

# Mid Sussex Parking Strategy



2020 - 2030



DRAFT – WORK IN PROGRESS

parking  
matters



# Foreword

---

**DRAFT**

Welcome to Mid Sussex District Council's Car Parking Strategy. This sets out the Council's plans and ambitions for the Council's car parks for the next 10 years; with specific focus on the role car parks play in contributing to the sustainable, economic vitality of the District.

During the development of this Strategy, the world was faced with an unprecedented global pandemic. Response to, and recovery from, Covid-19 will no doubt have a lasting impact on every aspect of our lives. Car Parking will be no exception to this and, whilst at this stage in the pandemic it is difficult to anticipate the full extent of the impact, we have tried to anticipate as far as possible the likely ramifications in this Strategy.

The Council has a wide range of car parks across town and village centres which play an important role in our local community infrastructure, supporting our economic centres and balancing the often-conflicting needs of visitors, local workers, residents and commuters.

This Strategy sets out how the Council will utilise these resources to support our Covid-19 recovery, balance the demands of the various car park users, sustainably support town and village centre businesses and ensure operational costs are met.

How the Council manages its car parks can influence and enable transport choice. Through this strategy and the investment it proposes, the Council is committed to ensuring that its car parks improve the customer experience through the use of emerging technologies and nationwide best practise, play its role in minimising the environmental impact of its parking customers and support sustainable economic recovery and growth for our towns and villages.



**Councillor Stephen Hillier, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth**

# Introduction

Parking should be a positive experience that enables people to carry out their daily business. As the number of cars on our roads continues to increase, and with cars parked for most of the time, parking is a valuable resource that needs to be managed properly.

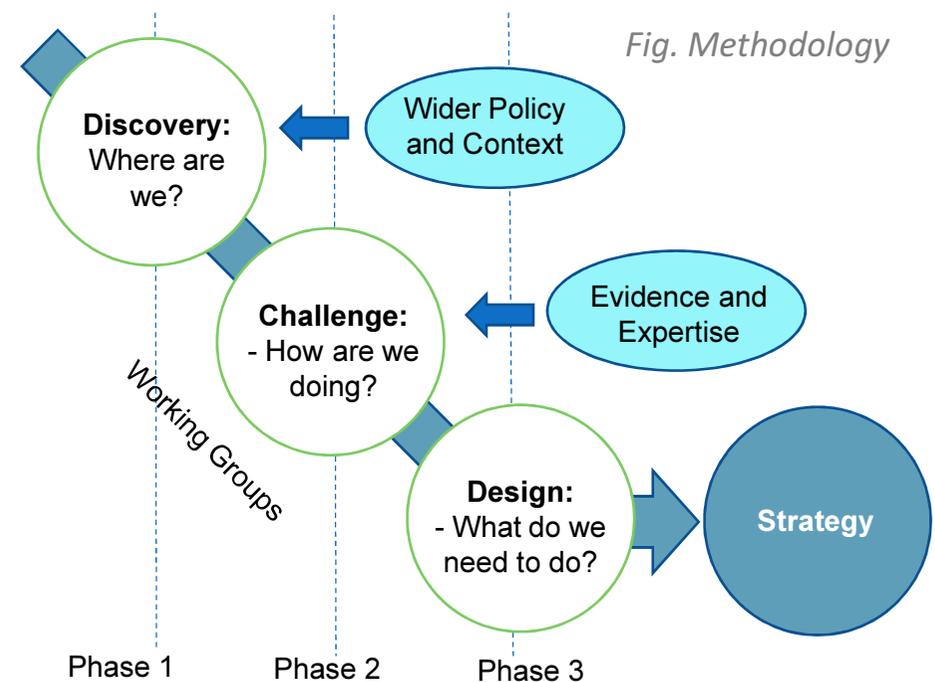
Parking also represents a valuable asset that provides the Council with a tool to shape places, influence growth, reduce nuisance parking and provide income to invest in its car parks for the benefit of all.

The Mid Sussex Parking Strategy aims to balance the needs of our residents, businesses and the wider environment, helping to provide the accessible parking people need, when and where they need it to provide a positive parking experience and support the sustainability of our local places.

## Our vision:

**“The Council's car parks will support sustainable growth and provide a positive parking experience.”**

The Strategy has been prepared with the input and assistance of Councillors through regular Working Groups, and the help of expert parking consultants, Parking Matters. It has been further reviewed and updated in response to the real and anticipated social and economic impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic and social distancing measures. It provides evidence-based actions and policies as part of a Wider Strategy.



# Covid-19 Update

---

Following the development of this Parking Strategy and Action Plan, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 significantly changed the short, medium and long term economic outlook at both a national and local level. As a result, it was considered necessary to carry out a supplementary review to ensure that the Parking Strategy and Action Plan remained relevant.

Additional work was commissioned to consider the economic, societal and practical variables that are likely to be influenced by the pandemic and how they might impact the delivery of the Parking Strategy. Applying learning from consumer behaviour in previous recessions and building on emerging worldwide trends enables some early conclusions to be drawn; however, the exact long-term impacts of the pandemic are still very uncertain.

The commissioned work is appended to this strategy, and concludes that despite the inevitable short-term impacts, the themes and objectives within the strategy are robust in a post Covid-19 environment but some of the delivery timelines may need to change.

The Parking Strategy and Action Plan have been updated to reflect this.

# Parking in Context

---

The role of towns is changing and retail can no longer be relied on to form the basis of a centre's vitality. The Association of Town and City Management, and national and international evidence suggests that while tariffs do influence behaviour, it is the ease of finding a space and space availability that is the more significant factor in influencing where people choose to shop, work or establish businesses.

*"...the general availability of spaces is felt to be more important than cost in their overall decision about visiting. Traffic flow and parking signage have as much, if not greater, effect on their decision to visit the town centre, how long they spend there, and how much money they spend." – Association of Town & City Management*

People want to be able to find a space, when they need it, where they want it, and at a reasonable price that relates to their destination. Customers expect to pay for parking in a town centre because these places offer a variety of shopping, cultural and leisure experiences and they generally know that demand needs to be managed and car parks need to be maintained. In general, it is what a place offers that dictates the tariff, not the tariff which dictates the success of a place.

Customers increasingly expect to use technologies which help them to find where to park with easy payment systems. These technologies have benefits to operators as well; less cash collection, more efficient enforcement and better information on which to make investment and policy decisions.

---

British Parking Association National survey findings, what do people want when choosing where to park?:

1. Location
  2. Personal Safety
  3. Tariffs
  4. Ease of Access
  5. No / little queuing
  6. Number of spaces
  7. Effective surveillance
  8. Size of spaces
-

# Policy Context

**DRAFT**

The District Plan sets out the vision for how Mid Sussex will meet the Governments housing requirement to deliver 16,390 homes and 25ha of additional employment space by 2031. This growth is spread across the District – mainly in the three towns Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath, and in the larger villages Cuckfield, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and Lindfield.

The District Plan includes policies to support town and village centres, recognising the different roles they play in providing retail, leisure and cultural facilities aiming to create sustainable communities. This includes a sustainable local transport network, ease of access to local services and facilities and the requirement to provide adequate car parking in economic centres.

Several Neighbourhood Plans have specific policies on parking; for example, East Grinstead seeks to provide parking on the edge of the town centre and encourages people to walk in order to reduce congestion and traffic within the town centre itself.

The Parking Strategy supports the Economic Development Strategy which has a vision to make Mid Sussex a vibrant and attractive place for businesses and people to grow and succeed.

This aim is even more relevant in a post-Covid world.



# Parking in Mid Sussex

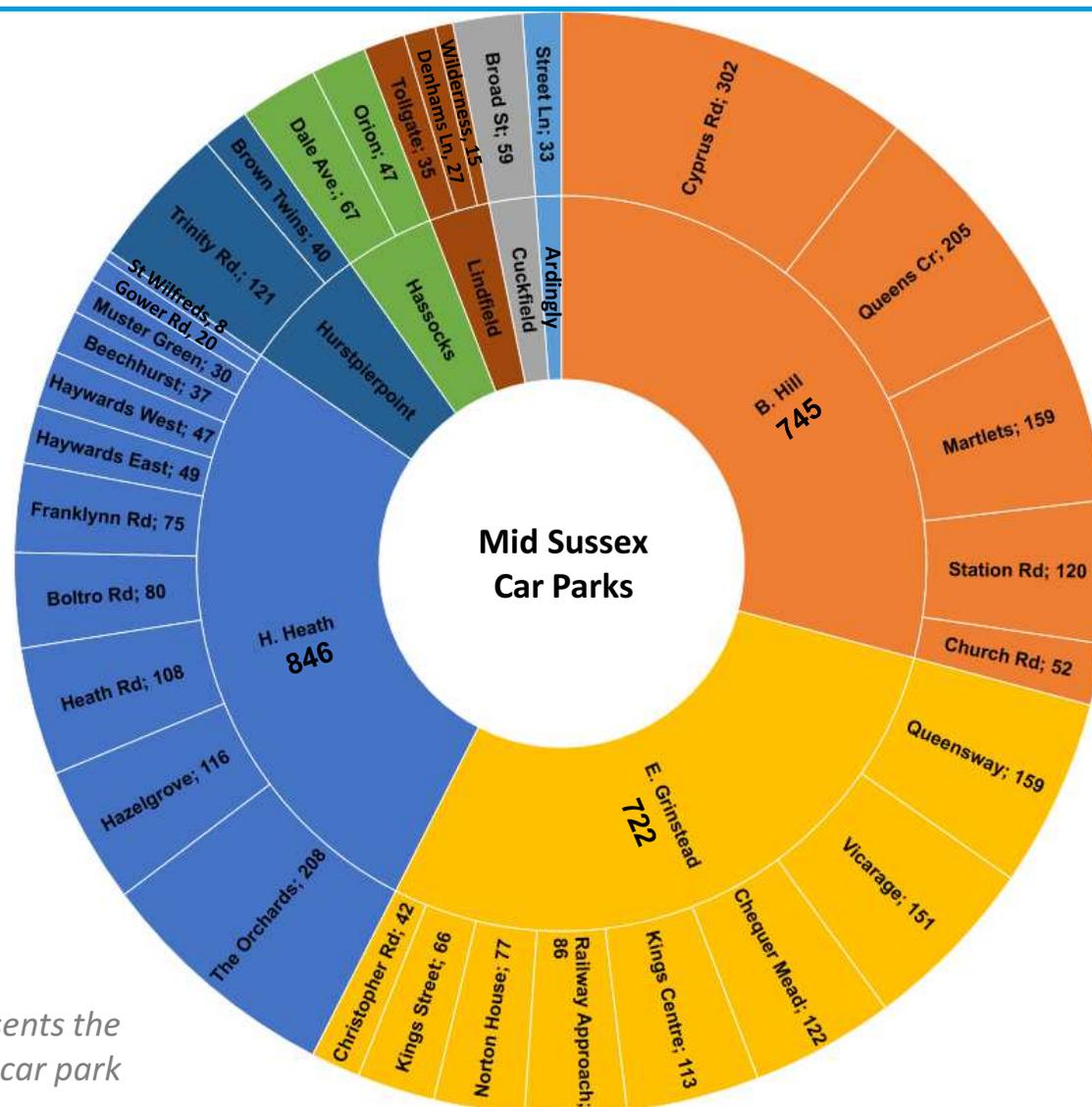
The Council provides around 2,900 spaces in 34 public car parks across towns and villages in the District. 22 are pay and display car parks in the towns and a further 12 have time limits but no charges in the larger villages. The strategy does not consider on-street parking or parking in leisure facility and open space car parks.

17 car parks have achieved the industry standard 'Park Mark' award for safer parking. This is awarded to car parks which meet high standards of management, appropriate lighting, effective surveillance and provide a clean safe environment.

Alongside the off-street car parks, on-street parking is managed by West Sussex County Council. There are a total of approximately 2,300 restricted on-street spaces in Mid Sussex which includes the Controlled Parking Zone in East Grinstead.

In addition to Council car parks there are several private operators in the District eg. Station car parks

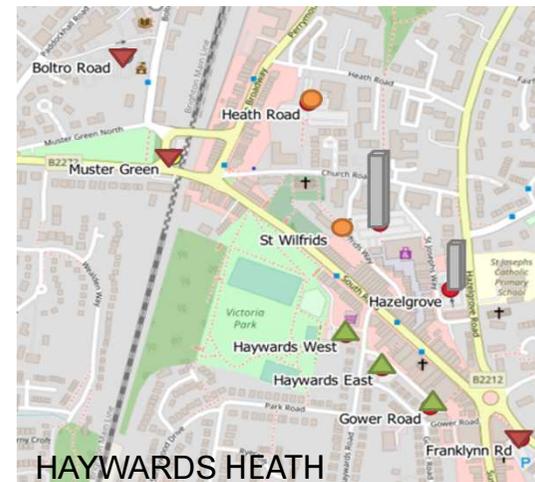
*Each segment of the wheel represents the number of car parking spaces in each car park*



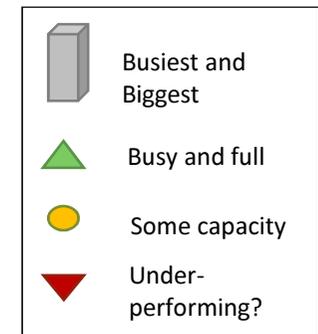
# Car Parks: Main Towns

There are 22 car parks in the three towns that charge for parking. Prior to Covid, the majority were found to be at 80% capacity for at least some of the day. Forecasting future demand based on likely growth tells us they will only get busier, and a different approach will be needed to support regeneration and growth.

Town	Survey & transaction data	Opportunities
Burgess Hill	There is capacity in most of the car parks, but levels of demand vary. Looking forward, growth and regeneration in Burgess Hill is likely to increase demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate feasibility to increase provision to meet future demand</li> <li>Rationalise car parks and utilise opportunities for future investment</li> <li>Consider differential tariff and management regimes to manage future demand</li> </ul>
Haywards Heath	There is limited capacity in the larger car parks and the smaller car parks are full for much of the day. Looking forward, this problem is likely to get worse as the town grows.	
East Grinstead	With few exceptions, car parks in East Grinstead are over 80% full for much of the time and more spaces may be needed to support the towns vitality.	



*Fig. Relative Performance of Car Parks*



# Car Parks: Larger Villages

There are twelve car parks in larger villages that are currently free or enforced through a parking disc. Forecasting future growth suggests there are likely to be future pressures in these locations and a different approach on a case by case basis may need to be considered to support local vitality. This remains the case post-Covid.

Settlement	Survey data	Opportunities
Ardingly	Street Lane is a busy car park with turnover during the day, there is some evidence of overnight parking by residents.	Car park is currently supporting the local economy. No immediate intervention required, will be kept under review.
Cuckfield	Broad Street is very busy and over 80% full for much of the day. There is demand for long and short parking which is impacting space availability.	Consider how to balance long and short stay demand to support space availability for the local economy.
Hassocks	Orion is very busy and close to 80% full at peak times, but with a high turnover. Dale Avenue initial findings suggest a low turnover.	With proposed growth in Hassocks and a mainline railway station, consider how to balance long and short stay demand to support space availability for the local economy.
Hurstpierpoint	Trinity Rd is busy with a mix of long and short stay and close to 80% full at peak times. Brown Twins is full for most of the day with long term parking.	Consider how to balance long and short stay demand to support space availability for the local economy.
Lindfield	Denmans Lane and Tollgate are busy and 100% full for some of the day. This will be impacting the attraction of the village as a destination.	Demand for parking is high and car parks are small. Consider how to balance long and short stay demand to support space availability for the local economy.

## Technology

Mid Sussex have already invested in new technologies for cashless payment options, joined-up back office systems and online PCN and season ticket portals which compares favourably to other similar districts.

The challenge is how to prepare for the future as customer expectations rise and as connected vehicles make more of the decisions and transactions related to parking. Pay-on-exit systems can increase dwell times, allow for much better management information and allow better information such as real time occupancy data. However these systems tend to be more economical in larger car parks so there are implications for the estate.

As car parks are developed and improved, investment will be made in modern technologies that will provide a better customer experience.



*Fig. Customer expectations and the role of connected vehicles will change over time*

	The town's 'visibility' to potential visitors	Importance of data
Now	Parking is being integrated into in-car systems but people still generally 'turn up' hoping to find a space	Visitors may have information about tariffs in advance, but visit hoping to find a space without real time information
5 – 10 years	In-car systems (and phones) make more of the decisions about not just which car-park is visited but also which destination based on user preferences.	Failure to provide accurate real-time information and automatic payment systems could result in less footfall
10 – 20 years	A vehicle drives you to most convenient location for your choice of activity	Data availability is a deciding factor in where and when to visit

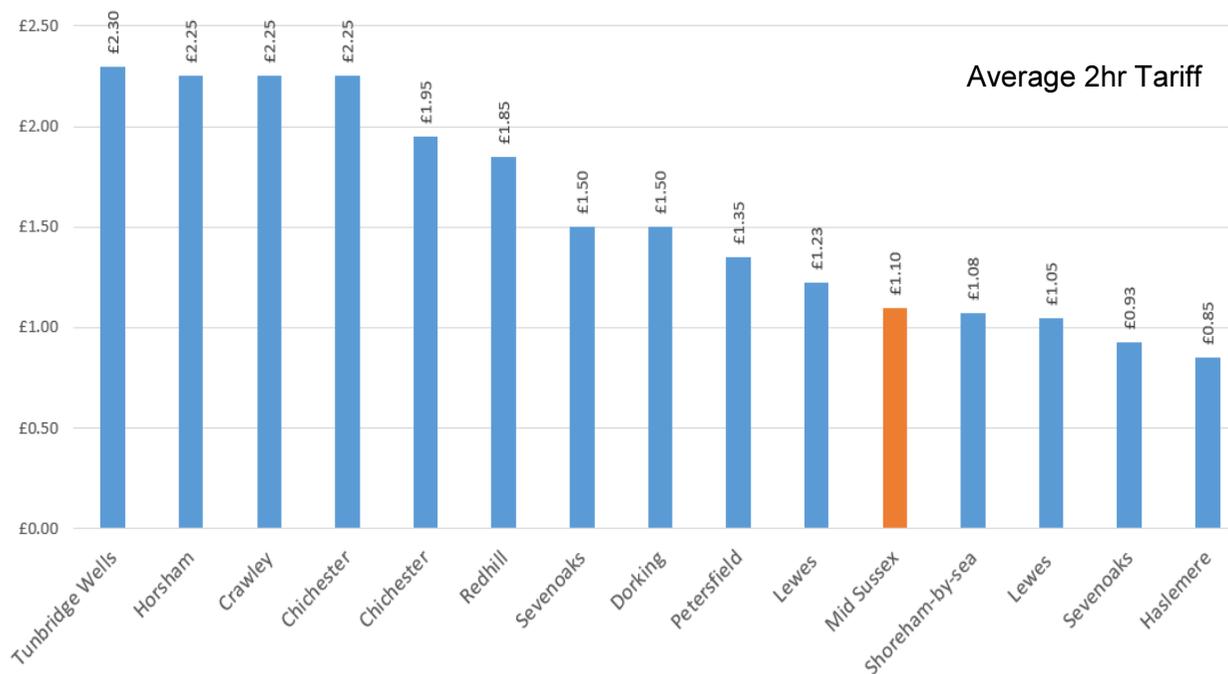
# Tariffs & Charging Regimes

Tariffs are a tool to manage car parks, influence behaviour and provide the financial support for investment and improvement.

Pay and Display tariffs in Mid Sussex towns are split between long and short stay, and season tickets offer a significant discount. The charging regime is the same across all car parks and all towns. Tariffs have not been reviewed since 2012. There are no charges within the larger village car parks.

Neighbouring Councils do not employ a ‘one-size-fits-all’ tariff structure across all their car parks or in different towns, they tailor charges to reflect the vitality of local places. In general, Mid Sussex tariffs are lower than many comparable areas.

Fig How do Mid Sussex tariffs compare to others?



*A comparison between charges in various car parks, including where differential tariffs are applied in the same town.*

# The Strategy

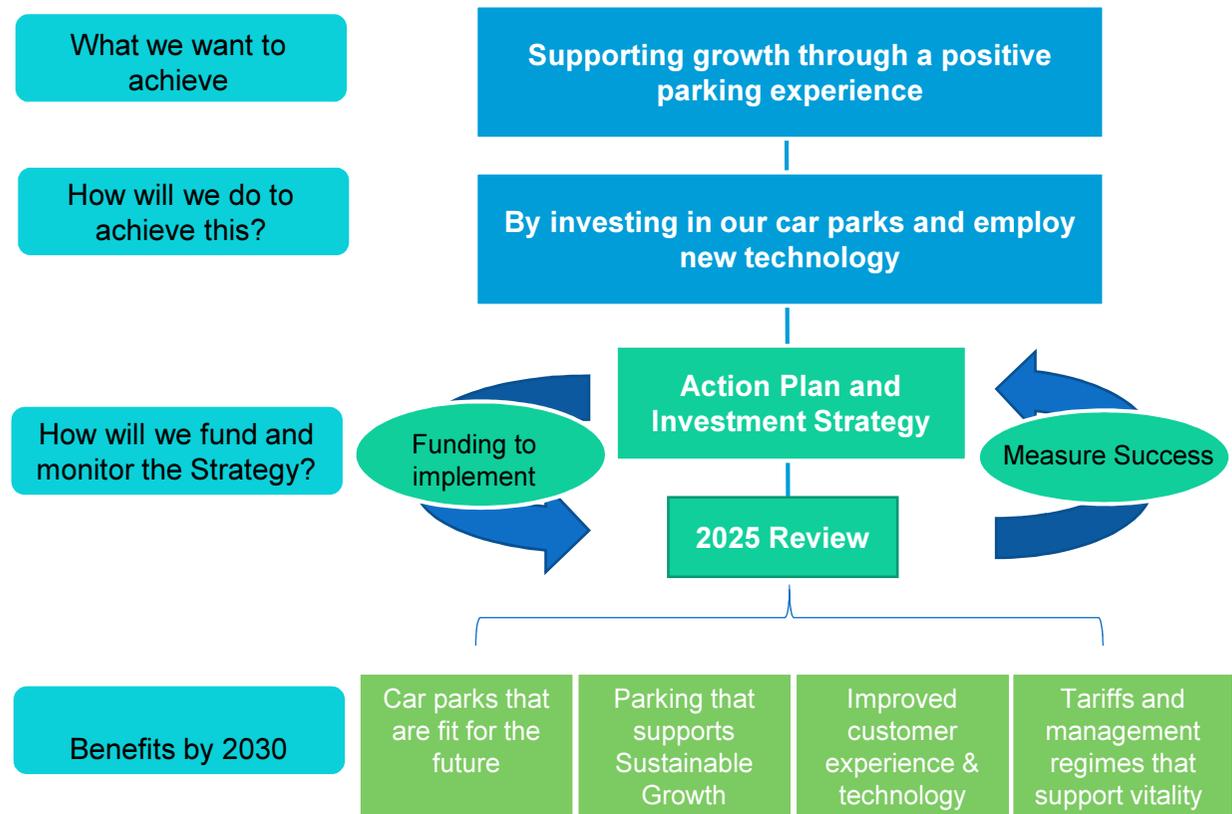
*The vision for the strategy is that the Council's car parks will support sustainable growth and provide a positive parking experience.*

To do this the Council needs a Strategy which sets out how it will achieve this which is realistic, evidence based and fundable.

**Through this Strategy, the following benefits will be delivered:**

- Investment in car parks through a planned Investment Strategy to ensure they are fit for the future
- Employment of enhanced technology and information to improve the customer experience
- Introduction of differential and appropriate management regimes between car parks and settlements to support vitality and economic growth.

The Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed at the end of five years, and progress monitored through the Annual Parking Report.



# Action Plan

2020 - 2025

parking  
matters



# Investing in Car Parks

Investing in car parks to improve them is the Council’s priority to ensure it can respond to future growth in the District. The Council needs to make sure parking supports sustainable growth and that it is well managed.

Many smaller car parks are full at peak times, this will be generating traffic as customers drive between them searching for spaces. Investments in technology, such as guidance and real time occupancy systems are harder to justify in smaller car parks.

The overall strategy in the towns will be to consolidate car parks to fewer, larger car parks with up-to-date technologies which provide better information, reduce wasted journeys and serve town centre needs.

Continuing with this action post Covid-19, will place the Council in a strong position to respond to the 'new normal' and support the medium – long term recovery in local economic centres.

Action	When will we do this?	Measures of Success
Commission an Investment Strategy setting out medium term strategic objectives for each of the Council’s car parks in terms of retention, disposal, expansion development / re-purposing to meet the economic needs of each settlement.	2020	Adoption of Investment Strategy to set out some strategic principles providing a framework to support future ambitions for the Council’s car parks
Assess the feasibility and business case of specific actions identified in the Investment Strategy	2021	
Deliver the priority actions arising from the Investment Strategy and feasibility work.	2021 - 2025	
Renew the Asset Management Plan which sets out business as usual maintenance and investment programme.	2021 - 2025	Adoption of an Asset Management Plan that secures investment into the car parks

# Sustainable Growth

**DRAFT**

The District faces challenges and opportunities through the growth outlined in the District Plan and parking will contribute to supporting sustainable growth in towns and villages. The Council is already committed to delivering change through initiatives such as the Economic Development Strategy, Burgess Hill Growth Programme, Haywards Heath Town Centre Masterplan and the Sustainability Strategy.

The Government has indicated that post Covid –19 , recovery will accelerate sustainable transport initiatives, so the Council will work in partnership with West Sussex County Council, local businesses and other key partners to identify how technology and different types of mobility could reduce congestion to improve air quality and local townscapes.

By investing in car parks there will be opportunities to introduce better information systems to guide customers straight to available spaces and support new transport initiatives such as modal shift, mobility hubs and alternative fuels.

Action	When will we do this?	Measures of Success
Work with WSCC to ensure parking policy supports sustainable transport initiatives, encouraging visitors / workers to seek car alternatives to support modal shift in each settlement.	2020 - 2025	Evidence of reduction in congestion in settlements.  Increased take up of electric charging points
Explore the opportunity to support inward investment by developing a season ticket policy that supports travel planning and changing business needs to encourage economic growth.	2021- 2022	Adoption of policy that supports preferential allocation of season tickets to local businesses with a travel plan
Work with WSCC to actively promote and monitor employer travel plans to encourage modal shift and reduce congestion	2022 - 2024	Evidence that travel plans are monitored and are making a difference to modal shift

# Supporting Vitality

Tariffs and stay restrictions are a tool to manage car parks more effectively, influence behaviour and provide the financial support for investment and improvement.

Tariffs and stay restrictions in Mid Sussex have not been revised since 2012, but costs and inflation have risen. The current 'one-size-fits-all' approach to pay-and-display and season ticket pricing do not reflect the variation between individual towns and larger villages or manage churn and demand.

To ensure the car parks continue to support local economies, the Council will commit to an annual review of tariff structures and stay restrictions to reflect local vitality by managing car parks more efficiently whilst also exploring sustainable alternatives.

During the Covid-19 recovery it will still be necessary to review tariffs and restrictions to ensure they continue to support local centres, and whilst the ultimate implementation plan may now be different there will still be an impetus to respond to the 'new normal'.

Action	When will we do this?	Measures of Success
Undertake an annual review of tariffs to reflect local circumstances	Annual	Evidence that a differential management regime supports local vitality and encourages turnover
Commission feasibility work to explore opportunities for differential tariff regimes in town centres to support local vitality	2020 - 2021	
Implement a differential tariff and stay restriction regime between and within town centres to support the local vitality.	2021 - 2022	
Commission feasibility work to explore opportunities for alternative management regimes in the larger village car parks.	2020 -2021	
Implement new management regimes that support local vitality in the larger villages on a case by case basis.	2021 - 2022	

# Customer Experience

The Council has already made a significant investment in cashless payments and online services and will continue to invest and modernise car parking to ensure the service is accessible to all users.

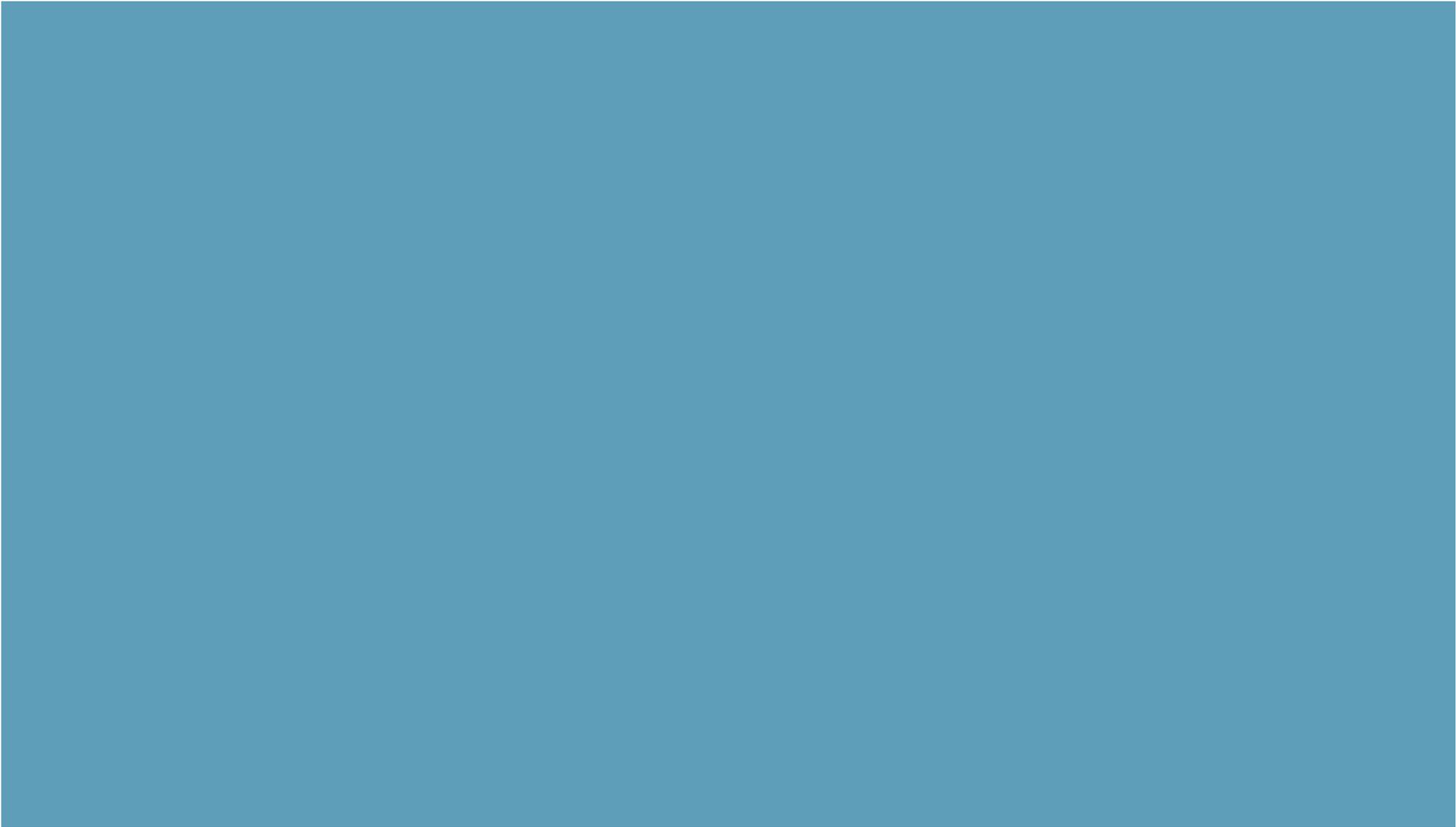
To support local vitality the Council will need to share information, such as location, capacity and pricing to digital platform providers. As the car parks develop, the Council will invest in new technologies to enable better information sharing with platforms such as in-car systems and third-party apps which will improve the customer experience of finding spaces.

As the car parks change through the Asset Management and Investment Strategy, newer technologies will be implemented to improve the customer experience to make finding spaces and parking more convenient.

The Council will continue to collect performance data to inform the management of its car parks going forward.

Post Covid-19 an acceleration of digital technology solutions is likely to respond to changing consumer behaviours. Any further technology investments will be identified in the Investment Strategy.

Action	When	Measures of Success
As the Council invests and develops its car parks, it will utilise digital innovation to improve service delivery e.g. Variable Message Signage, app technology and alternative payment methods	2022 - 2025	Improvement in the visibility and usability of car parks by customers
Continue to develop digital platforms to provide more convenient self-service systems e.g. virtual season tickets	2020 - 2021	Evidence of channel shift for delivering parking services
Respond to the WSCC Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) Review and the outcomes of the MSDC Parking Strategy to manage the impact on the enforcement and management of the off-street estate	2021 - 2022	Evidencing the appropriate level of resource to effectively deliver the parking service



parking  
matters

