had an issue on a Sunday." Because there are single yellow lines which give us extra parking." Bath resident

"If I came in to Bath any day it would be a Sunday because I don't have to worry about parking. Everyone can park for free and there's an abundance of parking." Bath resident

The fact that parking is free allows Sunday to be a more relaxed, family day for local people. It is felt that **charging for parking could change the character of Bath on a Sunday, for the worse.**

"On a Sunday is the only time when people can relax. A lot of people like to come in for breakfast, visit vintage antique markets." "Bring the kids in." "Go for a walk in the park and just chill for a bit longer, rather than the manic Saturday." Bath residents

"Normally it feels more sociable on a Sunday because people tend to go out for brunch or Sunday lunch, more families." Bath resident

"Saturday seems a bit more of a stressed day, Sunday is more of a relaxed day." Bath resident

"You'd have to get back to your car at a certain time as ever, whereas at the moment it's more expansive, you can be in town all day if you want to." Bath resident

It was also mentioned that instituting **Sunday charging could deter people from visiting Bath** and send them elsewhere, for example, Bristol – which would not be good for business.

"Street parking in Bristol is free on a Sunday. So if Bath charging for it more people probably go in to Bristol than Bath." Keynsham resident

"I think Sunday's the second biggest day of trade (retail assistant) for most retailers, they depend a lot on it." Bath resident

It would also irritate Bath residents, all of whom are aware there is free parking on Sunday. On the other hand our Keynsham and Midsomer Norton residents were not all aware that Sunday is free.

The **main rationale for supporting instituting charging on Sunday are to bring it in to line with the rest of the week as shops are open and tourists visit on a Sunday too, and to make it easier for residents living in a permit zone to park.**

"I'm not sure that it's unfair to charge because shops are open so it's a normal day in that respect." Bath residents

"Imagine if that happened to you where you live, you can park there all week but then on a Sunday you can't park outside your own home." Midsomer Norton resident

"To be a resident here, pop out to lunch and minute you go someone gets your space, that must frustrate the hell out of them, because then they've got to drive around for hours." Bath residents

However, it should be noted that our **2 respondents who live in a permit zone maintain they don't have any problem parking on a Sunday.**

"Not (a problem) for Sunday because most of the problem is when people are going to work and leaving their car Monday to Friday....I don't think it affects parking zone residents. By Sunday you've either got your parking spot or you haven't. I'm not driving around on a Sunday looking for a parking spot." Bath resident (living in parking permit zone)

"This single yellow thing, so if you're a resident in the centre of town on Saturday night you can park, you don't have to worry because you've now got 000s of more spaces opened up the next day, so it's not an issue any more." Bath resident (living in parking permit zone)

Another point made, in the context of the fundamental principle of putting residents first is that permit zone residents account for a small percentage of B&NES residents

“The views of the residents living in the permitted areas are probably different from ours but they’re a small % of BANES residents. So I feel it’s unfair to the broader residents, the broader number won’t feel it’s such a good idea.” Bath resident

3.4.2 Increase Short Stay Car Park Tariffs in Bath

Idea 2: Increase short stay car park tariffs in Bath to the same level as private car park operators. Currently private car park charges are higher than Council ones.

Group	Average
Bath 1	3.2
Bath 2	2.4
Keynsham	2.2
Midsomer Norton	2.8

B&NES residents are prime customers of short stay parking – especially non-Bath residents - as the vast majority of their visits to Bath are for a short length of time. Their **reaction to increasing the price of short stay car parking is therefore to feel victimised; they feel it would discriminate against B&NES residents as local people popping in to Bath.**

“But then it’s not fair for those that have got to just pop in.” “Yes you’re being penalised for that.” Midsomer Norton residents

“I think they’re trying to focus too much on tourists. We as local people surrounding Bath, we’re the people that are regularly going in, we’re the ones that are doing it every day so they should be trying to satisfy us rather than the tourists that are coming in on the coaches.” Midsomer Norton resident

“People will just feel negative.” Bath

There is also a **prediction that prices will keep rising if the Council adopts this policy**; private car parks will put up prices and then the Council will follow.

“Because they’re a private one, if they increase theirs, the Council will probably increase theirs too. So it’s just going to go up and up.” Bath resident

“The thing is private parking would probably increase each year so the Council would go ‘oh they’ve put their prices up we’d better do the same’, so it would just go like that all the time. It’s not fair.” Midsomer Norton resident

There is a view that **Council car parks are a public service**, in contrast to private ones, which are recognised as businesses. It's placing the Council in the same sphere as the private sector.

"They're a Council, they're there to serve us. A private car park, they're a money making business." "We're paying our Council taxes aren't we."
Midsomer Norton residents

"I can't see why they want to do that, it's just a reason for them to raise more money. You just said that's not their underlying reason. So I think that would just put people's backs up, because the locals would know." Bath resident

"Why do they want to increase it, they're not money making corporations, apparently." Keynsham resident

It was also pointed out several times that this **policy doesn't fit with the principle of encouraging a turnover of spaces.**

"It's not prioritising parking for short stay visitors, Idea E, it's not doing that is it."
Bath resident

"Because looking at E you want to increase the turnover of visitors so short term parking should be a lot cheaper." Keynsham resident

However, on the other hand **a few appreciate that the increase (in fact any increase in price) achieves the aim of encouraging people to park out of town or use a Park & Ride.**

The fact that some car parks are private and others Council is not front of mind for our respondents and sometimes they don't know which are which. There is also a view that Council and private car park prices are not that different from each other (note: people are used to private prices e.g. Southgate, Podium) so raising Council prices would have little impact and, even if they were noticed, people would soon get used to the situation. It would have the simplicity of making all car parks the same price and, as one pragmatic respondent pointed out, would spread demand.

"I don't know that there's that much of a difference between private car parks and Council car parks..."

"Podium is £4.50 isn't it"

"... Southgate is definitely around about £3.50, £3.70, something like that. I don't think Avon Street is that much different so I don't think it would make much difference." Bath residents

"To be fair at least you'd know all car parks are the same..."

"That's true."

"... if they were all the same price you'd just park it anywhere." Bath residents

3.4.3 Increase Long Stay Tariffs in Bath

Idea 3: Increase charges for long stay parking (4 hours or more) at Manvers Street, Avon Street and Charlotte Street car parks. This would bring them in line with other Councils' long stay car parking charges. There has been no increase in BANES long stay car parking charges since 2010.

Group	Average
Bath 1	5.0
Bath 2	4.9
Keynsham	5.0
Midsomer Norton	3.0

An increase in long term parking tariffs would not directly affect B&NES residents, unless they are commuters in to Bath and currently park in a long term car park (only one of our respondents does this).

The **general feeling is that it's preferable to increase long term rather than short term parking charges** for 2 main reasons; it would deter commuters from driving in and, conversely, encourage use of Park & Rides; it **would discourage people from staying too long, thereby increasing turnover and flow of customers to local businesses.**

"I can see for a city you want a strategy of having people coming in for the short and medium term, but not for too long. So you give people an incentive to come in spend money and go." Bath resident

"I think 4 hours is long enough for most shopping trips and business meetings. If you need longer the P&R should be encouraged." Bath resident

"There'd be a higher turnover because people won't be willing to pay to stay longer, you'd get more of a steady flow." Midsomer Norton resident

"I commute in to town every day so if they were to increase the charges - and I see it's only fair to be honest - but that would affect me personally and would make me think about not using the car." Bath resident

"If you're going to do that you'd have to look at Park & Rides to other parts of the city not just the centre." "There's quite a bit of business on the Upper Bristol Road so there might be a call for a Park & Ride bus to there. At certain times of the day." Midsomer Norton resident

A few people felt penalising tourists would not be good for Bath and contradicts the 'support tourism' principle. However, a **more common view is that tourists accept that being a tourist, especially to a city like Bath, is going to cost.**

"But then you penalise your tourists don't you. They're likely to be the ones using long stay car parks and they're the ones you need to be attracting." Bath resident

“Well we get stung when we go and visit somewhere. If we go to London or whatever, you accept it.” “It’s not going to stop people from coming to Bath.”
Bath residents

In connection with deterring commuters it was pointed out that it could cause another problem in that commuters will be more likely to park around the city, thus displacing parking further out.

“I have friends who work out of Bath and rather than use the Park & Ride or long stay they park in Oldfield Park which is just south of Bath, student city. So they’ve got to contend with all that as well. If commuters come in and don’t use the car parks then you’re affecting the residents on the outskirts, that outer ring”. Bath resident

It was also noted that it would penalise commuters taking the train.

“People getting the train, they’d lose out because the cost is relatively cheap and then they’re popping on the train and going to London or wherever.”
Midsomer Norton resident

3.4.4 Preferential Parking Charges for B&NES Residents

Idea 4: Preferential charges for BANES residents parking in Bath and Keynsham. Charges would be lower for BANES residents.

Group	Average
Bath 1	8.3
Bath 2	8.5
Keynsham	8.6
Midsomer Norton	8.8

Immediate reaction to this idea was extremely positive, as one might expect.

Note: the idea was connected only to Bath not Keynsham. *“You can’t get much lower than it is already in Keynsham.”* Keynsham resident.

“We’re all going to agree with that.” Midsomer Norton resident

“Now you’re talking.” Keynsham resident

“It’s a no brainer.” Bath resident

When asked to justify preferential treatment for B&NES residents the responses were: we pay Council tax; we work and live in Bath; we contribute to Bath’s economy; it meets the fundamental principle of putting residents first; similar prioritisation for residents happens elsewhere.

“We all use it, not like a tourist that pops here once every 5 years, we’re using it every week.” Midsomer Norton resident

“Our short journeys aren’t for fun, to go and look at the Roman Baths yet again, it’s to go and spend money. And you know where to spend the money and it’s often in the smaller shops, the markets, the Guildhall, the market next door, it’s those. We know where to go, we don’t need to dawdle around for hours.” Bath resident

“Well it’s also about helping Bath, you’re going into your own city, you’re spending money in your own city, it’s helping the businesses.” Bath residents

“It hits one of the principles spot on about helping residents.” Bath

“There are parts of Bristol where you can park for 20 minutes without paying and that’s brilliant. We don’t have that anywhere as far as I know. That would be such a brilliant thing for residents, if you just want to do something quickly that would be so much better.” Bath resident

There was also a view that there’s nothing wrong with being unfair! *“None of these ideas are based on fairness so why should this one be.”* Bath resident.

Preferential rates for residents made people think of the Bath Discovery Card, of which they all strongly approve. An equivalent one for parking would have a similar result in making people feel more kindly disposed to Council.

“Already you can get these tourist cards. I don’t go to the Royal Crescent or Roman Baths every other day but it’s nice to be recognised we’re paying the Council tax, got some pride in the city and we’ve got something back. This is just an (extension of that).” Bath resident

“We get 25%, 20% off their facilities for using the Discovery card, so why shouldn’t we get 20% of the parking.” “I think that’s a very good idea.” Keynsham residents

Other positive effects could be on residents’ behaviours; it might encourage use of car parks rather than driving around looking for free on-street parking and could mean they pop in even more often. To make it especially relevant to B&NES residents reductions for short stay or end of day parking were suggested.

“Might mean I use the car parks rather than driving around for ages which probably isn’t the best. People more likely to use the facilities.” Bath resident

“In our household what we do a lot of is dropping each other off in town rather than using any parking which is obviously causing congestion if a lot of people are doing that.” Bath resident

“You might pop in more often. I think if you’re coming in for a longer period, you’d do that the same amount. But you’d pop in for a piece of meat, get a card.”

“Meet your friends for coffee for half an hour, 45 minutes.” Bath residents

However, it was **noted that a direct consequence of this would be more vehicles and therefore more congestion and poorer air quality in the centre of Bath, thereby contradicting 3 of the core principles of the parking strategy.**

“Doesn’t fit with their plan.” “Well you wouldn’t use the P&R would you if you have preferential rates.” Midsomer Norton resident

“Less use of the buses.” Bath resident

Midsomer Norton and Keynsham participants would rather have free bus travel and/or reduced train fares than cheaper parking. It was pointed out that preferential parking prices don’t create more spaces.

“I’d prefer to get a reduction on the train than a reduction on the car parking to be perfectly honest. HL why? Easier to get the train...”

“And quicker”

... and you’re fitting in with your C (improve air quality)” Keynsham residents

“If the option is between cheaper parking and free bus travel I’d prefer the bus travel (agreement) than have the parking subsidised.” Bath resident

“Even if you make it cheaper, there’s still the lack of parking spaces.” Keynsham resident

3.4.5 Differential Charging Based on Vehicle Emissions

Idea 5: Differential charging for residents parking permits and pay & display, based on vehicle emissions. This would relate to recognised and established Emission bands.

Group	Average
Bath 1	5.3
Bath 2	5.5
Keynsham	1.4
Midsomer Norton	7.2

This parking charges idea was considered in relation to Pay & Display only. It **polarised opinion**. There was a wide range of individual respondent scores out of 10 that reflected whether a person attached more importance to the clear benefit or the clear drawback of the measure.

The clear benefit is that this measure would help improve air quality in Bath (and thus meet one of the Parking Strategy’s fundamental aims).

“It’s helping out pollution and the environment.” Bath resident

“And it’s hitting the principle about air quality.” Bath resident

The drawback is that it would penalise poorer residents who tend to have vehicles with high emissions.

"It's not necessarily fair because people on lower incomes have maybe got older vehicles so it's OK for those who are quite affluent because it's not going to affect them."

"Plus we've been conned by the govt into all buying diesels." Midsomer Norton residents

"Really bad, it penalises your poorer residents who've got older cars that will naturally throw out more emissions." Bath resident

"I think it penalises people who can't afford newer cars, I don't think that's fair." Bath resident

"That's so naughty... If you can't afford a nice new car, you're basically penalising people who can't afford it in the first place." Keynsham resident

There was a recognition that this measure was in line with wider government policy.

"Are they going to bring in one of those zones like London?" Keynsham resident

"It's top down isn't it, central government filtering in to local government." Keynsham resident

"It's the way the world is moving though. In London they're trying to reduce emissions so eventually this would have to come in to place, because all new cars are being put in with it anyway, so I thought it was a good thing." Bath resident

There was a question over whether hitting private cars would be the most effective or fairest way of achieving the aim of improving air quality.

"If they were to implement that they would have to do something about the buses because those First buses that are like Y reg, black smoke and the bin men that drive along, the smoke that comes out of them. That's where the main emissions are really, not parking." Bath resident

There were also queries about how easy this measure would be to enforce.

"That would be very hard to implement as well." "Yes that what I thought." Bath residents

"How on earth are they going to police that for pay & display, it's going to cost an awful lot."

"I think it's a good idea but impossible to manage."

"If you've got the technology to enter your registration number they'll know what your emissions are. You don't work it out, the machine works it out for you."

Bath residents

Plus concerns it would have a knock on effect.

“Like you say about Bear Flat you push all those cars out so people will be parking on the edge, so you’ve not done anything about it, you’ve just pushed it to a ring around.” Bath resident

3.5. Secondary Parking Charges Ideas

3.5.1 Increase Tariffs for Long Stay Parking in Keynsham

Idea 6: Increase charges for long stay off street parking (4 hours and above) in Keynsham. Charges in Keynsham are much lower than those in Bath. As in Bath there has been no increase since 2010/11.

Group	Average
Bath 1	5.7
Bath 2	4.5
Keynsham	3.8
Midsomer Norton	5.2

Knowledge of the current parking prices in Keynsham is patchy – hence the questionnaire scores should be regarded with additional caution. Most (but not all) Keynsham residents know and some Bath residents do, but others are very pleasantly surprised when they discover how low the current tariffs are. *“Oh well I’ll go to Keynsham then!”* Bath resident

The general view, including among Keynsham residents, is that it would be acceptable to raise prices from such a low base.

“40p is very cheap. Even if they double it it’s £1 for 4 hours (that would be OK).” Bath resident

“It’s a good area to make more money.” Keynsham resident

“In isolation (an extra) 20p doesn’t seem very much.” Keynsham resident

It was mentioned a couple of times that increasing long stay parking in Keynsham would affect people from Bristol who commute to Bath, as they drive to Keynsham, park and then get the train in to Bath.

3.5.2 Flat Fee to Park Overnight in Bath Car Parks

Idea 7: Introduce a flat fee to park after 8pm/overnight in Bath car parks. Currently parking charges end at 8pm and start again at 8am. This would be in line with private car park operators and many other Councils.

Group	Average
Bath 1	2.3
Bath 2	3.2
Keynsham	3.4
Midsomer Norton	2.8

Reaction to this idea varied; Bath residents in particular were irritated and couldn't see the point of, whereas others found it potentially acceptable.

"No that's dreadful." Bath resident

"If we're driving in to town to go out for the night to restaurant, theatre, cinema or something you think, great, after 8pm it's free, whereas suddenly now you have to pay." Bath resident

"And it's not a congestion problem either." Bath resident

It was felt extra evening parking would put a damper on going out into Bath, and maybe even be a deterrent. For Keynsham residents it could make Bristol more attractive.

"I think that would really hit restaurants and things in the week because you'd think ..."

"And the pubs as well."

"... you might think you'll pop out but then' no I won't bother'. It's just an extra hurdle isn't it." Bath resident

"It's inconvenient isn't it. All of it's set to make your life thoroughly miserable." Keynsham resident

"In Bristol it's free after 6pm so that would drive people to Bristol for their night time rather than Bath." Keynsham resident

However, a nominal fee would be acceptable to some, especially if overnight parking started at 7 rather than 8.

"I don't see anyone would object to a minimal fee." Midsomer Norton resident

"But if they changed that to an hour or so earlier I don't think people would be so annoyed. But between 6 and 8, if you're going to do anything in Bath like go to the theatre or cinema they catch you at 7 to 8. In Bristol it's 6. But if you're going to the Theatre Royal you know they're going to sting you just on that first hour." Keynsham resident

"I think that would definitely hurt businesses unless it was a really minimal fee like a quid." Bath resident

3.5.3 Charge for Motorbikes at Car Parks

Idea 8: Introduce charging for motorbikes at car parks (in Bath and Keynsham). Historically motorbikes haven't paid to park due to inability to display a paper ticket. Advances in technology now allow virtual stays to be created online, by text or phone.

Group	Average
Bath 1	6.0
Bath 2	5.3
Keynsham	6.1
Midsomer Norton	7.0

This idea received a fair amount of support and no firm opposition. A lot of participants had always assumed motorbikes paid for parking anyway.

"I can't believe they're not charged anyway." Bath resident

"Didn't realise they didn't." Keynsham resident

The rationale for motorbikes paying is that they take up space, use the roads and cause pollution and, so, should be treated like cars.

"A car's got to pay so why shouldn't a bike if they're using the same piece of tarmac." Keynsham resident

"If you're an adult on a motorbike working why should a motorbike not pay when people going in with a car could have 3 or 4 people in the car so saving on congestion." Midsomer Norton resident

"But they're contributing to air quality." Midsomer Norton resident

"They use the roads." "They pay an excise licence." "They contribute towards air pollution." Bath residents

However, a lower tariff than cars was advised as being fairer (as motorbikes don't take up as much space) and to avoid pushing motorbike drivers into cars.

"But you can get 3 or 4 motorbikes in a parking space." "Spaces for motorbikes are often spaces cars can't fit." Midsomer Norton resident

"Thought they take up a smaller space." "They can pay half the cost." Keynsham resident

"If a minimal charge. It's a vehicle isn't it." Bath resident

"Think it's the level isn't it because you don't want them taking their car. But if it was a half or a third then they can use that money to reduce the cost of the P&R." Keynsham resident

3.5.4 Increase Cost of Resident Visitor Parking Permits

Idea 9: Increase the cost of visitor parking permit costs for use in resident permit areas in Bath and Keynsham. Paper permits would be more expensive than virtual permits created online, by text or phone.

Group	Average
Bath 1	5.2
Bath 2	3.6
Keynsham	3.6
Midsomer Norton	1.1

There was **little discussion around this idea as some respondents didn't understand what was meant and others had difficulty engaging with the concept.** For this reason the questionnaire scores will have limited validity.

Keynsham participants maintained that though they see themselves as living in a residents' parking permit zone, there is nothing to support this other than signs; there's no enforcement, no residents' parking discs and they don't pay anything! They therefore questioned the existence of bona fide residents' parking zones in Keynsham.

Where comment was made about the idea it was not sympathetic.

"Seems a bit hard on the people who are paying for permits anyway."
Bath resident

"It's expensive enough living in Bath." Keynsham

"But if residents can't even find a space, like you, there's no point in buying them for visitors." Bath resident

3.5.5 Increase Cost of Hotel Permits in Bath

Idea 10: Increase the cost of Hotel permits in Bath. Hotel permits provide access to on street parking for visitors to the city. Currently they can cost less than the cost of resident parking permits.

Group	Average
Bath 1	9.3
Bath 2	6.5
Keynsham	5.7
Midsomer Norton	6.8

This idea received the most support, after preferential charging for residents. The view is that the Council could get away with increases in charging here as tourists, who it is assumed will bear the brunt, will regard it as part and parcel of the cost of their trip. The underlying assumption that the tourists staying at the kind of hotels that have these visitor permits will be wealthy.

"It's just part of your holiday." Bath resident

"I don't think it will have an effect. If the cost of a room is say £100, it would just up it to say £105." Midsomer Norton resident

"That's an associated cost with going to that hotel."

"It's an expensive city to come to, so I don't think the tourists will notice it particularly."

"What sort of hotels have these facilities, the Gainsborough? A few extra quid for these facilities is going to be peanuts for guests, immaterial to them." Bath residents

"Your Americans have got all the money in the world, they're not going to care a monkeys, they'll just accept it."

"They wouldn't know any different anyway." Bath residents

3.5.6 Increase Cost of Season Parking Tickets

Idea 11: Increase the cost of season parking tickets for car parks in Bath & Keynsham. 5 day or 7 day season tickets for a month or more offer a substantial saving over purchasing a pay & display ticket on the day.

Group	Average
Bath 1	5.3
Bath 2	4.2
Keynsham	3.4
Midsomer Norton	3.9

It was difficult to engage people in discussing this idea as it was far removed from their own experiences and imaginations. The responses of the Bath groups was similar to those for long stay parking increases; forcing people to consider alternative modes of travel (if they can) but also pushing commuter parking to the outskirts of Bath.

3.6 Parking Charges in a Wider Context

Discussion about parking prompted people to talk about transport in general. They were adamant that parking should not be considered in isolation but needed to be part of a wider transport strategy. The idea that parking charges can influence travel behaviour independently of other travel options was wholeheartedly rejected.

“But you’ve got to offer an alternative, they can’t keep raising prices in the hope people won’t come in.” Bath resident

“What’s really disturbing about these is there’s nothing about buses, it’s all about car park charges...”

“Yes, what about the alternatives.”

“...there’s got to be a holistic strategy, you can’t just say I represent Parking, what’s the overall strategy.” Bath residents

There were strong feelings about not only encouraging use of Park & Rides by altering the pricing structure to make them more attractive than parking in Bath but also reducing bus fares generally, especially for children.

“For me the Park & Ride should be pushed more and be cheaper.” Midsomer Norton resident

“Also kids are free for the Park & Ride but if they get on half way down the hill they have to pay! It’s not incentivising people to use the bus.” Bath resident

“I sometimes drop my kids off because it’s cheaper than them getting the bus. Then I’ll pick them up. Which is ludicrous. Kids should be free on the bus. I know a lot of mothers who ferry their kids around because it’s cheaper than going on the bus.” Bath resident

“And you have to buy an all day ticket, you can’t just go one way. It’s £7 for an adult. (gasps of amazement).” *What to go in to Bath!!!* *“You could stay all day in Bath for that.”* Midsomer Norton residents

Train fares are considered reasonable but the way to increase use of the train from Keynsham to Bath is to increase the number of carriages.

“That’s what’s needed, more trains.”

“Or put on another carriage.” Keynsham residents

4. Appendices

4.1 Sample Profile

	Bath 1	Bath 2	Keynsham	Midsomer Norton
Total	6	11	10	10
Male	3	6	6	4
Female	3	5	4	6
18-29	0	4	2	3
30-39	1	2	3	2
40-49	1	2	2	2
50-59	2	2	3	1
60+	2	1	0	2
SEG:				
B	0	3	3	0
C1	2	8	7	2
C2	3	0	0	3
D	1	0	0	5
Local business owner	1	1	1	0
Bath retail worker	1	4	0	0
Blue Badge	2	1	2	3

Parking Recruitment Questionnaire

Respondent: Address: Contact no: Email address:	Interviewer Declaration: I certify that this interview has been personally carried out by me with the informant and conducted within the MRS Code of Conduct. I further certify that the informant is not a friend or relative of mine, and has not been interviewed by myself during the last 6 months. Interviewer signature: Date of interview:
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Group Details: Midsomer Norton (C2DEs), Mon 27 November, 6.15pm, Midsomer Norton Town Hall <input type="checkbox"/> Keynsham (ABC1s), Thurs 30 Nov, 6.15pm, Somerdale Pavilion <input type="checkbox"/> Bath group 1 (C2DEs), Wed 6 December, 6pm, Bath Guild Hall <input type="checkbox"/> Bath group 2 (ABC1s), Wed 6 December 7.45pm, Bath Guild Hall <input type="checkbox"/>
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Time and date of reminder calls/texts:

Introduction

Hello my name is . . . I'm looking for local people to take part in some focus groups about parking. The research is being carried on behalf Bath & North East Somerset Council to inform their new Parking Strategy. EXPLAIN AS APPROPRIATE:

- **You will be given £40 as a “thank you”.**
- **The research will involve taking part in a focus group, lasting 1 ½ hours, with about 8 or 9 other people. It will be an informal occasion where you will have the chance to talk about your experience of living in BANES and in particular the issue of parking.**
- **The discussion will be lead by an independent researcher from Crystal Market Research and will take place at (LOCATION) on (DATE).**
- **Everything you say will remain confidential. No one other than myself and the researcher will know that you personally have taken part in the research and no one will be identified in the report.**

Please can I ask you a few questions to check that you fit in with the profile of the people we are including in the survey.

Q1 Do you live in Bath & North East Somerset (BANES) local authority area?

Yes		No	CLOSE
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For each of the 3 areas, try to get a spread geographically

Q2 Do you drive a car, van or motorcycle?

Yes – car		Yes - motorcycle	
Yes – van		No	

Ideally all participants should drive a car, van or motorcycle but OK if, across the groups, up to 2 don't.

Q3 What is your occupation? IF NOT WORKING: What is your partner's occupation? IF RETIRED: What was your occupation? Are you living on a state pension? WRITE IN DETAILS AND CODE SEG.

A		C1		D	
B		C2		E	

Quotas:
Bath group 1 = 4-7 C2s, 4-7 Ds, no more than 2 Es; Bath group 2 = 1 = 4-7 ABs, 4-7 C1s
Midsomer Norton = 4-7 C2s, 4-7 Ds, no more than 2 Es
Keynsham = 3-5 ABs, 6-8 C1s

IF WORKING OR STUDYING

Q4 Do you work/study in the BANES local authority area?

Yes		No	CLOSE
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IF WORKING

Q5 Please could you explain a bit more about your job and the company or organisation you work for. ESTABLISH WHETHER AN OWNER OR MANAGER OF SMALL/MEDIUM INDEPENDENT BUSINESS i.e.WITH 0-250 EMPLOYEES, BASED IN BANES. WRITE IN DETAILS AND CODE.

Yes		No	
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Quota: across the groups at least 4 owners/managers of local SME businesses

ASK ALL

Q6 How often do you visit Bath?

More or less every day		Once a week		Once a month		Less often than once every few months	
2-3 times a week		Once a fortnight		Once every few months			

Q7 Gender

Male		Female	
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Quota: in each group 5-6 men, 5-6 women

Q8 Age category:

18-29		40-49		60-69	
30-39		50-59		70+	

Quota: in each group 2-3 from each decade, but maximum of 2 aged 60-69, and maximum of one aged 70+

Q9 Are you or is anyone in your extended family a Blue Badge holder?

Yes – respondent		No	
Yes – extended family			

Quota: across the groups try to get some people with experience of Blue Badges, but no more than 4 in total

Q10 Finally, if you don't mind me asking, what is your political affiliation - Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem, Green, something else, or do you have none, or prefer not to say?

Conservative		Other	
Labour		None	
Lib Dem		Prefer not to say	
Green			

IF HAVE AFFILIATION WITH A POLITICAL PARTY

Q11 How strongly would you say you support?

Very strongly		Not very strongly	
Fairly strongly		Not at all strongly	

<p>WRITE DOWN RESPONDENT'S ADDRESS AND OTHER DETAILS, AND HAND OUT INVITATION LETTER</p>
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Parking in BANES Discussion Guide 2

1. Introductions

“As you know the subject for discussion this evening is parking. As you may know, BANES Council is reviewing their parking strategy and, as part of this, they want to get feedback from local residents. I’ve got some specific ideas I’d like to get your reaction to, but first of we’ll be talking more generally about parking in BANES”

Rules and reassurances: *“State your views (no right or wrong), I want to hear your experiences and opinions, please respect others’ opinions, let everyone have an equal say.*

Confidential, names not passed on.”

Audio recording, ask permission

Respondent introductions:

Name, where live, where work, how do you travel around locally, how often visit Bath city centre and why

2. Parking in BANES

10 mins

“So let’s talk about parking ...” ASK ABOUT BATH ONLY FOR BATH GROUPS. MN AND K GROUPS ASK ABOUT LOCAL AREA FIRST, THEN MOVE ON TO BATH.

Bath groups:

What’s parking like in Bath for you personally?

As a resident ... do you live within a residents’ parking permit zone?

Visiting the city centre

What are the main issues?

Time of day, day of the week ... what’s it like on Sundays?

City centre v further out

On street v off street

Which car parks/type of parking used, why ... what are the influencing factors?

More generally, what’s parking like for ...?

(Residents)

Local visitors (from elsewhere in BANES, Bristol)

Tourists

Commuters

Impact of parking situation in Bath on businesses, hotels, shops?

Attitudes to P&Rs, pros and cons (NB: *Sites at Bathampton for P& R on the East of Bath not going ahead*).

Where/how do they fit into the parking situation? How do they help?

Who are they for?

Non Bath groups:

What's the parking like where you live ?

Keynsham .. do you live within a residents' parking permit zone?

Midsomer Norton/Radstock

What are the issues?

Time of day, day of the week

On street v off street

Which car parks used, why

More generally, what's parking like for ...?

Residents

Visitors ... where are they from

Tourists?

Commuters

THEN ASK ABOUT BATH

3. Fundamental Aims of Parking Strategy

20 mins

“BANES Council in the process of creating a new parking strategy for the LA area. A large amount of public consultation has already taken place. The Council has come up with some ideas which I'd like to get your views on. Must stress that these are ideas based on the feedback already received from the public not set plans. Also that they are confidential and should not be discussed outside the room. Will be asking you to sign a confidentiality agreement to this effect at the end of the session.”
CHECK EVERYONE OK WITH THIS.

However, before we get on to specific ideas I want to show you some underlying principles and aims that the Council has in relation to parking. Please be aware that these principles have emerged out of previous extensive consultation with residents, businesses etc so I don't want to spend a lot of time re-writing them. As much as anything want you to understand them and therefore the thinking behind the parking ideas we're going to discuss later.

BOARD A

- 1. Reduce congestion.** Keep Bath and other busy locations like Keynsham moving. The aim is to manage parking in a way that lets traffic move more freely around the city and other busy locations.
- 2. Reduce the number of vehicles being brought into Bath.** Encourage more sustainable travel options for example train, Park & Ride, cycling and walking.
- 3. Improve air quality in Bath.** Reduce the number of vehicles being brought into Bath and reduce congestion. Pollution occurs where there is a high concentration of slow moving vehicles.
- 4. Put residents and disabled users first.** Give residents and disabled users priority for on-street parking in Bath and Keynsham. Note: Increasing on street parking is not an option in Bath as it's a World Heritage site and Georgian city with narrow and limited roads. Keep parking free in Midsomer Norton and Radstock
- 5. Support local business.** Prioritise parking for short stay visitors over commuters. Increase the turnover of spaces to enable a steady flow of customers for business in Bath, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock.
- 6. Tailor solutions to the needs of different areas.** There isn't a 'one size fits all' approach. For example, parking will continue to be free in more rural areas such as Midsomer Norton and Radstock, to help support the local economy.
- 7. Support tourism.** As a world heritage sites Bath attracts large numbers of visitors which contributes to Bath and the wider BANES economy

ALLOW RESPONDENTS TO DISCUSS IN WHATEVER ORDER THEY WISH.

What do you make of these principles? Do they make sense?

Do any jump out as particularly sensible/important? Any jump out as wrong?

Anything missing?

For each, what are the positives, the negatives, what has to be taken into consideration, what are the impacts, who is affected?

Are they consistent with each other? Are they all achievable or can some only be achieved at the expense of others? Which are most important?

Is there an argument for reducing the amount of parking?

Could the space given over to parking be better used?

4. Parking Charges

35 mins

"I'd now like to move on to some specific ideas to do with parking and get your reaction to these. They centre around parking charges in Bath. But first of all can we chat about the current situation ...

Awareness of and attitudes to current parking charges in Bath car parks ...

On street

Short term

Long term car parks, including several days

Park & Rides

Are the charges reasonable/fair?

Are some better value than others?

Private car parks (Southgate, Bath Cricket Club, Bath Spa Train Station, University of Bath, Podium Shopping Centre) v Council run ones. Which are they, do they differ in price?

Do parking charges influence which type of car park you tend to use?

Why do you think the Council charges for parking?

Do you notice a hierarchy of charging, i.e. does the Council try to influence travel and parking behaviour through the charging levels? What is it trying to encourage and how?

How is the money raised by parking charges used?

TO DISPEL MISCONCEPTIONS READ OUT

The Council maintains that parking charges are not a money making exercise but a way of managing traffic and parking demand. They can influence use of parking facilities and length of stay. Revenue generated from parking tariffs cannot be used for general purposes by the Council. It has to be used to cover parking running costs and in connection with transport related schemes.

5. Parking Charges Ideas

45 mins

“Here are some parking charging ideas. When considering these, please take into account the principles and aims we’ve discussed earlier. In other words, please try to think from a wider perspective not just from a personal point of view. But first of all I’d like you to complete a short questionnaire, just so you can give your own individual view and then we’ll open it up for discussion.”

QUESTIONNAIRE (TO BE COMPLETED INDIVIDUALLY)

Score out of 10 for Ideas 1-5

Pros and cons

THEN DISCUSSION AROUND EACH IDEA:

What do you think of this, how much do you support/oppose it and why?

What are the benefits, what are the drawbacks? To whom?

What would the impact/consequence, knock on effect be?

Would it make you/others change travel behaviour? How? E.g. use P&R, walk/cycle, not make the journey, park elsewhere

What level of charge increase would it take to force a change?

How well does it support/fit with the aims and principles we discussed earlier?

(HAVE BOARD ON DISPLAY AND REFER TO INDIVIDUAL PRINCIPLES IF NECESSARY)

What kind of in

RANDOMISE ORDER OF DISCUSSING IDEAS 1-5. BOARD FOR EACH.

Idea 1: Charge for on street parking on Sunday in Bath (it is currently free). The charges will match Mon-Sat charges. The operational hours of residents parking zones will therefore include Sundays.

Idea 2: Increase short stay car park tariffs in Bath to the same level as private car park operators. Currently private car park charges are higher than Council ones.

Idea 3: Increase charges for long stay parking (4 hours or more) at Manvers Street, Avon Street and Charlotte Street car parks. This would bring them in line with other Councils’ long stay car parking charges. There has been no increase in BANES long stay car parking charges since 2010.

Idea 4: Preferential charges for BANES residents parking in Bath and Keynsham. Charges would be lower for BANES residents.

Idea 5: Differential charging for residents parking permits and pay & display, based on vehicle emissions. This would relate to recognised and established Emission bands.

5. Secondary Parking Charges Ideas

70 mins

QUESTIONNAIRE (TO BE COMPLETED INDIVIDUALLY)

Score out of 10 for Ideas 6-11

Pros and cons

THEN DISCUSSION AROUND EACH IDEA:

What do you think of this, how much do you support/oppose it and why?

What are the benefits, what are the drawbacks? To whom?

What would the impact/consequence, knock on effect be?

Would it make you/others change travel behaviour? How?

What level of charge increase would it take to force a change?

How well does it support/fit with the aims and principles we discussed earlier?

(HAVE BOARD ON DISPLAY AND REFER TO INDIVIDUAL PRINCIPLES IF NECESSARY)

RANDOMISE ORDER OF DISCUSSION OF IDEAS 6-11. ALWAYS SHOW IDEA 12 LAST. SPEND LESS TIME ON THESE IDEAS

Idea 6: Increase charges for long stay off street parking (4 hours and above) in Keynsham. Charges in Keynsham are much lower than those in Bath. As in Bath there has been no increase since 2010/11.

Idea 7: Introduce a flat fee to park after 8pm/overnight in Bath car parks.

Currently parking charges end at 8pm and start again at 8am. This would be in line with private car park operators and many other Councils.

Idea 8: Introduce charging for motorbikes at car parks (in Bath and Keynsham).

Historically motorbikes haven't paid to park due to inability to display a paper ticket. Advances in technology now allow virtual stays to be created online, by text or phone.

Idea 9: Increase the cost of visitor parking permit costs for use in resident permit areas in Bath and Keynsham. Paper permits would be more expensive than virtual permits created online, by text or phone.

Idea 10: Increase the cost of Hotel permits in Bath. Hotel permits provide access to on street parking for visitors to the city. Currently they can cost less than the cost of resident parking permits.

Idea 11: Increase the cost of season parking tickets for car parks in Bath & Keynsham. 5 day or 7 day season tickets offer a substantial saving over purchasing a pay & display ticket on the day. Note: season tickets in Keynsham only apply to Bath Hill East, Fox & Hounds, Station Road, The Labbott South (not Civic Centre or Ashton Way)

IF TIME:

Idea 12: Increase pedestrianised areas on High Streets. For example, central retail areas like Milsom Street, Kingsmead Square, Upper Borough Walls.

6. Review

85 mins

In general, to what extent do you support the Council increasing parking charges? If not, why not?

Which parking charging ideas do you think the Council should prioritise? Why?

What are the trade offs?

Who should benefit most, at the expense of whom?

To what extent do you agree with the Council's priority order for who benefits from parking measures

1. Residents
2. Disabled people
3. Business (tourists, local visitors)
4. Commuters

i.e. short term parking has priority over long term

But sustainable travel above that

