Parking Strategy Review of Witham

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Parking Strategy Review of Witham

Executive Summary

1. Introduction
Witham Town Council had formed a Task Force of interested local parties to investigate parking problems across the whole town to understand better what parking provision is needed, where and when, and how it is best provided to develop an action plan which all interested parties can sign up to. Individual reports

Braintree District Council has commissioned a similar district-wide project and the 2014 GVA report on regenerating Witham's town centre includes a review of parking strategy in the town centre.

The following five key areas of concern have been identified:-

- The lack of adequate and affordable town centre parking for employees and visitors is causing problems in both residential areas and on the industrial estates
- Parking provision on housing estates is becoming increasingly insufficient.
- Parking provision on the industrial estates is at a premium and can impact on the freeflow of HGV's at times. This can discourage new businesses from locating to Witham.
- Insufficient supply of affordable commuter parking at the station is causing problems throughout residential areas
- Residents are increasingly suffering problems from inconsiderate parent parking at drop off and pick up times in residential areas around local schools.

2. Recommendations
The Task Force proposes the following recommendations to address the key issues identified:-

2.1 Residential Areas

Increasing car ownership and housing density has collided with need to increased town centre employee parking and commuter parking to create problems in residential areas, particularly those adjacent to the town centre and station.

Recommendations

- Develop an Information Pack to provide residents with guidance on measures available to counter unwanted/irresponsible parking; the availability of the information pack to be publicised in the Witham Voice;
- Dedicated Town Council resource to assist residents in preparing a case for parking restrictions - it is suggested that a councillor might be appointed to provide this service.
• discuss with residents in relevant areas whether an application should be submitted to alter the time restrictions to prevent the current abuses;
• establish with ECC Highways responsibility for roadside verges on residential estates with a view to pursuing with Highways their part conversion into parking spaces;
• As a major transport hub Witham has problems with parking that are unique in the District and should have its own dedicated CEO operating across the town in residential areas, the town centre and on the industrial estates.
• An integrated cycle network linking outlying areas with the station/town centre should be a prime consideration of planners approving such developments. Such a network to encompass existing estates.

2.2 Town Centre Parking

Lack of affordable all day town centre parking for employees. Car parking charges are deterring shoppers from using Witham Town Centre, as opposed to larger commercial centres (Chelmsford, Colchester, Freeport). The car park at the Grove Centre is at capacity. Proposals to create a new health facility in the town centre will require appropriate parking provision.

Recommendations
• Increase parking capacity in the town centre. Options are:-
  o a new multi-storey car park with 320 spaces and other works behind or over the Newlands Shopping Centre
  o Double deck an area of existing car park adjacent to Tesco's
  o Create a new car park on the site of former Bramston Sports Centre
  o Redevelopment of land at the rear of former Co Op store for parking and recreational use
  o Create additional parking by reviewing TROs
  o Increase capacity with “end on” rather than parallel parking
  o Move permit parking from Lockram Lane to Newlands Drive to free up short stay shopper parking

2.3 Commuter Parking

The cost of and insufficient provision of commuter parking at the railway station means that commuters are increasingly parking in residential areas.

Recommendations
• Create a Cressing loop to enable four trains per hour on the Braintree Branch line to increase capacity, prevent driving to Witham to catch train.
• add a tier to the main station car park; (comment: increasing the capacity of the main station car park should be accompanied by improved access/traffic management. A solution would be to open up an entrance/exit at the rear of the car park to allow access via Station Road and Avenue Road. This would help relieve the increasingly difficult exit from Easton Road on to Braintree Road);
• a park and ride facility off the B1018 just north of the Cherry Tree with mini buses ferrying commuters to the station. Buses would need to run late into the evening;
as an alternative to a park and ride, a Witham North Halt by a car park north of the Cherry Tree with trains to London stopping here;

- buses to run later into the evening especially to Silver End. This was met with refusal by the bus companies on the grounds that it would not be economically viable. ECC were asked for support but refused;

- Improving parking provision at stations on the Braintree line and improving footpath/cycleway access to these stations.

- A multi storey car park at Cut Throat Lane (a planning application for this was rejected in the past on the basis of restricted highway access). The S106 Agreement for the extension to the Morrisons store could potentially solve the access issues, by providing access from the small Morrisons roundabout into Cut Throat Lane.

- Park and ride service from edge of Witham offering high quality bus link service or rail shuttle to the station.


### 2.4 Parking for Schools

Residents are increasingly suffering from parking problems at drop off and pick up times around schools. Various tactics have been tried to reduce the number of children coming to school by car and to encourage parents to park considerately. Essentially it is a problem of lack of space and overcrowding.

**Recommendations**

- Explore the possibility of creating additional parking for Southview School on the former community orchard site in Conrad Road, as part of the Local Plan discussions.

- Request NEPP to devise a scheme for increasing enforcement availability for both schools and the industrial estates whereby the council has enlisted the assistance of those most directly affected by the problem and given designated school staff and parents the power to issue parking tickets around the local school or potentially on the industrial estate.

- Improvements to the Spa Road Car Park are being taken forward by the Open Spaces Steering Group, a partnership between Witham Town Council and Braintree District Council using CHIP funding and S106 monies. Additional 40+ spaces created.


### 2.5 Industrial Estates

Parking by town centre employees and commuters on the industrial estates is causing a problem, when combined with employee parking and HGV movements. On occasion the roads through the industrial estates can become gridlocked.

**Recommendations**

- Existing yellow lines to be enforced on a regular basis by North Essex Parking Partnership.

- Additional double yellow lines should be introduced in areas identified in the Traffic and Parking Survey undertaken in 2012. (TROs sent for consultation May 2016). General parking restrictions to deter commuters or other non-
estate users would **not** be an option as this would be detrimental to businesses in the BID area.

- The problem of parking on the footpaths needs to be enforced, particularly where this causes an obstruction to pedestrians.
- There are a number of locations where the footpaths, verges and kerbs are damaged and require repair work by Essex County Council.
- The proposals by Witham Industrial Watch Ltd. for improving the Crittall Road area need to be discussed and approved without further delay. (issues with utilities)
- Parking by rail commuters and other non-estate users will continue to be monitored. The Strategic Parking Review needs to consider the impact on both residential and industrial areas of Witham by rail users, and plan for better provision and lower charges to alleviate the current situation.
- Implementation of the plan for a car park on land between Pasture Road and Wheaton Road should be given urgent consideration. This would provide an additional 200 spaces for use by businesses in this area of Witham but the spaces would only be used if there were no parking charges.
- Reduce the number of trailers being parked along Freebournes Rd.
Appendix 1
Parking issues in residential areas
In compiling this research, Ward Councillors, Greenfields Community Housing, and the North Essex Parking Partnership were consulted and helpful contributions were received from a number of residents.

Witham can be divided into three distinct areas.

- Outlying residential areas, essentially the estates.
- Residential areas close enough to the railway station to be attractive to commuters as parking areas for the station;
- Residential areas in the centre of the town that could be attractive to both shoppers and those working in the centre of the town;

There is some overlap as between the second two areas.

Outlying residential areas (estates)
General observations
The parking issues that are present on the outlying estates are not generally caused by commuters. Narrow roads (by design), a lack of off-road parking areas, garages (where available) that are too small for today's cars, (current building regulations have increased the size of garages) and households with more than one vehicle (some with three or four) are the main reasons why the outlying estates have parking issues.

It appears that a driver (commuter or town centre employee) seeking a free parking space is prepared to walk up to 20 minutes to his destination. This generally keeps the outlying estates free from commuter parking. However, with the development of new estates on the fringes of the town, the potential impact such developments will have on town centre and station parking needs to be recognised by planners.

Humber Road
The Humber Road estate, comprising approximately 750 households, is formed around and off Humber Road. Humber Road itself is a bus route (buses circulate in one direction). Some off-road parking is provided in the form of garage blocks and small car parking areas. Few houses have driveways. The estate is managed by Greenfields Community Housing. In an attempt to ease the parking problems Greenfields have been removing some of the garage blocks to provide more parking spaces.

The Humber Road Estate Community Initiative (HRECI) – the local residents' group – conducted surveys in November 2014 and again in November 2015 to gauge residents’ opinions on matters relating to transport, roads and traffic. The surveys revealed a wide range of concerns including dangerous parking near junctions with particular reference to the junction between Humber Road and Spa Road and inadequate parking facilities in Humber Road itself. Inadequate parking facilities for the Douglas Road Surgery were also highlighted. Many residents referred to the grass verges along Humber Road suggesting

An integrated cycle network linking outlying areas with the station/town centre should be a prime consideration of planners approving such developments. Such a network to encompass existing estates.
that some sections could be cut in for parking. This would also improve the flow of traffic along Humber Road.

**Little Elms**

The Little Elms estate off Rickstones Road is sufficiently far from the station to be unattractive to commuters wishing to park for the railway station. The estate dates from the 1960s and although properties have garages and driveways on-street parking by residents is extensive. This is due in part to the size of garages being too small for today's cars and/or being converted to other uses. On-street parking becomes particularly acute at weekends. Despite these issues we are not aware of any calls from residents for the introduction of parking restrictions.

**Forest Road**

The Forest Road estate is situated close by the Little Elms estate and has similar problems not associated with commuter parking with the notable exception of **Walnut Drive** and its junction with **Homefield Road** and that part of **Forest Road** itself that is close to its junction with Cut Throat Lane. Both these areas offer easy access to the station (via Cut Throat Lane).

**Maltings Lane**

The residential development off Maltings follows the now standard Essex Design Guide with many narrow roads, properties with short front gardens and inadequate off road parking spaces/garages. With multi-vehicle households, extensive parking on pavements becomes a necessity to allow vehicles to pass.

**Howbridge Estate**

This estate is managed by Greenfields. **Pelly Avenue's** lack of parking facilities causes residents to park on grass verges. **Pitt Avenue** has very limited parking for residents. **Elizabeth Avenue** is a bus route with extensive parking.

**Hatfield Road Estate**

This estate is managed by Greenfields. Problems have been identified by both Greenfields and the ward councillor in the **Alan Road** area where inadequate parking facilities have led to vehicles being driven over grass verges.

**Templars**

Concern has been expressed in the past about parking believed to be commuter parking on the entrance roads to the courts.

**Flora Road area**

[to follow]

**Powers Hall End** towards the Victoria Public House, vehicles block the footpath. Residents have reported the obstruction of the footpath to Essex Police but as yet there has been no positive outcome. Conversion of the grass area (or part of) in front of houses could relieve the problem. It is understood that some years ago Greenfields were to convert the area but as yet there has been no action.

**Other residential areas**

The parking problems experienced by residents in **Luard Way** are typical of those experienced in many areas of the town. At the end of Luard Way is a turning space which
gives access to the River Walk, for emergency and maintenance use, and direct access to the driveways of three properties. It has become a daily habit for four cars to be parked in the turning space for the whole working day making it difficult for refuse vehicles to use the turning area on one day per week and for other normal visiting vehicles every day. One residential driveway is frequently blocked. Local residents have established, by speaking to the drivers of the offending cars, that they live outside Witham and come to work in Newland Street.

**Blackman Way** residents have expressed concerns about cars parking close to the junction with Maldon Road making entering and exiting Blackman Way dangerous. Inconsiderate parking across driveways, wholly and partially make it impossible to access driveways. **River View** has also attracted many commuters working in the centre of town. Again parking down to its junction with Maldon Road creates a hazard for vehicles entering and exiting River View.

**Glebe Crescent** roadway is very narrow and parked vehicles cause larger vehicles eg refuse trucks, to mount the greensward causing damage.

Inconsiderate parking in Newland Street across the entrance to **Lawn Chase** makes access to the residential area difficult.

**Albert Road.** Inconsiderate short-term evening parking while waiting for trains causes congestion and access problems for residents.

**Measures already adopted to deal with parking problems**

**Moat Farm** estate presented an attractive parking area for commuters using the railway station. The residents of Moat Farm secured parking restrictions based on the yellow line with a time restriction. It appears to be working to residents’ satisfaction. However there has been some displacement of commuter parking onto **Highfields Road**.

**Saxon Drive** has similar restrictions that appear to be working satisfactorily.

**Chalks Road** residents secured a resident permit parking scheme to counter the parking by commuters using the railway station. Neighbouring **Church Street** residents would like to be included in this zone but their request has been refused by BDC.

**Guithavon Street's** resident permit parking scheme secures parking spaces for residents that would otherwise be occupied by shoppers.

**The Grove,** dating from the 1970s, was the first residential development in Essex to follow the Essex Design Guide. As a consequence many of its roads are narrow with multiple bends. Houses are built close to the carriageway leading to restricted sight lines. The layout was not designed to support extensive on-street parking. Each household was provided with at least one garage (now considered too small for today’s vehicles) and one off-road parking place. However being centrally situated, The Grove provided an attractive free car parking facility for those working in central Witham.

With the pending arrival of Cofunds the Grove Residents’ Association could envisage the parking problems escalating to intolerable levels. The Association established through correspondence with Cofunds that the firm anticipated that their on-site parking facilities in Mayland Road would not meet the needs of all staff. They estimated a shortfall of up to 150 car parking spaces daily. At this point the Residents’ Association began the process that led to the establishment of a resident parking scheme coming into force in November 2014.
An inevitable consequence of this was to move the problem onto other nearby residential areas, notably the Greenfields/Barleyfields estate off Pasture Road. The residents’ association there are in the final stages of securing a resident permit parking scheme similar to that in force on the Grove. This however will inevitably move the problem on elsewhere.

Residential roads between Newlands Street and the railway line that would attract both commuters using the railway station and those working in central Witham have a variety of schemes based on the yellow line with a time restriction. Until approximately 10 years ago Avenue Road had a time restriction covering the majority of the working day. This effectively deterred commuters but proved inconvenient for residents. The restriction was changed to 10am-11am on one side and 11am-12 noon the other. This had been working satisfactorily until recent times. Whilst the restrictions still deter those using the railway station, it is thought that those who work in Witham, and are able to do so, move their vehicle at the appropriate hour to an area of the road where the time restriction has passed. Afternoon parking has intensified compromising sight lines on bends. Increased parking towards the end of Avenue Road close to its junction with Colchester Road suggests that the vehicle owners are working in central Witham.

Mill Lane leading to Guithavon Valley is a busy link road between Newland Street and Collingwood Road used by vehicles travelling to and from the north of the town. Until recent times it was generally free from inconsiderate parking. However commuter parking (for the station) became a serious problem and emergency measures (yellow lines) were adopted. These have proved inadequate and many consider that they have not contributed to improved road safety or the smooth flow of traffic.

Greenfields Community Housing

Greenfields manage the Humber Road, Hatfield Road, Howbridge, Templers and Greenfields estates. Over recent years they have made a number of improvements to the parking on these estates. Largely unused garage blocks have been removed and replaced with parking spaces; existing parking areas have been enlarged. They have recently created driveways for some of their properties in Alan Road (Hatfield Rd estate) as well as extending the existing parking bays owned by ECC through their Neighbourhood Action Plan budget. However Greenfields report that due to recent funding and rent cuts imposed by the government they will have no budget for such projects in the future. They currently have no plans therefore for further parking improvements in the Witham area.

Some areas of the estates managed by Greenfields eg roadside verges which may be suitable for conversion into parking areas, are thought to fall under the responsibility of ECC Highways. Further enquiries with Essex Highways to establish responsibility should take place.

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

As part of the localism agenda, Essex Highways delegated on-street parking, including lines, signs and restrictions, to the NEPP in the north of the County with a similar operation in the south (SEPP). NEPP is made up of Essex County Council plus six District/Borough Councils, Colchester (acting as lead authority), Braintree, Harlow, Epping, Tendring and Uttlesford.

The NEPP is responsible for examining all requests for parking restrictions and for drawing up Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and for the enforcement of restrictions once in place. Their administrative hub is in Colchester and they have three enforcement hubs
in the East, Central and West of the County. The hub covering Witham is based at the George Yard Multi-storey car park in Braintree from where Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) serve Witham.

The NEPP judge each request received against a scoring matrix which illustrates the factors taken into consideration. With larger scheme request such as resident permit parking or commuter type restrictions, which may ultimately affect a number of local parties, evidence of local consultation showing 75-80% support is required.

A simple junction protection scheme is estimated by the NEPP to cost between £1500-£2000 with larger resident permit parking and commuter type parking restrictions costing between £5000 and £10000 which accounts for all costs relating to TROs, signing, lining and officer time.

The TRO process is complicated, time consuming and cost regulated. NEPP partners are restricted to putting forward a maximum of 8 schemes per year for consideration.

As part of their work programme for 2014/15 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at Braintree District Council reviewed the NEPP’s relationship with the District Council and the services it provides, inter alia, in relation to parking enforcement and TROs insofar as it affects the Braintree District. The report is very light on finances. What information is given relates only to off-street parking facilities. It is reported that the NEPP relies heavily on income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and resident only parking. On enforcement, again, the report concentrates on PCN issues in Council car parks and provides no information about PCNs issued for on-street parking infringements.

Parking enforcement across driveways does not require a TRO but can be enforced at the specific request of the householder/occupier. This is not well communicated.

**Initial conclusions**

From a very quick examination of the town’s parking problems in residential areas it is clear that it would be inappropriate to look for a ‘one size fits all’ solution. Some areas have adopted resident permit parking schemes whereas other areas have found that yellow lines with time restrictions to be an appropriate solution. Each of the schemes has followed essential extensive resident consultation. NB. It is understood that where it is considered socially necessary to curb parking the yellow line with a time restriction is now used only where it is also necessary to maintain safe traffic flow on busy roads.

**Adequacy of existing restrictions**

In some areas the yellow line with a short time restriction designed to deter those wishing to park all day is proving to be inadequate. Whereas most motorists who travel on to work by train are put off by such restrictions, those who work in Witham, and are able to do so, move their vehicle at the appropriate time to a location where the time restriction has passed. An adjustment to the restriction times may stop this practice.

**Level of enforcement**

From our own observations and from reports we have received, it is clear that where parking restrictions are in force, especially restrictions attached to yellow lines, there is an absence of adequate enforcement. The split between on-street and off-street enforcement by CEOs is said to be 70-30 respectively. The level of enforcement activity
is perceived by residents to have been reduced in recent times, and parking restrictions where they are exist are being abused.

As a major transport hub Witham has problems with parking that are unique in the District and should have its own dedicated CEO operating across the town in residential areas, the town centre and on the industrial estates.

Recommendations from Residential Areas

- Develop an Information Pack to provide residents with guidance on measures available to counter unwanted/irresponsible parking; the availability of the information pack to be publicised in the Witham Voice;
- Dedicated Town Council resource to assist residents in preparing a case for parking restrictions - it is suggested that a councillor might be appointed to provide this service.
- discuss with residents in relevant areas whether an application should be submitted to alter the time restrictions to prevent the current abuses;
- establish with ECC Highways responsibility for roadside verges on residential estates with a view to pursuing with Highways their part conversion into parking spaces;
- As a major transport hub Witham has problems with parking that are unique in the District and should have its own dedicated CEO operating across the town in residential areas, the town centre and on the industrial estates.
- An integrated cycle network linking outlying areas with the station/town centre should be a prime consideration of planners approving such developments. Such a network to encompass existing estates.
REPORT

To Witham Town Council Parking Strategy Committee

FROM: Kenneth Davies Chairman HRECI (Humber Road Estate Community Initiative)

Date: 28 February 2016

Background

Since the inception of the Humber Road Estate Community Initiative (HRECI) residents have had numerous concerns regarding Transport, Road, Traffic and Parking

In order to address these, we have undertaken public consultations and surveys to ascertain

The residents’ concerns the results of these has been:

1.1 Residents workshop November 2014 included the following comments

TRANSPORT, ROADS AND TRAFFIC (figures in brackets show number of responses)

1.1.1 Strengths

Bus service is good

1.1.2 Issues

(a) Traffic (4)

(b) Parking in Humber Rd and Ness Walk (5)

(c) Parking (3)

(d) Parking close to junctions (3)

(e) Car parking near to schools (3)

(f) Speeding (2)

(g) The footways and side roads are in a poor state of repair (1)

(h) Access to the junior school: parents gather around gate and block the path

(i) Obstructing private garage

(j) Potholes on roads and paths

2.1 Future

(a) Allocated parking spaces for Ness Walk (3)
(b) More resident parking in Humber road for Spa Road shops (2)
(c) Remove grass verges to allow for easier parking (2)
(d) An area at the school for staff to park
(e) A better restricted system for parking
(f) Enforcement camera
(g) Potholes repaired
(h) Reduce speed limit: lower speed limit

2.2 Other suggestions:

- Lights on car parks
- There is no lighting in car park on your arrival at all
- Use of lights that come on when someone / something passes under it
- Some people start work at 4.30 am. It would be nice for lights to come on at four am
- Maybe street lights all night on alternate posts
- Subsidised security lighting for front and back doors, for pensioners in view of street lights off after midnight
- LED lights should be slowly installed, so lights can be left on at night
- Double yellow lines on road corners, especially Helford Court and Douglas Grove
- In car parking areas, alleyways (more lighting please)
- More dropped kerbs for wheelchair users corresponding each side of roads e.g. bus stops

3

3.1 Residents survey November 2015 provided the following information

3.1.1 Lack of designated parking spaces 77 for 17 against
3.1.2 Conversion of garage areas for parking 63 for 28 against
3.1.3 New parking spaces on green areas 53 for 41 against

4.1 Comments on traffic and parking issues:
• Cars parked near junction and lots of vans parked on verges making it difficult to see when crossing the road

• Cameras could be installed to help with problems

• Cars noisy and revving up, and speeding

• People supping up cars all weekend in house garage

• Not on green areas, but on grass verges for parking

• We have a drive with dropped kerb, but struggle with parked cars across road

• People who think parking spaces are theirs only and block spaces in order to keep them

• Green areas need to be turned into parking bays

• Some people seem to park on a bend or corner which is dangerous

• Living right near Doctors surgery is a big issue with parking at surgery hours

• Zebra crossing needed, Humber Road near Doctors

• Be good to see police doing speed checks

• Parking is getting to be a problem

• Speed humps

• Turn grass verge into parking

• Dangerous parking i.e. corners - blocking clear view of approaching traffic

• Double yellow lines

• Stop cars parking on the corner as you drive out of Douglas Grove

• Put in cameras

• Big problems caused by commuters near station

• People mostly have two cars per household, at times we cannot park outside our own house

• Would like more speed control on Humber Road / Tamar Avenue

• Should be for residents in that road / close

• Some green verges at the side of road needs to be taken back to widen road
• Verges jutting out into road should be taken away

• Town growing no new car parks or parking facilities being made available, families now have more vehicles per household

• Humber Road should be a one-way system

• Garage area - eye sore

• Vehicles parking opposite the turn to Bure Drive, making a blind spot. Just waiting for accident to happen

• Green verge must be converted to parking area as a matter of safety

• Not enough parking bays for everyone

• No parking at all on estate. Stop youngsters on noisy mopeds, and boy racers!

• Green spaces on estate, as they are never used

• My car was vandalised twice when parked, so in consequence have to park elsewhere. Not enough lighting

5

• Parking on road corners around Humber Road is very dangerous as this obstructs the road view

• Only that some neighbours can be inconsiderate

• 20 mph on the estate roads, but not the trunk through roads

• People on bikes - riding on green areas

• Parking bays - people from next street parking near us, causing parking problems

• Thoughtless parking - dustbin lorry unable to gain access - disabled unable to use drop curbs

• Main Humber Road should be made wider

• Double yellow lines on junction

• Large vehicles on grass areas

• Generally bad parking

• Large / heavy lorries on unsuitable roads

• Turning out of side roads very dangerous, cannot see as cars parked on both sides of the road

• Helford Court is so dangerous to come out of - cars parked on the bend, so cannot see till you pull out.
• Ness Walk needs parking over garages!

• Keep green areas or cars and vans will park all over place and put log blocking ground at back

• In designated parking areas I would like white lines indicating each space, as some cars take up 2 spaces

• Spa Road car park is a problem

• I think the grass verges by the road should be made parking, as you get a lot of mud in your car when having to walk over them

• Only regarding commercial vehicles parking (with due care and attention)

• 20 mph painted on road surface on all major roads coming from top of Humber Road

• Knock garages down or make people that have use them for cars, instead of storage

Areas where people feel unsafe:

• Paths at back of houses - no lighting

• Around the dark garage areas

• The person across the road has a large mobile home parked outside house - when turning into Don Court as it is very dangerous as blocking the view of drivers - very dangerous for children playing too.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 That the Parking Strategy Committee note the contents of this report

2 That the Committee note that this is an interim report and there is work in progress on some of the issues

3 That the contents of this report be incorporated into the HRECI Community Action Plan

4 That HRECI formulate a series of action plans to address these issues identifying who should be involved costs and delivery times

Report prepared by Kenneth Davies

Chairman

HRECI
Appendix 2

Town Centre Parking
Includes needs of shoppers and those employed in the town centre.

Current position

Based on 3 visits, spread over a 6 month period at different times of the day. (mid-morning on Thursday, 30 July 2015; early afternoon on Tuesday, 15 September 2015 and mid-morning on Tuesday, 2 February 2016).

Each day there were, on average 2 to 4 spaces open on Newland Street itself (1 hour free parking) at any given time.

Newlands Drive (Short Stay) Car Park - situated behind the Newlands Precinct. It has a total of 96 marked bays and a section of permit only parking bays at one end. There are four pay point machines and signs, only two of which have any signage regarding the 10p car parking. This car park used to have an A frame at the entrance showing the 10p parking as well as a sign on all of the parking rate signs. This is no longer the case. One 10p sign is covered up by a tree when you are standing at the pay machine.

July 2015. At 10:29am this car park was about 45% full. The permit only section was also about 45% full.

September 2015. At 12:15 there were 27 spaces free (75% full) and 7 of the permit only spaces free.

February 2016. At 10:15 am there were 30 empty spaces (70% full) and 4 permit parking spots empty

Mill Lane Car Park. This car park is located at the south end of Newland Street on the junction with Mill Lane and has a total of 43 marked bays.

July 2015 At 10:26 am there were 28 spaces free (35% full)

September 2015 At 12:18pm there were 11 spaces free (75% full)

February 2016 At 10:15am there were 16 spaces free (63% full)

Mayland Car Park. This car park is located at the side of the Grove Centre and to the rear of several shops including the Red Lion pub. Monday to Friday it is a permit holders
only car park and out of the 29 marked bays, there were only about 13 cars parked there at 11am, about 45% of capacity. It was about the same on each day we observed.

**Lockram Lane Car Park.** This car park is located to the side of the Newland Precinct is a permit holder only car park Monday to Friday and Sunday and is the location of the town’s Saturday market. It has 41 marked bays.

**July 2015.** At 11:06 am there were 20 spaces free (50% full)

**September 2015.** At 12:20pm there were 11 spaces free (74% full)

**February 2016.** At 10:20am there were 14 spaces free (64% full)

**Conclusions**

Permit parking capacity appears to be very underused. It is peculiar that there seems to be a huge waiting list for permit parking and yet so many permit spaces sit empty in Lockram Lane, Mayland Road and Newlands Drive car parks. The balance of permit and adhoc parking capacity needs to be amended and creative ways found to share space more effectively.

This shows that the town centre car parks are not full, which suggests that it is cost that is leading drivers to use on-street parking rather than the car parks. Spaces, especially near the rail station, were at an absolute premium. The Town Centre car parks do appear to have got busier in the past six month period. For example, the Tesco car park at the Grove has become almost impossible to park in during the midday time period. During December, there were many days when the queue to get into the Tesco car park was backed out well onto the roundabout and the Grove. This made for quite a bottleneck in this part of town during premium Christmas shopping times.

**Parking on Residential Roads within the Town Centre**

**Newlands Drive**

There has recently been an increase in cars which park on the double yellow lines just outside of the Newlands Drive car park. For the most part, these are blue badge holders who are parking here rather than paying to park in the public car parks now that there is a charge for them to do so. Here is a picture of what that looks like on a Thursday morning at about 10:30am.
Mill Lane

There is also have the newer issue of increased parking on Mill Lane which is probably the result of the double yellow lines installed last summer in Guithavon Valley.

Amending some of the existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which haven’t been reviewed for some years, and by changing areas of parallel parking to “end on” parking, some 40 additional short term parking spaces potentially could be created in the town centre. See map below.

The permit parking in the Lockram Lane car park should be moved into the Newlands Drive car park, nearest the church, so that shoppers can park nearer the shops and have a better view of them.

Recommendations – Town Centre Parking

- New multi-storey car park with 320 spaces and other works behind or over the Newlands Shopping Centre
- Double decking an area of existing car park adjacent to Tesco’s
- Car park on the site of former Bramston Sports Centre
- Redevelopment of land at rear of Co Op for parking and recreational use
- Create additional parking by reviewing TROs
- Increase capacity with “end on” rather than parallel parking
- More permit parking from Lockram Lane to Newlands Drive to free up short stay shopper parking
Appendix 3
Commuter Parking

In 2007 Passenger Focus commissioned research to look at station car parking capacity up to 2015 in the context of forecast growth in demand for rail travel. It concluded that:

- Most passengers who live within walking distance of a station will generally walk to it
- Passengers travelling to a station from rural, semi-rural and edge of town locations will generally choose to drive and park at the station
- Many passengers drive to a station with a better service than the station nearest their home

If station parking becomes difficult options include:

- Get a lift
- Drive to another station
- Make journey by car
- Travel earlier in order to secure a space

In 2007 it was calculated that there was 19% suppressed demand at Witham. 123 additional spaces were needed in 2007, with need for further 50 by 2016 and that investment in parking capacity would generate both additional parking revenue, and also increased fare revenue.

However, excessive car park charges might stop people travelling by train at all or force them to seek out alternative places to park.

- If a station car park becomes full during morning peak, becomes a barrier to off peak use.
- At Witham, only 7% of passengers who currently park at the station said they would walk if car parking became difficult.
- As station car parks reach 90%+ capacity, it will force passengers who currently travel towards the end of the peak to travel at a busier time, to be sure of getting a parking space.
- 38% of passengers regularly waste time trying to find a space.
- Showing parking space availability in real time (on websites/text services) allows passengers to make informed choice, rather than avoiding the car park which they think is full.

In 2007, 40% of respondents using Witham station travel more than 4km to the station. For these people an alternative method of transport is not seen as practical.

Options for dealing with problem include:

- A multi storey car park at Cut Throat Lane (a planning application for this was rejected in the past on the basis of restricted highway access). The S106 Agreement for the extension to the Morrisons store could potentially solve the access issues, by providing access from the small Morrisons roundabout into Cut Throat Lane.
• Add deck to existing station car park. Need to improve highway access – scope to add additional entrance/exit SE of existing car park
• Park and ride service from edge of Witham offering high quality bus link service or rail shuttle to the station.

Background
• Car access accounts for almost half of all those accessing the station - 47% - 43% walk or cycle; 5% travel by bus
• More park at the station than are dropped off (26% park, 21% dropped off + 4% taxi minicab)
• Commuters travel to Witham Station from as far away as Tiptree/Maldon/Braintree up to 10 miles
• Just over half of respondents at Witham station are commuting, around 2/5 travelling for leisure purposes. Rail users are more likely to walk to the station if they are travelling for leisure purposes. Time is precious for commuters.
• 53% of travellers are commuting, 7% are on business and 37% travelling for leisure or other purposes – suggesting that 60% of travellers travel during peak times.
• Over 30% of respondents who parked used the station car park, White Horse Lane and Cut Throat Lane. 2/5’s parked in other locations including Morrisons (since stopped), the Labour Party building and on-street.
  o Station Car park – 36%
  o White horse Lane – 7%
  o Cut throat lane – 13%
  o Other – 42% - 12% on street
    o - 6% at friends/relative house
    o - 8% Morrisons
    o - 12% Another car park
• 30% chose a particular car park because it is nearest to the station (recent access to station improvements have helped)
• Price issue for 20% in choosing a parking location because its free, and further 15% because its cheaper
• Residents parking schemes – commuters view that enforcement is lax – prepared to ignore restrictions and risk being fined

Current situation
Easton Road Car Park – this is the newest car park recently built by BDC and shares the same road entrance with the Witham Rail Station car park. This car park is newly paved and lined and situated within a 5 minute or less walk into the rail station. It also has the highest parking rates of all the public car parks. It has 66 marked parking bays.

July 2015. At 10:32 am it was approximately 80% full. Some of the spaces were available as shown.

September 2015. At 12:21 there were no spaces free and only 3 disabled places free.

Monday 14 September 2015 mid-morning (capacity 66 cars, daily rate £6.00, £3.00 after 9.30) was full. Cars were driving in and out again and going on to the main station car park.
**Thursday 15 October mid-afternoon.** 1 available space.

**February 2016.** At 10:25 am there were no spaces free and only 3 disabled places free.

**Witham Rail Station Car Park.** This has a capacity of 406 parking bays, although some of them are badly marked and far too close together for most cars to be able to use to park.

**July 2015.** At 10:35 am it was approximately 75% full with quite a few spaces available at the far end.

**September 2015.** At 12:23 there were 4 spaces free

**Monday 14 September 2015 mid-morning** (operated by NCP - capacity 418 cars, daily rate £6.70, £3.90 after 9.30) had 39 available spaces. While I was there three or four cars came into the car park to fill some of those available spaces.

**Thursday 15 October mid-afternoon.** 6 available spaces. Two vehicles were preparing to leave as I left the car park. While there I spoke to the NCP Enforcement Officer and asked him whether it was a typical day (ie a day when for all intents and purposes all spaces were taken up). He said it was. He went on to say that he visits the car park most days and the only day when there are a few spaces is Friday when there might be 20-30 spaces. I mentioned that a few weeks earlier I had seen that number of spaces on a Monday morning. He thought that would have been unusual.

**February 2016.** At 10:25 am there were no spaces free

NB Where do “day” rail users find to park, or those going to London for the evening?

**White Horse Lane.** This is the next closest car park to the rail station and is located just across from Morrisons off the roundabout. This car park has 72 marked bays. For those travelling from the Braintree direction it is the most convenient and the easiest to access and leave.

**July 2015.** 13 free spaces available at 10:42 am.

**September 2015.** At 12:27 there were 2 spaces free

**Thursday 15 October mid-afternoon**. The charge is £5 for 24 hours. There were 7 spaces. I would imagine that this car park is used by night workers, hence the empty spaces at 2.30 in the afternoon.

**February 2016.** At 10:21 am there were no spaces free except 1 disabled.

**Cut Throat Lane Car Park.** This is a privately run commuter car park, right next to the rail station and I understand that it is almost completely full every weekday.

We observed this car park on Tuesday, 15 September 2015 and mid-morning on Tuesday, 2 February 2016. In September, at 12:31pm, there were 19 spaces free. In February, at 10:22am, there were no spaces free, and some double parking was in evidence.

Thursday 15 October mid-afternoon. Just 2 spaces. There were several cars parked not in marked spaces indicating that earlier the car park had been full beyond its marked capacity. While I was there two vehicles left.

Conclusion

From this quick survey it appears that the main station car parks are operating close to capacity (BDC's is at capacity). The station car park offers season tickets for one week, one month and 12 months. It is unlikely that on any given day all season tickets issued would be in use. For a car park such as the main station car park, some vacant spaces are therefore to be expected and operating at around 90% full is, I would suggest, operating close to a workable capacity.

The privately run Cut Throat Lane car park operates on the basis of daily payments of £5.50 paid to an attendant on entry. If the attendant is not present unauthorised parking is liable to a £100 fine. The attendant was not present at the time of my visit (around 10.45 am). My guess is that he probably leaves at around 09.30 am. At that time the price at both the station car park and at BDC's car park drops significantly. There are unlikely to be many motorists wishing to use the Cut Throat Lane car park after 09.30 am. It is also a much less secure car park than the other two and there have been incidents there over the years. It is, I would suggest, for all intents and purposes, operating close to capacity.

There is a view held by some that commuters using the station for their onward journey to work are put off by the price of parking at the station and are prepared to walk up to 25 mins if they could then find a free parking space on a residential road. That may be the case for some but it is clear from the surveys that the vast majority of commuters are prepared to pay to park. Increasing capacity at the station is therefore likely to be utilised. However, there may have to be further restrictions on commuters parking in residential streets, to 'encourage' those who at present look for a free car parking space to use any new capacity.

Witham is a major hub for commuters and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Dramatic improvements to public transport (eg the Braintree loop) would go some way to relieving the commuter parking problem but cannot alleviate it completely.

Half of the members of the local Rail Users Association using Witham station come in from the Braintree area. Over the years this Association has put forward to the relevant bodies a number of possible solutions to the parking problem. Most of them are long term solutions that require major expenditure from the service providers concerned which has not so far been forthcoming. The Association has been unable to identify any quick (inexpensive) fixes. Among the solutions the Association has proposed to various bodies are:

- a Cressing loop to enable four trains per hour on the Braintree Branch line;
- adding a tier to the main station car park; (comment: increasing the capacity of the main station car park should be accompanied by improved access/traffic management. A solution would be to open up an entrance/exit at the rear of the car park to allow access via Station Road and Avenue Road. This would help relieve the increasingly difficult exit from Easton Road on to Braintree Road);
- a park and ride facility off the B1018 just north of the Cherry Tree with mini buses ferrying commuters to the station. Buses would need to run late into the evening;
as an alternative to a park and ride, a Witham North Halt by a car park north of the Cherry Tree with trains to London stopping here;
buses to run later into the evening especially to Silver End. This was met with refusal by the bus companies on the grounds that it would not be economically viable. ECC were asked for support but refused;
The Rail Users’ Assn also proposed that improving parking at Witham rail station should be made a condition of the new rail franchise agreement. The Government did not agree.

Other solutions proposed have included improving parking provision at stations on the Braintree line and improving footpath/cycleway access to these stations.

Major expenditure by the rail company to improve parking at Witham station cannot realistically be expected before the new franchise has been awarded.

In the longer term some relief may come once the new Beaulieu Park station and car park in Chelmsford is open as it is believed that many who presently travel from the Braintree area to Witham will find it easier to drive to Beaulieu Park for their onward train journey.

Chelmsford City Council is working with its partners Essex County Council, Network Rail and Countryside Zest to deliver the new Beaulieu Park Station at the earliest possible time. A detailed project plan for the construction of the station and associated track works is being prepared for approval under Network Rail’s Guide to Rail Investment Process (GRIP).

Funding has been secured for the construction of the station from the developer and from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). It is presently envisaged that the station will be completed and open towards the end of 2021.
Commuter Parking Recommendations

- a Cressing loop to enable four trains per hour on the Braintree Branch line;
- add a tier to the main station car park; (comment: increasing the capacity of the main station car park should be accompanied by improved access/traffic management. A solution would be to open up an entrance/exit at the rear of the car park to allow access via Station Road and Avenue Road. This would help relieve the increasingly difficult exit from Easton Road on to Braintree Road);
- a park and ride facility off the B1018 just north of the Cherry Tree with mini buses ferrying commuters to the station. Buses would need to run late into the evening;
- as an alternative to a park and ride, a Witham North Halt by a car park north of the Cherry Tree with trains to London stopping here;
- buses to run later into the evening especially to Silver End. This was met with refusal by the bus companies on the grounds that it would not be economically viable. ECC were asked for support but refused;
- Improving parking provision at stations on the Braintree line and improving footpath/cycleway access to these stations.
- A multi storey car park at Cut Throat Lane (a planning application for this was rejected in the past on the basis of restricted highway access). The S106 Agreement for the extension to the Morrisons store could potentially solve the access issues, by providing access from the small Morrisons roundabout into Cut Throat Lane.
- Park and ride service from edge of Witham offering high quality bus link service or rail shuttle to the station.
Appendix 4
Parking for Schools
The New Rickstones Academy/6th Form Unit/Honeybears House Day School/Elm Hall Primary School/Elm Hall CP Playgroup/Southview Special Needs

- This group of learning centres is one of the most problematic in the Witham area.
- Whilst on-site staff parking is sufficient within the boundaries of the New Rickstones Academy, Honeybears House and 6th Form School, it is inadequate in the case of Elm Hall schools and Southview.
- Elm Hall School has designated spaces but currently allows some staff and possibly visitors to park along non-designated areas within the school boundary which is undesirable and obstructive. Staff not finding a parking space are currently reduced to leaving vehicles along Conrad Road or in one of the adjoining access roads into the Templar's residential area.
- Southview cannot provide any additional non-designated parking due to the waiting and access requirements of the many special mini-buses and adapted taxis delivering and collecting children. All children attending have special needs, most of them requiring wheelchairs. Currently, their transport has to queue along Conrad Road and the school's internal access road before reaching the drop-off point close to the school entrance. This is creating problems in the early morning and mid-afternoon for public services vehicles, bus services and passing traffic. In an attempt by some drivers to reduce obstruction, they have been temporarily parking on the grassed verge of Conrad Road causing considerable damage. Southview staff, not finding a parking space (which may include teachers and medical staff), are currently leaving vehicles along Conrad Road or in one of the adjoining access roads into the Templar's residential area.
- Staff in Honeybears House and 6th Form have sufficient on-site parking but complain about parents and others obstructing access to their premises and using their internal parking area whilst dropping off and picking up children from Elm Hall. The school itself is also being obstructed by parents vehicles parked around its entrance which are in turn damaging the grass verges.
- Parental parking outside the schools is often inconsiderate to residents and pedestrians by parking across dropped kerbs crossing points in Conrad Road as well as on the corners of road junctions. Some have been observed parking on the grassed areas opposite the schools.
- Full details of staff parking requirements for The New Rickstones Academy have been requested and are currently awaited, although it appears parking for staff, disabled and visitors can be fully accommodated.
- Older students of the Academy are not permitted to park on-site unless by motor cycles, scooters and cycles in designated places. Conrad Road adjacent to the Academy has clearly marked restrictions and a designated bus lay-by.
- All of the above contributes varying risks to health and safety, as well as many heated confrontations between the parties involved. A number of parents parking cars actually reside in the Templar Estates, Forest Road and Rickstones Road area and can easily walk their children to school.
- Inconsiderate parking is occurring at the junction of Conrad Road and Rickstones Road, obstructing sight lines and presenting a hazard to turning vehicles. Some may be residents but others are rail commuters or persons working in Witham Town Centre who have been seen to continue to work on foot, by bicycle or bus.

- Greenfields Housing (and thereby the Chair of Templars Estate Residents) have been requested to supply some input to this survey.

**Templars Primary Upper & Lower Schools/ Templars Roundabout Children's Centre/ Templars Infant and Nursery School**

- All four schools/day nurseries are adjacent to each other along Cressing Road and appear to share parking areas within their boundary. Based upon figures provided by Templars Primary School, staff parking appears to be manageable on site, given the number of part-time staff. Staff requirements are awaited for the Pre-school and Day Nursery. It has been reported by residents in nearby Cross Road, that cars parked near to the junction with Cressing Road are believed to those of staff. This has yet to be verified.

- Many parents and children walk to school from the Forest Road area, Templars and, via the pedestrian railway bridge, from Church Street and Ebenezer Close and do not use cars. The school has one of two ‘lollipop’ persons in Witham, assisting pedestrians across the Cressing Road. Temporary parking by parents in Crossroad and Cressing Road occurs around school start and finishing times.

- Parking problems in Bronte Road have also been reported to the Town Council, who sought to install bollards, to prevent parking on verges, and enforcement activity via NEPP.

**Essex Fresh Start Independent School**

- This relatively new special school, formerly Chipping Hill Primary School, has non-designated parking within its bounds and can accommodate up to 40 cars for the monthly staff meeting. Normal daily use does not appear to be a problem for this school’s current staff numbers. Pupils attending use public transport or taxis. The latter which must enter the car park to deliver youngsters are not permitted to stop in Church Street. No pupils are brought to school by mini-buses.

- Please note, that the school has an arrangement with St. Nicolas Church opposite, allowing the school car park to be used by the church on special occasions, e.g. funerals, weddings, Medieval Fayre, etc. This is subject to availability by the school.

**Spring Lodge Pre-School/Spring Lodge Holiday Play Scheme/Chipping Hill Playgroup**

- Spring Lodge Community Centre is used by many groups throughout each day, including children’s groups. The number of staff varies with each group. Some staff walk to the Centre and those that drive are easily accommodated in the designated car parking spaces. It is possible that some commuters have been parking their cars and walking up Chipping Hill to the station. This is to be verified. Nearby, residential roads have restrictive parking.

**Powers Hall Academy/Powers Hall Infants School/Harlequin Children's Centre/Harlequin Day Nursery**
Clustered adjacent to the Spa Road Shopping Centre, Powers Hall Academy and Infant Schools have insufficient designated parking on-site. The Harlequin Centre and Day Nursery have no on-site parking availability and do not use that of the schools. As a result, many staff from the schools and the children’s centre/nursery who drive to work, must be parking either in the shopping centre car park or in other roads between Highfields Road and Spa Road, using the pedestrian underpass for access.

There is high congestion with double parking during around school start and finishing times, presenting health and safety issues.

Shoppers and visitors, as well as parents, temporarily park on the double yellow lines in the Spa Road car park who cannot find a designated space. Furthermore, Blue Badge holders also park on the double yellow lines. The shopping centre, which includes a pharmacy and post office, also has some designated residents parking behind the shops as well as access for deliveries. Vehicles park along its access road which may be causing obstruction.

**Spa Road Car Park.** Parking here is free. It is the only car park for the Spa Road shops and Co-op as well as providing parking for staff and parents of Powers Hall Academy, Powers Hall Infant School and the Harlequin Children’s Centre. During school time, this car park is absolutely packed with parking on the sides and in the road. 10:38am, it was only about 60% full. Since school is on summer break at this time, we can probably assume that many people from the school use this car park during the school day. The parking here has gotten much worse in the past year.

- **September 2015** - 12:40pm there were 2 spaces free – back in school time
- **February 2016** - 10:35am- completely full with two more cars parked on double yellows closest to shops. This was in school time.

This car park forms part of the project currently being undertaken to rejuvenate Spa Road Shops, to make is more accessible for shoppers to attract them to the shops. Proposals are being put forward to increase the number of available spaces here and to designate around 20 short stay spaces for shoppers.

**Witham Valley Nursery**

- This small children’s nursery uses the Guithavon Valley Evangelical Church hall which has a small car park which can accommodate many vehicles in non-designated spaces. Most staff walk to work and those who drive can easily park on-site.

- A problem of Health and Safety was observed when parents were bringing or collecting children, either on foot or by car, due to the speed and recklessness of some drivers using Guithavon Valley, Guithavon Road and Mill Lane mini-roundabout junctions.

- Traffic calming in the form of a carefully positioned ramps consisting of raised block paving across Guithavon Valley would slow drivers. These should be located on the approaches to the mini-roundabouts which are currently 'overrun' by many drivers. (The same form of traffic calming is also needed at the other end of Guithavon Valley approaching the junction with Armond Road. Cars have been observed accelerating downhill from Collingwood Road in a reckless manner in attempt to pass by parked cars in Guithavon Valley ahead of opposing traffic.)

- This area is subject to a review by ECC Highways under the Local Highways Panel, and a report on proposed safety measures is expected shortly.
The Maltings Academy

- This newly built Academy has a large fully designated car park for staff, disabled and visitors (see also The New Rickstones Academy). Deliveries and service vehicles have separate point of entry to the academy. Full details of staff parking requirements have been requested and are currently awaited.

Chipping Hill Primary School

- This newly built school appears to have reasonable on-site car parking for staff at present, given the number of part-time staff, including designated spaces for disabled staff. Deliveries and service vehicles have a separate point of entry to the school. Whilst it has a local catchment area, following the move from Church Street to Owers Road, many children travel across Witham by car, resulting in some temporary parking in adjoining roads. As most properties immediately adjacent to the school are flats with internal courtyard parking, there is not so much competition between residents and the parents’ cars. However, traffic around the somewhat narrow and complex roads system does become congested at peak times.

Howbridge (C of E) Junior School/Howbridge Infants School/Little Hands Pre-School

- Howbridge (C of E) is adjacent to Howbridge Road and Dengie Close. Howbridge Infant School is accessed from Dengie Close opposite Botts Rise. Vehicular access into the school's shared parking area is only from Dengie Close. Assuming the figures recently supplied are for the total number of staff driving to work from both the Junior School and the Infant School, the number of cars equates to the number of designated spaces available. However, if the figures currently supplied are for the Junior School only, even allowing for some flexibility due to some staff being part time, there is likely to be a considerable shortage of off-street spaces. Details of staff and parking for the Infant School have been requested and are currently awaited.

- Whilst many residents in Dengie Close and Botts Rise have off street garage parking, many have vehicles parked in the road. At peak school start and finishing times (which appear to be slightly staggered) congestion outside the school car park and obstruction along the road is very bad. Double, even triple parking was observed, in some cases preventing residents from leaving. Tempers were very high between both parents and residents during the writer's visit.

- Little Hands Day Nursery is located in a Community Hall at the far end of Dengie Close. Many parents, collecting from Howbridge Schools, were using the parking area in front of the Community Hall. Please note, that this hall and parking area is also used by MenCap on a Wednesday afternoon, who may require access and parking for special buses.

- Parking and stopping in Howbridge Road is restricted and, where permitted, is limited to public service vehicles only. Being a bus route, the Howbridge Schools have the remaining 'lollipop crossing' person to assisting parents and children.

Holy Family R.C. (Aided) School

- Situated on Maltings Lane, this school appears to have a shortfall of designated off-street parking for staff and visitors within its boundary. There are no adjoining public car parks for staff to use. The entrance and exit are gated but open for the occasional visitor and school service deliveries. Maltings Lane has a school parking restrictions and traffic calming close to the school entrance. Parent's cars frequently obstruct traffic flow by parking too close to the restricting barrier.
Gershwin Park Day Nursery School

- This newly built day nursery has a designated car parking for staff and visitors within its boundary. Details of staff and parking have been requested and are currently awaited.

Small Talk Parent and Toddler Group (URC)

- This group currently meets in the United Reformed Church in Newland Street. The church has provision for some managed shared parking within its boundary for the staff, although most staff, parents and toddlers do not arrive by car. Details of staff and parking have been requested and are currently awaited.

Witham Nursery

- Situated in Maldon Road adjacent to the entrance to Witham Park, it does not have provision for parking for staff. It is understood that some staff are allowed to park in the adjoining car parking area of the Cricket Ground which is gated but usually open. Parents bringing and collecting children tend to be on foot, although some have been seen to park temporarily in the Cricket ground car park. Details of staff and parking have been requested and are currently awaited.

Pelican Place Day School

- About to undergo an extension into the adjoining building, Pelican Day School is situated in Collingwood Road close to the Public Hall. It has a ‘drive through’ entrance for parents bringing and collecting children. Details of staff and parking have been requested and are currently awaited. There is a nearby Public Car which could be used by staff if necessary.

Recommendations for School Parking

- The Town Council will explore the possibility of creating additional parking for Southview School on the former community orchard site in Conrad Road, as part of the Local Plan discussions.

- Request NEPP to devise a scheme for increasing enforcement availability for both schools and the industrial estates whereby the council has enlisted the assistance of those most directly affected by the problem and given designated school staff and parents the power to issue parking tickets around the local school or potentially on the industrial estate.

- Improvements to the Spa Road Car Park are being taken forward by the Open Spaces Steering Group, a partnership between Witham Town Council and Braintree District Council using CHIP funding and S106 monies.
Appendix 5
Parking on the Industrial Estates

Witham Industrial Watch Limited

Parking and Traffic Report

Presented by Witham Industrial Watch Limited, Dickens House, Guithavon Street, Witham, Essex. CM8 1BJ
www.withamindustrialwatch.co.uk
Parking and Traffic Report

1. Introduction

2. The Business Improvement District

3. Area specific problems

   3.1 Crittall Road

   3.2 Croft Way

   3.3 Perry Road

4. User specific problems

   4.1 Rail Commuter parking

   4.2 Heavy Goods Vehicles

5. Conclusion and recommendations
1. Introduction
The aim of the traffic and parking survey is to report on the problems specific to the Witham Business Improvement District. These problems can be categorised as area specific, where the road layout and its use are the cause of the problems, and user specific: commuters, employees of businesses in the BID area, employees of businesses outside of the BID area and freight vehicles. These issues can be shown to slow down or severely restrict traffic flow, damage infrastructure, reduce parking space for employees of businesses in the BID area and impact on the efficient management of the economic hub of Witham.

2. The Business Improvement District
A Business Improvement District is a five year scheme that enables improvement projects to be undertaken within a specific area. In July, 2015, the ratepayers within the BID area voted in favour of a second five year term following the successful completion of the initial five years. Witham Industrial Watch Limited represents over 300 businesses who in total employ several thousand people and contribute in excess of thirteen million pounds in business rates.

Streets included in the 2014-2019 BID area:

Atlantic Square    Bellcroft    Black Croft Road    Blackwater Lane

Briars ford    Colchester Road    Colemans Bridge    Crittall Road    Croft Way

Cromwell Centre    Eastways    Enterprise Court    Europa Park    Freebournes Road

Moss Road    Motts Lane    Perry Road    Perry Way    Rosewood Business Park Station

Road    Stepfield    Swan Vale Estate    Swanbridge Industrial Park    Taber Place

Waterside Business Park    Wheatear Estate    Wheaton Court    Wheaton Road

One of the key targets in the BID proposal is improved traffic flow and addressing parking problems.
3. Area Specific Problems

3.1 Crittall Road

Considerable damage has been done to the grass verges due to illegal parking on the verges and on the footpaths. Heavy Goods Vehicles frequently drive over the damaged areas. In addition to the environmental impact on the area traffic flow is often restricted and manœuvring difficult.

Crittall Road parking on verges and pavements.

Witham Industrial Watch has proposed improvements which are being considered by local authorities and utility companies. These proposals would improve the immediate environment for both businesses and residents of the new residential development at the corner of Crittall Road.
3.2 Croft Way

In April, 2015, four cars parked at the junction of Croft Way and Station Road blocked a lorry for four to five hours. Attempts to find the owners of two cars proved impossible, despite the involvement of Essex Police. The impact on local businesses and road users was considerable and costly.

A lorry blocked for 4-5 hours by parked vehicles.

After enforcement of existing double yellow lines by North Essex Parking Partnership.
3.3 Perry Road

Cars parked in Perry Road and at the junction with Freebournes Road frequently cause congestion and restrict the flow of traffic. During periods when the waste recycling centre is closed for maintenance local businesses, their suppliers, employees and clients are unable to access their premises. There are several issues which cause congestion in Perry Road. When the recycling centre is closed, which occurs at frequent intervals during the week, queueing vehicles waiting for the centre to re-open block the entrances to businesses, the queue reduces the road to one lane, or where there are parked vehicles less.

It has been observed that many of the cars parked in this area belong to employees of businesses outside of the BID area. This has not been verified by a detailed survey but some of the owners of damaged vehicles or cars causing an obstruction have been contacted at addresses outside the area.

This area is used by members of the public accessing the Recycling Centre, local businesses and contractors managing the site; parking by non-estate users severely restricts the movement of traffic and the availability of parking for employees and other estate users.
4. User specific problems

4.1 Rail Commuter parking

In 2012 two surveys were undertaken by Capital Traffic on behalf of Witham Industrial Watch Ltd. to assess the number of vehicles which did not belong to employees of businesses within the BID area. The times of each survey were 6:30 to 9:30 am. The surveyed locations were those known to be used by commuters due to the proximity to access to Witham Railway Station.

Table 1.

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<th>Parking Location</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Other non-estate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Atlantic Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surface Car Park (rear of Atlantic Sq.)</td>
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<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beyond surface car park (assumed as Eastways/Croft Way)</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>82</td>
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</table>

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Parking Location</th>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Other non-estate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastways</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croft Way (non highway section)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croft Way (non highway section)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Road</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of this survey show that a significant number of vehicles were parked on the industrial estates by rail commuters and other non-estate users, to avoid car parking charges or due to the shortage of parking elsewhere, thus reducing the availability of space for other users of the estates: customers, tradesmen and suppliers in addition to employees.

The survey has not been repeated but it is known that the situation has not changed since the original survey was undertaken. It is probable that the two unidentified cars parked in Croft Way, referred to in 3.2 above, belonged to either rail commuters or other non-estate users.

The 2012 survey also identified junctions and sections of roads where double yellow lines would significantly improve traffic flow and reduce the incidence of parking related congestion.
4.2 Heavy Goods Vehicles

It is imperative that heavy goods vehicles have access to commercial premises throughout the day and night but it has been observed that many vehicles are using the BID area as a lorry park. There are no facilities for lorries parked overnight and vehicles are frequently the target of crime. Proximity to the A12 makes the industrial areas accessible to vehicles looking for an overnight, and sometimes daytime, stopover. During the period September to November 2015 a survey was undertaken by Witham Industrial Watch Ltd. of the lorries parked in two locations in the BID area overnight, the location, number, and any infringements of parking restrictions were noted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of vehicles</th>
<th>Infringements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st-22nd &amp; 24th-25th September 2015</td>
<td>Eastways</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2 (parked on footpath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freebournes Road</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2 (parked on footpath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th-8th &amp; 20th October 2015</td>
<td>Eastways</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1 (parked on footpath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of nights surveyed 5</td>
<td>Freebournes Road</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10 (parked on footpath)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd-4th November 2015</td>
<td>Eastways</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of nights surveyed 3</td>
<td>Freebournes Road</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1 (parked on footpath)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Conclusion and recommendations

The key issues of parking and traffic flow have been surveyed and observed during the BID period from 2009 to 2015. Some minor improvements have been made in two locations, Croft Way and Crittall Road, by the enforcement of existing double yellow lines by North Essex Parking Partnership but serious parking and traffic flow problems persist.

Proposals for environmental improvements to Crittall Road, which would also alleviate the parking problems, have been forwarded to local authorities and are the subject of future discussions with Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, National Grid and British Telecom, but progress is extremely slow.

The free movement of all vehicles is essential for the economic wellbeing of businesses, of Witham and of the Braintree District. However, the problem of use of the BID area as a lorry park persists, causing damage to footpaths, attracting crime to the area, and creating sanitation problems due to the lack of facilities for drivers.

Proximity to the A12 and the Norwich to London railway line creates parking problems not only for the industrial areas but also for Witham town centre and residential areas.

It is recommended that:

- Existing yellow lines are enforced on a regular basis by North Essex Parking Partnership.
- Additional double yellow lines should be introduced in areas identified in the Traffic and Parking Survey undertaken in 2012. General parking restrictions to deter commuters or other non-estate users would not be an option as this would be detrimental to businesses in the BID area.
- The problem of parking on the footpaths needs to be enforced, particularly where this causes an obstruction to pedestrians.
- There are a number of locations where the footpaths, verges and kerbs are damaged and require repair work by Essex County Council.
- The proposals by Witham Industrial Watch Ltd. for improving the Crittall Road area need to be discussed and approved without further delay.
- Parking by rail commuters and other non-estate users will continue to be monitored. The Strategic Parking Review needs to consider the impact on both residential and industrial areas of Witham by rail users, and plan for better provision and lower charges to alleviate the current situation.
- Implementation of the plan for a car park on land between Pasture Road and Wheaton Road should be given urgent consideration. This would provide an additional 200 spaces for use by businesses in this area of Witham but the spaces would only be used if there were no parking charges.
RESOLVING PARKING ISSUES IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Background Papers:
Minute 13(a) Environment Committee 1st June 2015

Summary:
Members agreed at the recent Environment Committee Meeting that the whole issue of parking in Witham needs to be addressed, and a joint working group between Essex County Council, BDC and the Town Council has been proposed to discuss this.

As an interim Cllr. R. Williams has identified a stretch of land in the middle of the industrial estate which could potentially be used to park c200 cars. This land currently forms part of the disused railway and Blackwater Rail Trail between Pasture Road and Wheaton Road.

This stretch of land between these two points is already concreted, and currently has bollards installed at either end to prevent vehicular access, although there is already a dropped kerb at the Pasture Road end. Entry could be gained via Pasture Road, and vehicles could exit via Wheaton Road as indicated on the map overleaf. The Blackwater Rail Trail is currently in the ownership of Essex County Council. If cars were parked diagonally, and the vegetation cleared from both sides, there would be plenty of room for both walkers and cyclists, the parked cars and a single vehicle lane.

Potential issues
Do members want to pursue discussions about this with Essex County Council? In principle, should this be free parking or should there be a charge? Should the spaces be allocated and controlled by the Town Council (eg to ensure it is used by Witham employers) in which case it will also have to be monitored. What is the intended use – commuter or Witham employee parking?
Advice:
To receive and note and consider whether to take this forward with ECC

JC 07 07 15

Looking from Pasture Road

Barriers at Pasture Road

View from Wheaton Road End

Track to Wheaton Road
Acknowledgements

Parking issues in residential areas
An interim report by Matthew Hill, Chairman Greenfields/Barleyfields Residents’ Association, Kenneth Davies, Chairman Humber Road Estate Community Initiative and Allan Waight former Chairman Grove Resident’s Association

Parking Issues for schools
An interim report by Keith Harman

Town Centre Parking
Suggestions by Cllr C Bailey
Research by Cllr J Williams

Commuter Parking
Research by Mr A Waight, Witham Rail Users Association and Cllr J Williams

Parking on the Industrial Estates
Report prepared by Witham Industrial Watch