

BRIEFING PAPER
CITY CENTRE CAR PARKING UPDATE - OCTOBER 2025**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This report provides the Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel with an update on City Centre Car Parking, along with key developments since the last report in November 2024. This includes:
 - 1.1.1. An assessment of growth impacts on the transport network and parking demand/supply.
 - 1.1.2. An update on electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and future plans.
 - 1.1.3. An update on the current challenges facing the city centre car parks.
- 1.2. This report focuses on the Council's Off Street parking provision within the area of the City Centre, which includes Mutley Plain, Millbay and Bretonside.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The City Council operates 19 public car parks within the city centre, offering a total of 3077 parking spaces (see appendix 1). There are 9 short stay car parks (397 parking spaces, 13%) and 10 long stay car parks (2680 parking spaces, 87%).
- 2.2. Most of the city centre car parking is provided by 5 multi-storey car parks, which account for 2365 parking spaces (or 77%) of all the Council's off-street parking spaces.

3. CAR PARK UTILISATION AND DEMAND**Financial Summary**

- 3.1. The parking Service is budgeted to generate a net income of £5.382M in 2025/26, which is critical for supporting the delivery of key services, including the provision of Highways service.

Public Transport Partnership and Collaboration




- 3.2. The council's parking service maintains a long-standing collaborative partnership with public transport providers. We work with bus operators to enforce bus-lane compliance, supporting punctual and reliable services. We are also working with bus operators on opportunities to enhance the use of city-centre car parks hosting shuttle services for concerts, football matches, and other events, working to ensure seamless connections between parking and public transport.

Current Utilisation and Demand

- 3.3. Current assessment indicates that car park utilisation remains consistent with the November 24 update. Figure 1.1 below outlines the parking demand status in the

city centre car parks, indicating which car parks frequently experience parking demand greater than availability, occasionally exceed demand, or have availability greater than demand.

Figure 1.1 – Car Park Utilisation Summary

Utilisation		Car Parks
Demand regularly exceeds availability		Exchange Street, Guildhall and North Hill
Demand can exceed availability		Derry's Cross, Cornwall Street East, Cornwall Street West, and Mayflower House Court, Mutley Barracks
Demand lower than availability		Colin Campbell Court, Courtney Street, Marks and Spencer, Mayflower East, Mayflower West, Napier Terrace, Plymouth City Market, Regent Street, St Andrews Street, Theatre Royal and Western Approach

Future Utilisation and Demand

- 3.4. In August 2024 the Council commissioned WSP to undertake an assessment of city centre parking demand and utilisation over the next 10 years, which factored in modelling data derived from the Plymouth Highway Assignment Model (HAM3) to project future growth in journeys and demand for City Centre parking alongside any known changes in parking supply over this period. The outcome of this study was not received in time to summarise within the November Scrutiny meeting.
- 3.5. The study determined that long stay parking is expected to have sufficient supply during weekdays; however, many areas are expected to experience increased demand and reduced capacity by 2034, resulting in short stay parking being over capacity on Saturday afternoons.
- 3.6. The 2024 demand and utilisation study did not include details around housing growth demands as this was not known at the time; however, it is important to review the opportunities for parking to support such growth; however, we need to understand what demand we may expect. Therefore, Plymouth city council is working with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to commission a development framework to set out how, where and when 10,000 new homes could be delivered in and around the city centre. The commission includes a more detailed delivery masterplan for the city centre core area and supporting work on infrastructure and delivery. Once appointed, the consultant team will work closely with the Councils retained transport consultants (WSP) to consider the impacts of growth on the transport network and parking demand/supply, and to prepare an integrated transport and parking strategy for the area. All of the work will be subject to extensive public and stakeholder engagement.

4. EV CHARGING

- 4.1. A total of 38 EV chargers is installed at city centre car parks, as summarised in Figure 1.2 below:

Figure 1.2 EV Chargers City Centre Car Parks

Car Park	Chargers	Charger Capacity (kW)
Western Approach	8	7
	6	22
	4	100
Theatre Royal	2	7
	2	100
Regents Street	4	7
Derry's Cross	2	100
St Andrews Street	2	100
Mayflower Street West	6	100
Mayflower Street	2	200
Total	38	

- 4.2. There are currently no plans to install further EV chargers within the city centre car parks; however, this will be reviewed as part of the work around the city centre masterplan and integrated transport and parking strategy.

EV Vehicle Loading

- 4.3. There has been much focus on the increased weight of EV cars and of the potential implications for this on car parks that were build long before the introduction of EV cars. Plymouth is no exception to this where the Councils multistorey car parks were constructed between 1966 to 1980.
- 4.4. The council's car parks undergo regular structural and condition surveys. The November 2024 scrutiny report detailed how previous inspections guided a £2 million investment to secure continued operation of the car parks for the next 15–20 years, subject to ongoing routine maintenance. Since those earlier surveys did not specifically address the increased loading from electric vehicles (EVs), the council commissioned additional assessments of all five multistorey car parks (Western Approach, Theatre Royal, Regent Street, Mayflower Street East, and Napier Street) to evaluate EV-specific loading impacts.
- 4.5. Those assessments confirm that all five multistorey car parks are currently safe for EV use. They also indicate that structural strengthening may be required over the next five to ten years. These future requirements will be built into the scope of work for the next structural and condition surveys, due to be commissioned in 2026. The upcoming surveys will identify any further works needed and their associated costs.

5. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Anti-Social Behaviour and Criminal Damage

5.1. The November 2024 report updated the council on anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in city-centre car parks. Since then, we have achieved significant reductions in such incidents, including a 50 % drop in reported cases at Theatre Royal car park and an overall decline in criminal damage. This progress reinforces our commitment to delivering a positive parking experience. We are confident of maintaining this trend through the following measures:

- Completed a major upgrade to the CCTV system in Western Approach car park.
- Continued enhanced cleansing across all car parks to ensure clean, safe facilities and a positive customer experience.
- Cabinet has approved Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), empowering authorised officers to remove non-users from car parks and prohibit alcohol consumption.

5.2. While we have made significant progress, we occasionally face challenges from a small minority of individuals. Our swift response means that such incidents now occur far less often than they did in November 2024.

Accessibility

5.3. Over 400 wider parking spaces have been introduced across several car parks (Mayflower East, Regent Street, Theatre Royal, Western Approach, Napier Street, and Colin Campbell Court). These wider bays make parking easier for motorists, acknowledging that many of today's vehicles are longer and wider than in the past. Figure 1.3 shows the locations of these bays.

Figure 1.3 – Extra Wide Parking Bays

Car Park	Extra Wide Bays
Wester Approach	127
Regent Street	63
Theatre Royal	84
Mayflower East	82
Napier Terrace	75
Total	431

5.4. A recent initiative aimed at providing further support for individuals living with disabilities has involved the introduction of six additional disabled parking spaces on level two of the Theatre Royal car park, as well as the creation of the first 'hidden disabilities' spaces on level four. These hidden disability spaces are intended for people with non-visible disabilities who do not require a standard Blue Badge-only parking space. There is no requirement to display a Blue Badge in these bays, which are marked with the nationally recognised sunflower logo.

6. SUMMARY

- 6.1. The parking service generates net income to the Council, income that is critical to support the delivery of key services.
- 6.2. The Council has successfully installed 38 EV chargers in city centre car parks. Further reviews will assess additional infrastructure needs as part of the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy.
- 6.3. The Council has successfully responded to challenges related to anti-social behaviour through improved security measures, such as the implementation of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and the upgrade of CCTV systems, contributing to a safer parking environment.
- 6.4. Over 400 wider parking bays have been introduced across several car parks to improve accessibility and accommodate the increasing size of modern vehicles.
- 6.5. Additional support for individuals with disabilities has been provided through the introduction of six new disabled parking spaces and the city's first 'hidden disabilities' bays at the Theatre Royal car park.
- 6.6. Looking ahead, the Council is collaborating with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to develop a comprehensive integrated transport and parking strategy, which includes planning for the delivery of 10,000 new homes within the city centre.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1. The Housing and Community Services Scrutiny Panel:
 - 7.1.1. Endorses the work with Homes England and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) leading to the development of an integrated transport and parking strategy, supporting work around how, where and when 10,000 new homes could be delivered in and around the city centre.
 - 7.1.2. Is assured that assessments undertaken confirm the current use of EV vehicles within the multistorey car parks to be safe.
 - 7.1.3. A future update can be provided in respect to plans over the next 5 to 10 years, informed and integrated with the work to develop an integrated transport and parking strategy.

Appendix I – City Centre Car Parking

Car Park	Surface / Multi- Storey	Parking Provision	Long Stay / Short Stay
Bretonside B	Surface	5	Short stay
Bretonside C	Surface	16	Short stay
Colin Campbell Court*	Surface	155	Short stay
Cornwall Street East	Surface	52	Short stay
Cornwall Street West	Surface	13	Short stay
Courtney Street	Surface	30	Short stay
Derry's Cross	Surface	71	Long stay
Exchange Street	Surface	18	Short stay
Guildhall	Surface	42	Long stay
Marks and Spencer	Surface	19	Short stay
Mayflower East	Multi-storey	292	Long stay
Mayflower House Court	Surface	75	Long stay
Mayflower West	Surface	81	Long stay
Napier Terrace	Multi-storey	299	Long stay
Mutley Barracks	Surface	24	Short Stay
North Hill	Surface	35	Long stay
Plymouth City Market	Surface	65	Short stay
Regent Street	Multi-storey	268	Long stay
St Andrews Street	Surface	11	Long stay
Theatre Royal	Multi-storey	505	Long stay
Western Approach	Multi-storey	1001	Long stay
Total		3077	