

2020

HIGHWAY & TRANSPORTATION CONSULTANTS



APRIL 2021

LICHFIELD CITY CENTRE CAR PARK STRATEGY STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2020 CONSULTANCY

FOR LICHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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1.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is fundamental for the study to garner a level of stakeholder and public engagement that would allow for opinions and possible concerns to be offered. It is from this engagement that data can be sourced and analysed to allow for a higher standard of subject understanding. It is important to offer the platform for engagement to produce further understanding and possible mitigating actions that would have a higher adoption probability with thorough stakeholder involvement at this stage. It was highlighted by the high levels of engagement during the process and online survey that the subject of car parking in Lichfield city centre was an important issue. Lichfield city centre has many trip generators and attraction destinations that require parking facilities and this process allows for the parking provision to be looked at both for the short term and long term.

1.2 REQUIREMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT

The aim of the public engagement is to give the public and stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on the car parking provision within Lichfield, both the existing provision and the potential changes and improvements. The results of the engagement will be used as part of identifying the possible changes needed to ensure that the parking provision is adequate. The car parks were individually identified and scored against a range of different criteria to evaluate the current provision. This Data and the data obtained from the engagement will inform the overall recommendations.

Note on Covid-19

In March 2020, the UK Government issued guidelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the general public were instructed to remain two meters away from anyone outside of their own household and unnecessary travel was not permitted. Public buildings were also closed, and large events banned. Whilst restrictions have been eased in the recent weeks, the planning

and delivery of stakeholder engagement and public engagement will continue to be impacted for some time as public gatherings are not permitted.

The COVID-19 pandemic has ensured that the shops and hospitality sectors have had to close. In this period, the vast majority of shops and restaurants have had to close which has meant that the car park occupancy has severely decreased. It is important when engaging with the public on this subject to gauge how their travel and public habits could change to get an idea of how provision needs to be improved going forward.

To ensure that Government guidelines are adhered to, 2020 Consultancy considered the alternative arrangements for engagement including the undertaking of virtual engagement and public engagement. This allowed stakeholders the opportunity to provide their comments and feedback on the scheme, whilst accommodating the needs of the hard to reach groups, without impacting upon the project programme and maintaining social distancing. The virtual process undertaken as part of this project was carried out in line with UK Government guidelines and advice provided by the UK Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and the Consultation Institute (Tci)

1.3 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

Public Engagement for the Lichfield Car Parking Study began on Monday 22nd February 2021 and lasted four weeks, ending on Monday 22nd of March 2021.

As with the majority of public engagement exercises, it was agreed to include both targeted consultation and informative consultation. During the early stage of the project 2020 Consultancy worked with Lichfield District Council officers to identify stakeholders that would be directly contacted. These stakeholders include:

- Local councillors;
- Staffordshire County Council officers;
- Lichfield City Council;
- Public transport operators;
- Historic England;
- Business and attraction contacts;
- Civic Society.

These stakeholders were contacted approximately 10 days prior to the process commencing to introduce the project and provide key milestones within the engagement. This included the opportunity to attend a virtual stakeholder workshop, which involved a presentation from 2020 into the project, including findings to date, future changes that could happen, and how it could relate to the district's wider plan. It also provided details on the online questionnaire.

The online questionnaire sought the stakeholder views on general parking questions such as generally how often do you travel into the city centre, their habits when deciding on what car parks to use and also if they assume their habits will change once the lockdown has ended. Respondents had the opportunity to outline why they preferred certain car parks over others and what they would perceive to be the best improvements that could be made to the existing provision.

It provided the respondent to register their reasons for trips into city and if they used car parks or on street car parking. It also gave them the opportunity to document if they had or have experienced any problems with car parking within the city. Within the questionnaire there was a large section on parking charges and asked for the respondent's views on parking charges and how they would prefer to be charged in the future. In the questionnaire, there were also questions around priority spaces and EV charging. Importantly at the end of the questionnaire there was a question which asked for any comments that the respondent had which allowed for the chance to express anything that the thirty questions previously hadn't touched upon.

1.4 STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES

Responses received from stakeholders were logged and analysed. This included returned questionnaires, emails, and letters. Responses were sent for all correspondence where an email address or full address was provided.

1.5 VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

1.5.1 ATTENDANCE AT THE EXHIBITIONS

The virtual workshops were well received and offered a safe and cohesive opportunity for the stakeholder to express their views. The attendance was adequate with 25 attendees over the two dates.

1.5.2 WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

The feedback that was supplied after the workshops both directly prior to the end of the meeting or from emails sent post workshop was positive. The feedback given highlighted that the opportunity to discuss personal views on parking within Lichfield was invaluable.

1.6 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

As part of the engagement exercise, a questionnaire was included, which focused on identifying the current car parking trends and levels of car parking satisfaction, purpose for travel into the city, improvements needed for payment options, on street parking habits and the importance of certain car park facility. This section reviews the 1071 completed questionnaires that were received during the engagement period.

Location

The questionnaire started with a request for the respondent to provide their post code. The information allowed the responses to be identified with a proximity to the city centre. Figure 10 provides a heat map of completed responses across the city and the surrounding areas. This demonstrates that the majority of responses came from the outskirts of the city which would align with the responders needing to travel via car into the city centre.

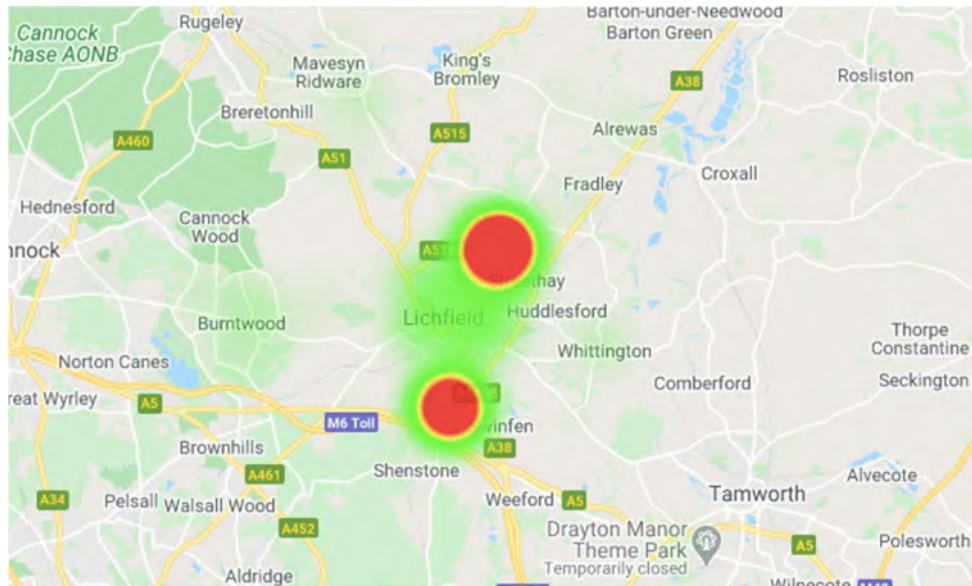


Figure 10 – Heatmap of completed questionnaire responses across the district.

The questionnaire contained a further 30 questions of both open and closed format and the data processed to access the responses and is summarised on the following pages. The following is a selection of questions from the questionnaire that give an indication of the key responses that were provided.

Question 2 asked Are you responding as?

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1070 answers.

Figure 11 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

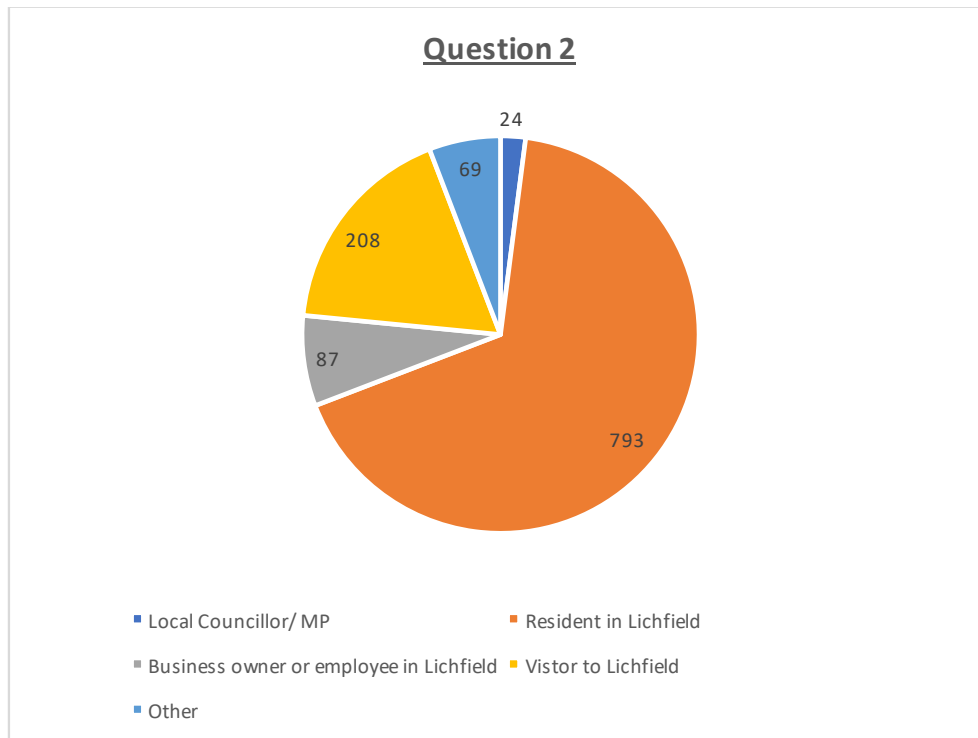


Figure 11

The purpose of this this question was to identify the breakdown of who was completing the questionnaire, which would allow data to be interpreted on who was responding. As shown above the vast majority of the respondents were residents from Lichfield 793 number in total. This shows that car parking in Lichfield is a subject with lots of public investment.

This question shows that there is a broad range of engagement from residents but also business owners local councillors and visitors to Lichfield.

Question 3 asked do you think the COVID-19 pandemic will change the way you travel into Lichfield city centre and how often you visit the city centre.

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1067 responses.

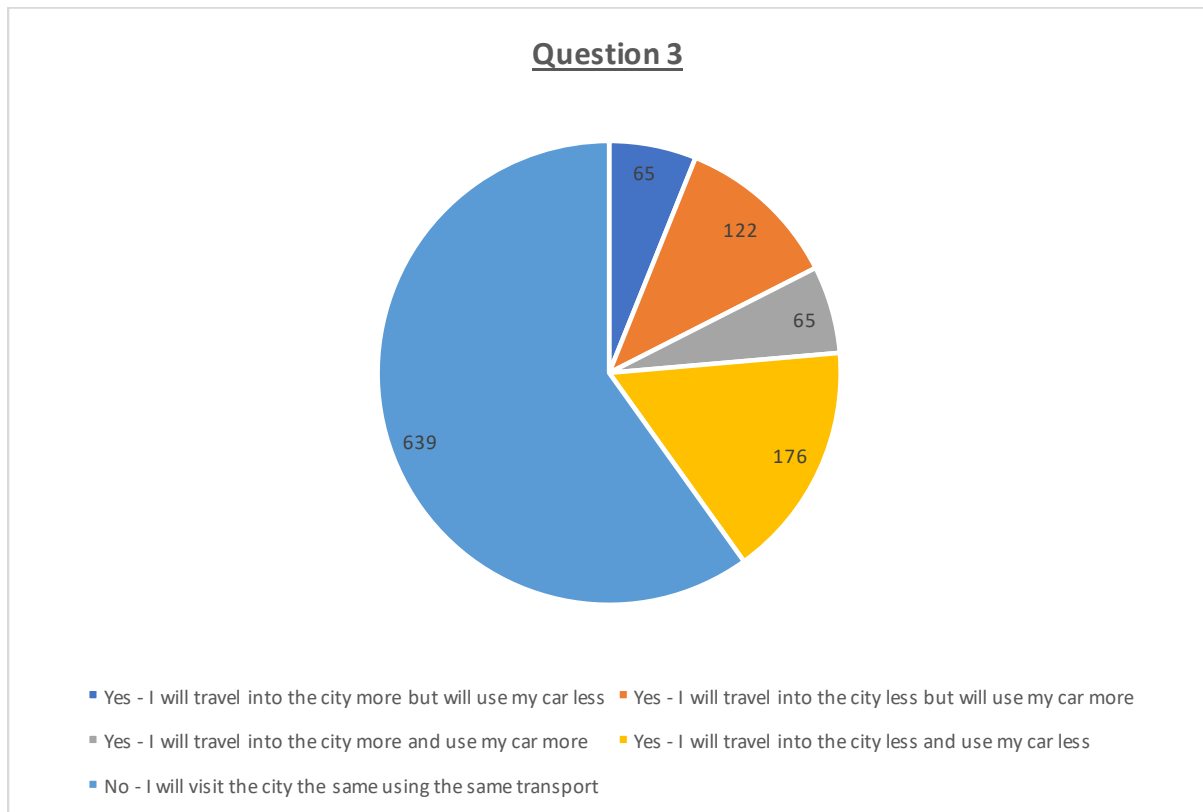


Figure 12

The purpose of this question was to try and identify the future habits of respondents after the COVID-19 pandemic. This was to give an idea as to how provision would need to change to incorporate what could be new shopping habits and social distancing measures. The results show that over half of the respondents confirmed that the pandemic will not change any of their habits.

They will continue to visit the city centre at the same frequency and also, they will use the same transport. The next largest selection was for the opposite which was to travel into the city less and use vehicle transport less. Although the pandemic will inform peoples choices on this question, existing public shift onto active travel and general well-being was apparent before the pandemic started. The use of other car parks could increase after the lockdown has eased as car parks that are located further away from the required destination could be perceived by the user to be safer than ones that are densely occupied and therefore create some challenges to social distancing.

Question 5 asks what are the main reasons for you visiting the city centre

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1067 responses.

Figure 13 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on the specific trip generators.

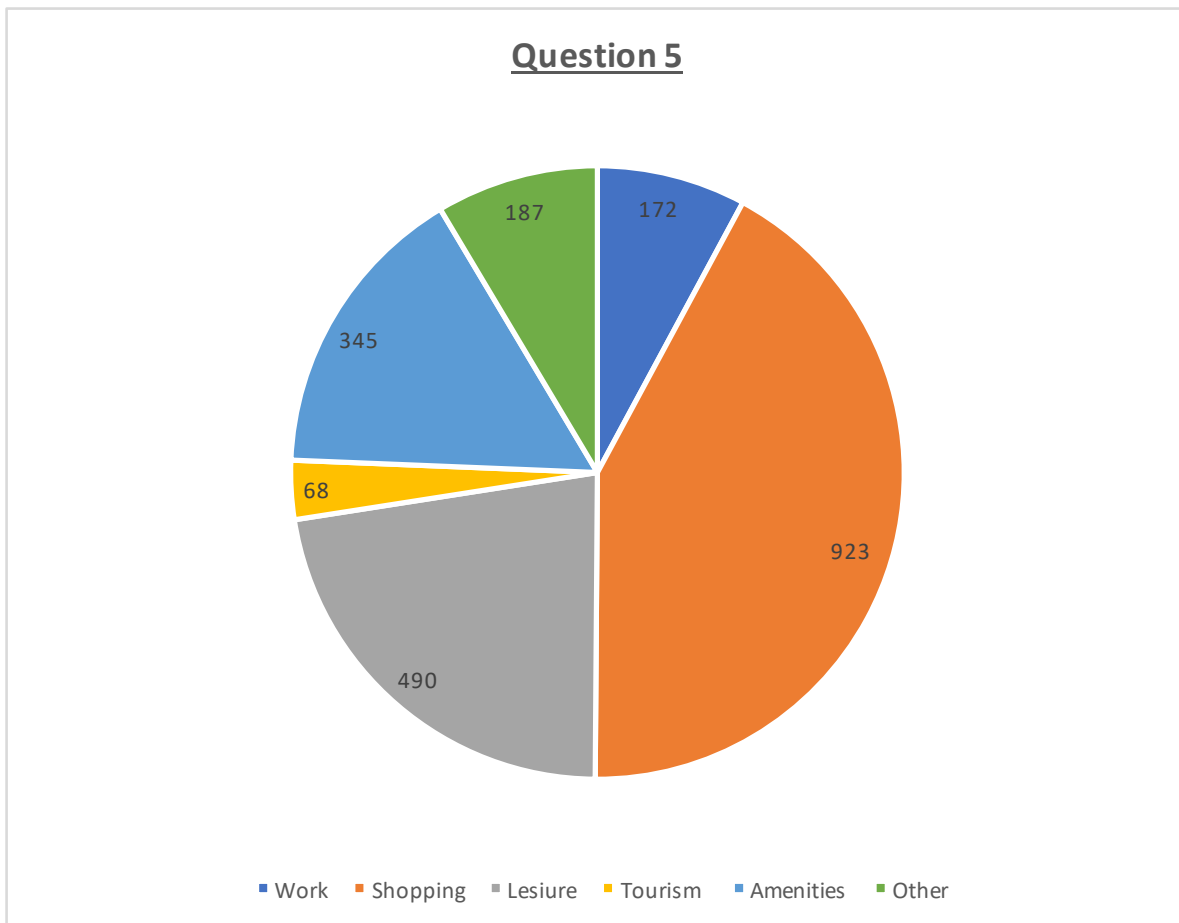


Figure 13

Figure 13 above shows the breakdown of respondents based on the following six options:

- Work
- Shopping
- Leisure
- Tourism
- Amenities
- Other

The purpose of this question was to identify what the key trip generators the respondents used. This would give an indicator as to why the majority of the respondents visited the city centre. This question allowed for multi selection which meant that the responder could select as many for which were appropriate. The question showed that shopping received the largest selection of 923. This shows that the trips into the city centre were for predominantly shopping or leisure purposes.

Question 6 asks what are the reasons why you drive into the city centre

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. The question received 1059 responses.

Figure 14 details the reasons for why the respondents drive into the city centre.

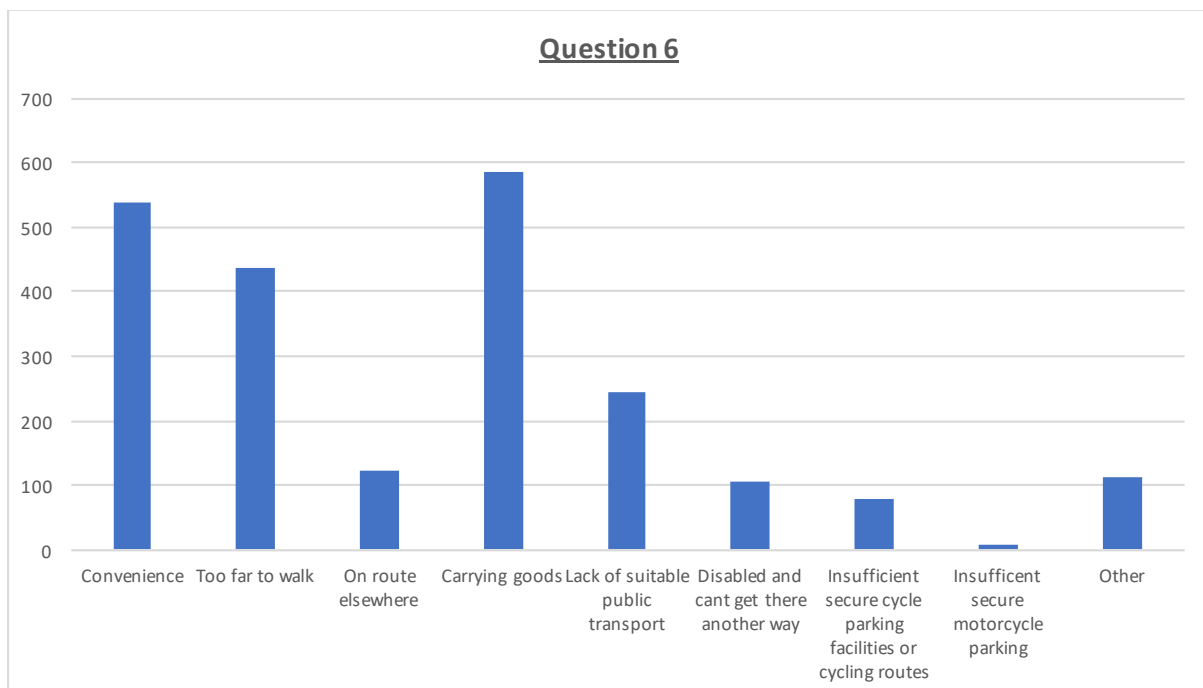


Figure 14

Figure 14 shows the breakdown of respondents based on the following nine responses:

- Convenience
- Too far to walk
- On route elsewhere

- Carrying goods
- Lack of suitable public transport
- Disabled and can't get there another way
- Insufficient secure cycle parking facilities or cycling routes
- Insufficient secure motorcycle parking
- Other

The purpose of this question was to identify the reasons as to why respondents used vehicular travel to enter into the city centre. The spread for reasons looks to be that there are three leading answers that were selected the most. Carrying goods, Convenience and too far to walk are the three that gained the most selections, this shows that the respondents require facilities to be well placed and within a certain proximity. The remaining selections received a good amount of selections and offer a broader view of certain reasons for travel which touch on public transport and priority provision.

Question 7 asks when you drive where do you normally park

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1047 responses.

Figure 15 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on where the respondents normally park.

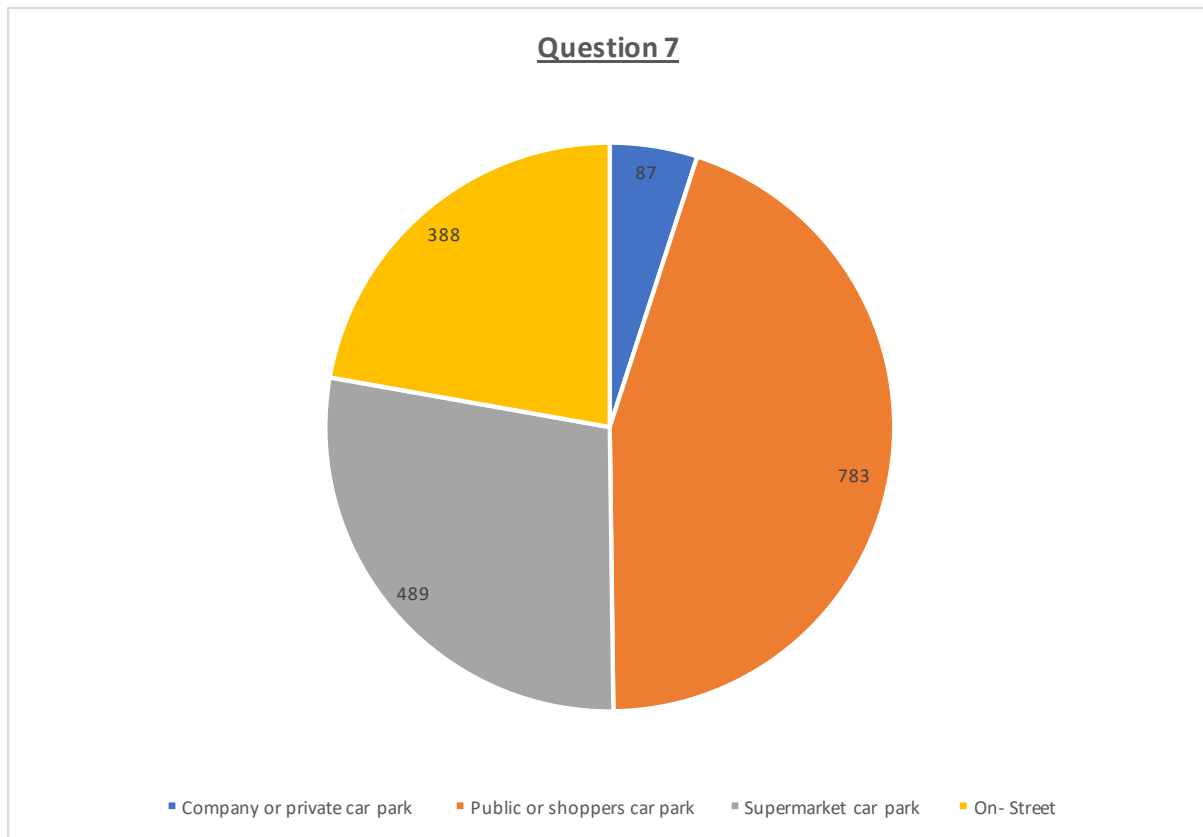


Figure 15

The purpose of this question is to identify where the respondents were parking when they entered into the city. The data shows that nearly half of the respondents use public or shoppers car park totalling 783 responses. In addition, the next most selected response was the super market car park at 489 responses. This shows that there are a vast majority of the respondents using the supermarket car park to park on their trips to the city centre.

Question 9 asks if you chose public or shoppers car park which one did you use

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 910 responses.

Figure 16 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on where the respondents normally park if they park in a public or shoppers car park.

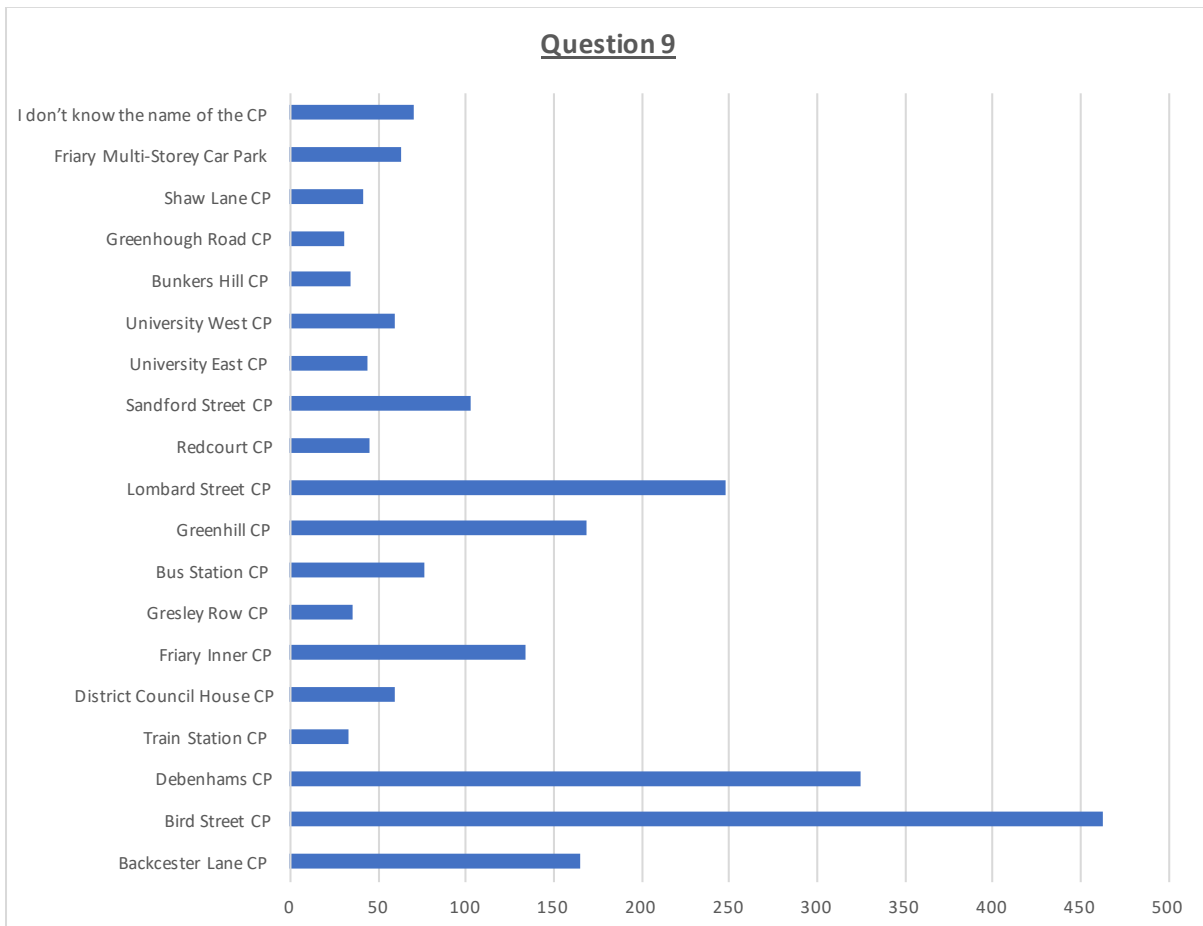


Figure 16

The purpose of the question is to detail where the respondents parked if they parked in a public or shoppers car park. The results show that there is a clear preferred favourite car park for a large percentage of the respondents to park, this being Bird Street car park. This shows that this car park meets most of the needs required by a large majority of respondents.

Question 11 asks If yes, which car park does this relate to

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 526 responses.

This question leads on from question 10 which asked if the respondents had experienced any problems at any car parks. Just over half of respondents 50.44% or 512 responses said yes, this then leads onto question 11 which asks what car park the problem relates to.

Figure 17 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on what car park the problem arose from.

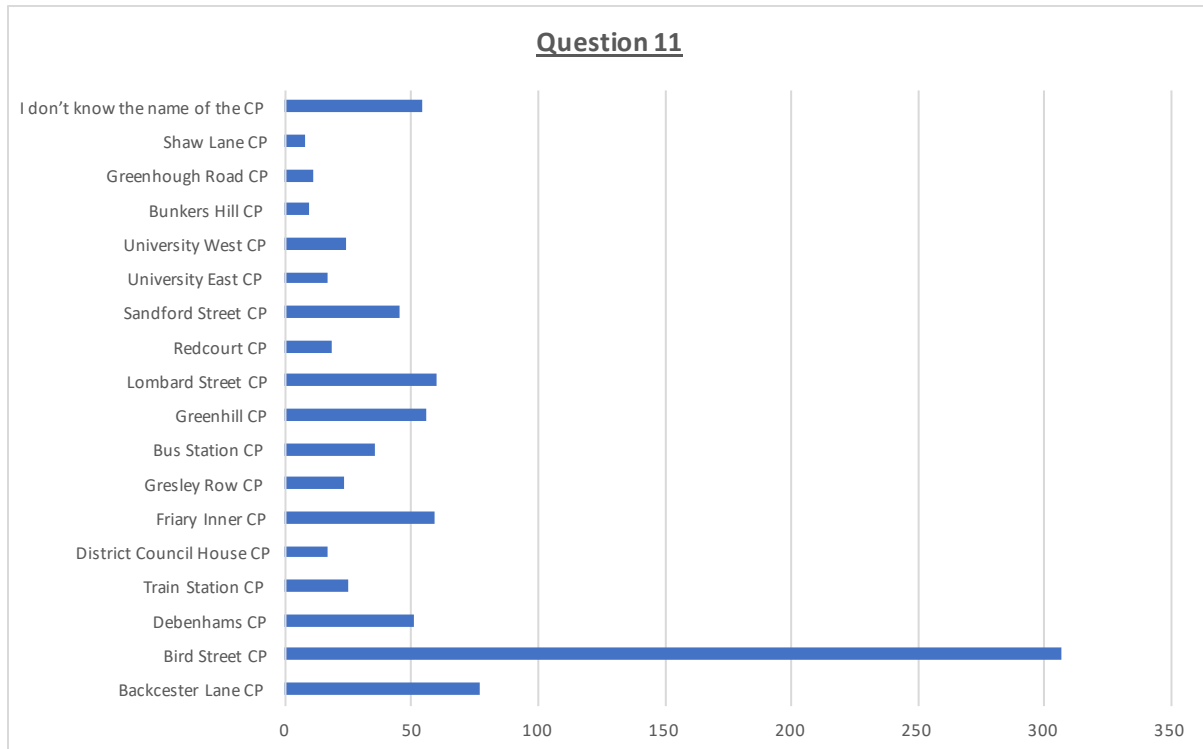


Figure 17

The purpose of this question is to highlight the car parks that suffer the most issues or problems. As previously stated 512 responses detailed that they had experienced problems at a car park in Lichfield of these the overall majority of issues were experienced at the Bird Street car park. This correlates with the fact that Bird street is the most popular car park.

Question 12 asks please select the issues that are related to your visit

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 639 responses.

Figure 18 below shows the breakdown of respondents based on the specific issues that was experienced by the user.

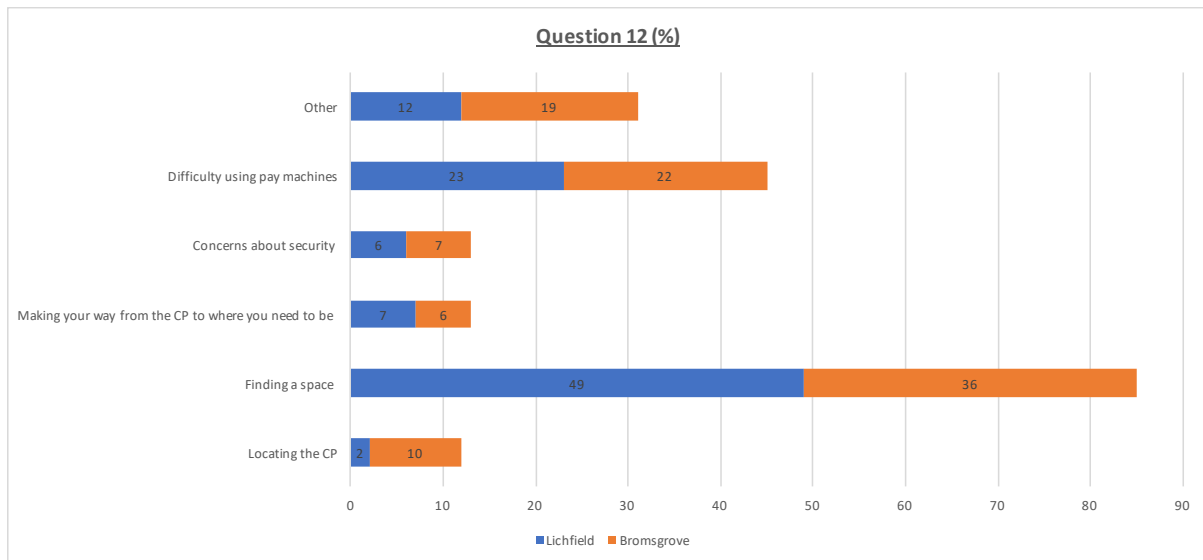


Figure 18

Figure 18 shows a breakdown of responses to the following issues:

- Difficulty using pay machines
- Concerns about security
- Making your way from the car park to where you need to be
- Finding a space
- Locating the car park
- Other

The purpose of this question is to identify the specific problems that are experienced when using the car parking provision within Lichfield. As above, the problem experienced most frequently by people entering Lichfield is a problem finding space. Nearly half or 49% of problems experienced is a problem finding a space. This issue is generally one that is experienced elsewhere also, by means of a benchmarking exercise a similar question asked of the residents of Bromsgrove is present to gauge a true reflection on the problems experienced. It highlights that although finding a space in Bromsgrove is a major issue it seems to be an issue experienced by a further 13% of people in Lichfield.

Question 13 asks how often do you experience problems

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 640 responses.

Figure 19 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

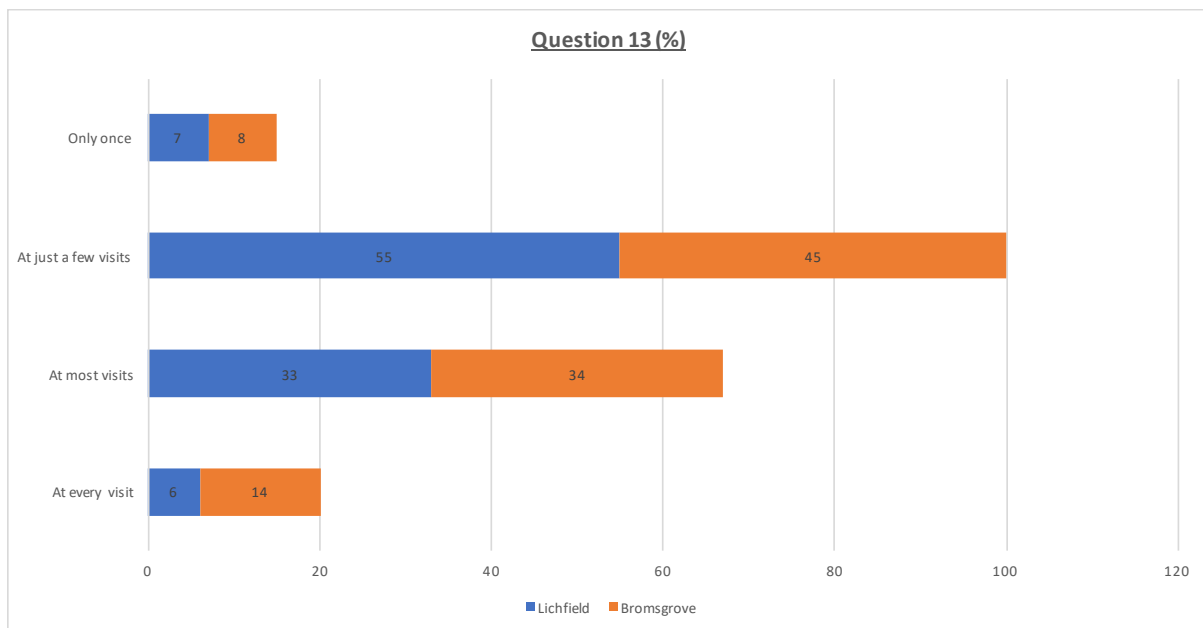


Figure 19

Figure 19 shows a breakdown of responses to the following selections:

- At just a few visits
- At most visits
- At every visit
- Only Once

The purpose of this question is to evaluate how often the problem is experienced by the respondent. As above shows, the problem that is experienced by the individual occurs most often on just a few visits with over half of the respondents claiming that they experience the problem at just a few visits (55%). A good proportion of people 33% experience their problem at most visits. This data along with the data supplied for the option only once equates to a majority of 94% of respondents experience problems on multiple visits, which suggests the issues are reoccurring.

Question 14 asks do you consider there to be enough overall parking in the city centre.

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 823 responses.

Figure 20 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

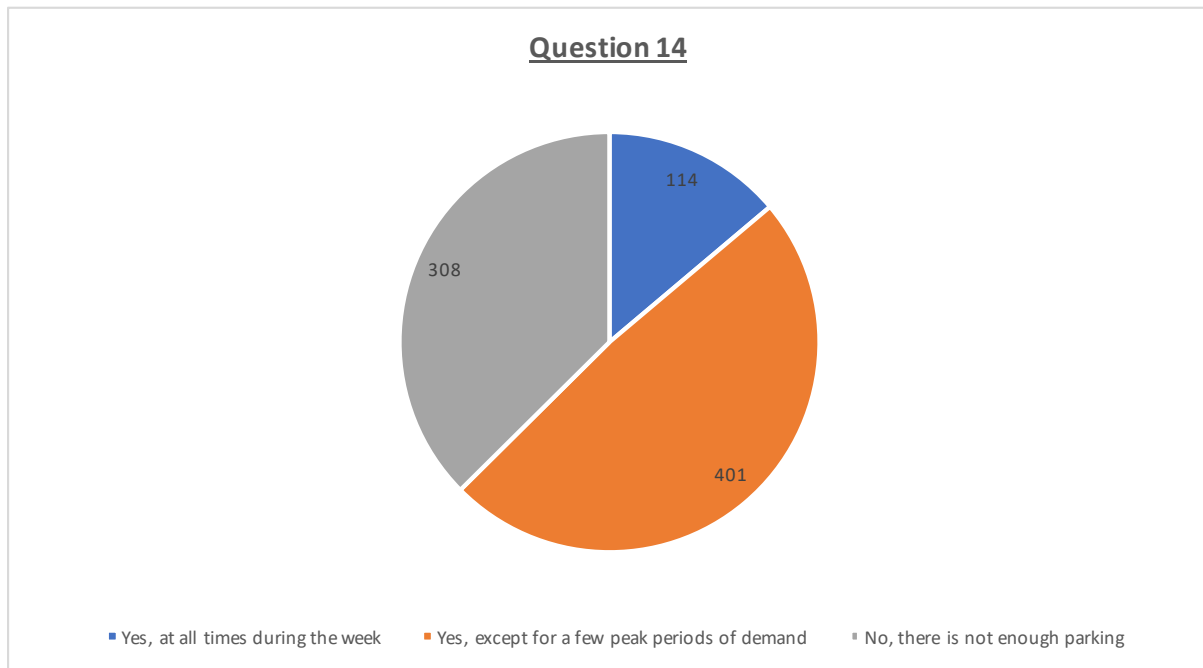


Figure 20

This question allows for the breakdown of data in relation to the overall satisfaction with space provision within the car parks in Lichfield. There were 401 responses to the selection yes except for a few peak periods. This shows that the perception of parking is very good in regard to the amount of spaces, yet it can get difficult at peak periods to find a space.

Question 16 asks what do you like most about the parking facilities you have in Lichfield

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1007 responses.

Figure 21 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

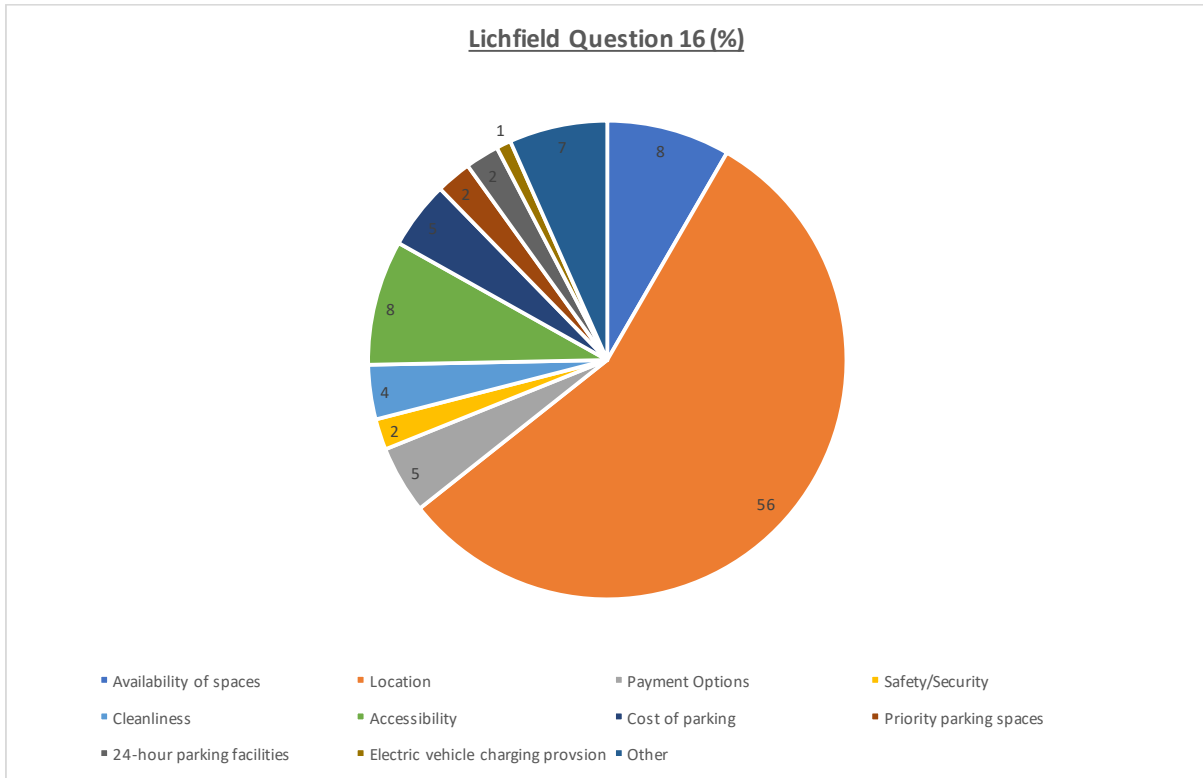


Figure 21

This question allows for data to be drawn from the choices selected. Over half of responses (56%) perceive the location of the car parks in Lichfield to be the best attribute attributed to car parks. This shows that the general thought process when deciding on car parks in Lichfield are there location.

Question 17 asks what would you most like to see improved within Lichfield city centre car parks.

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1030 responses.

Figure 22 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

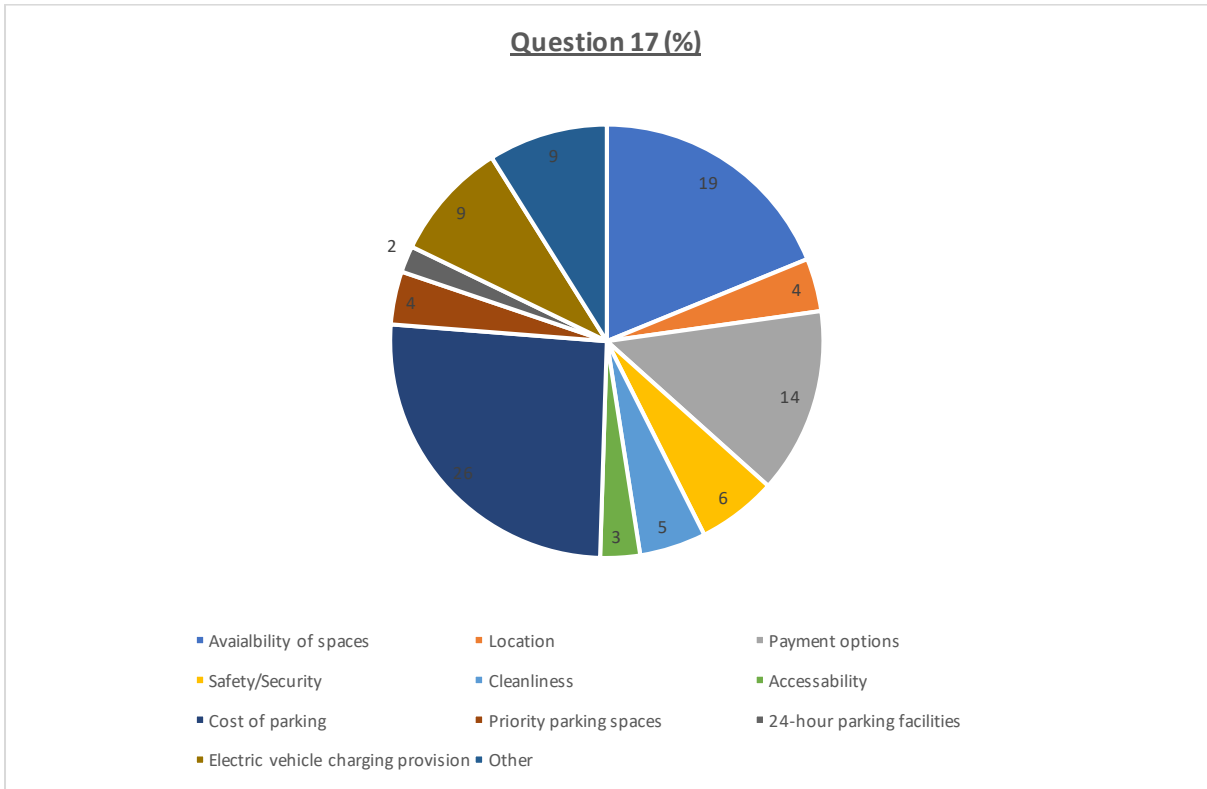


Figure 22

This question shows a general spread of responses as to what respondents would like to see improved within the car parks in Lichfield. The most selected at 26% of total responses was the cost of parking. The next largest selected response was for the availability of spaces to be improved at 19% of the total responses.

Question 18 asks how would you rate the following elements of the off street car parks in the city centre

This single selection question per choice enabled a simple tabulation of responses. Figure 23 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

Answer Choices	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Below Standard	Awful	Response Total
Cleanliness	6.86% 70	40.49% 413	43.73% 446	6.96% 71	1.96% 20	1,020
Condition	5.11% 51	40.04% 400	47.85% 478	6.31% 63	0.70% 7	999
Clarity of parking signs	4.27% 43	34.62% 349	49.50% 499	9.92% 100	1.69% 17	1,008
Clarity of parking charges	4.08% 41	30.45% 306	50.15% 504	12.04% 121	3.28% 33	1,005
Convenience	12.62% 127	46.02% 463	35.69% 359	4.08% 41	1.59% 16	1,006
Number of spaces	4.17% 42	28.37% 286	41.67% 420	21.33% 215	4.46% 45	1,008
Number of disabled spaces	9.53% 85	20.52% 183	50.45% 450	13.00% 116	6.50% 58	892
Number of parent & child parking spaces	7.08% 62	14.38% 126	54.11% 474	18.84% 165	5.59% 49	876
Lighting	3.04% 30	29.18% 288	54.41% 537	11.55% 114	1.82% 18	987
Security & Safety	2.66% 26	27.43% 268	55.07% 538	12.69% 124	2.15% 21	977
Toilet Facilities within the car parks	2.13% 21	10.06% 99	30.89% 304	39.23% 386	17.68% 174	984

Figure 23

Figure 23 shows a breakdown of eleven different answer perimeters. Each separate answer required a rating by the responder. There were six different words that could give you a suitable rating for that answer. Overall the largest percentages for each answer was adequate.

Question 21 asks how do you feel about the amount charged for short stay parking

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1041 responses

Figure 24 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

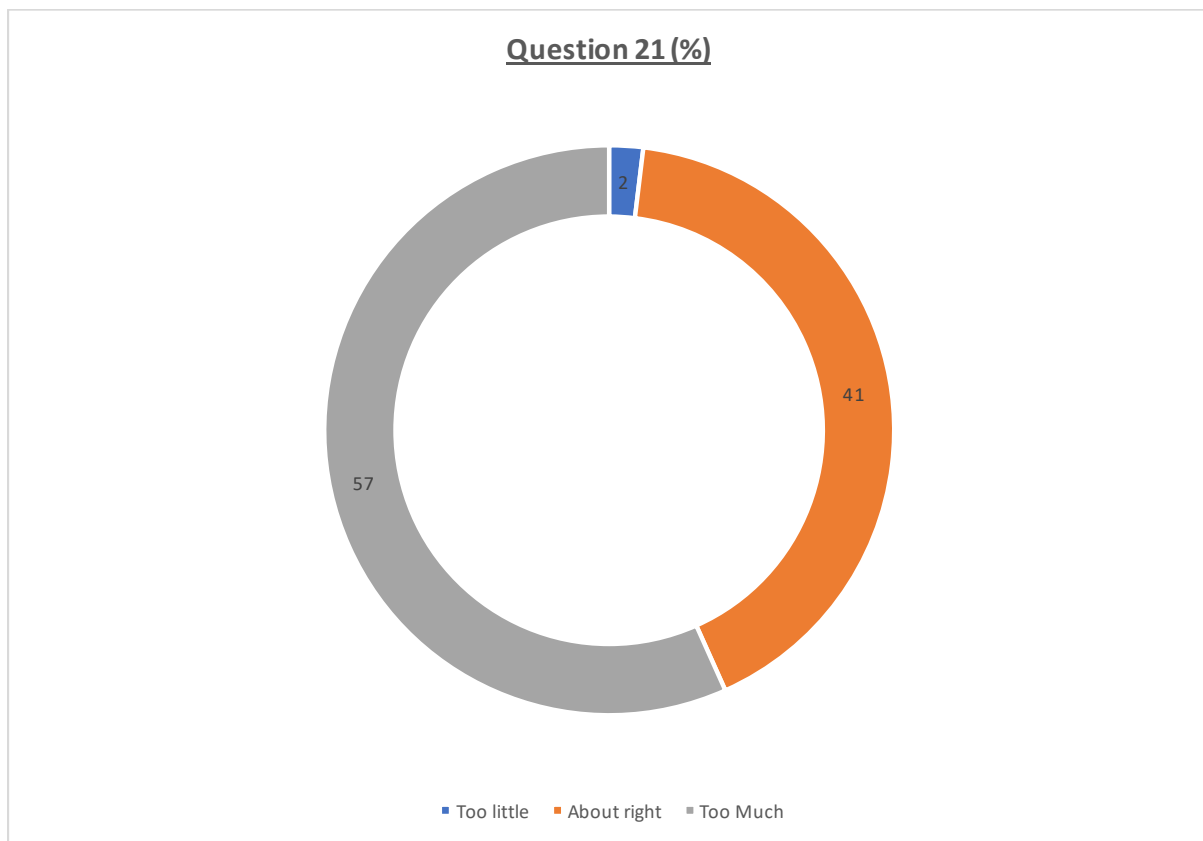


Figure 24

This question is useful to be able to obtain information against the existing pricing structure for short stay parking. The largest percentage of responses was attributed to the answer too much at 57% and the next largest being about right at 41%. There was a small amount of people (2%) that selected the answer too little.

Question 22 asks how do you feel about the amount charged for long stay parking

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1035 responses.

Figure 25 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

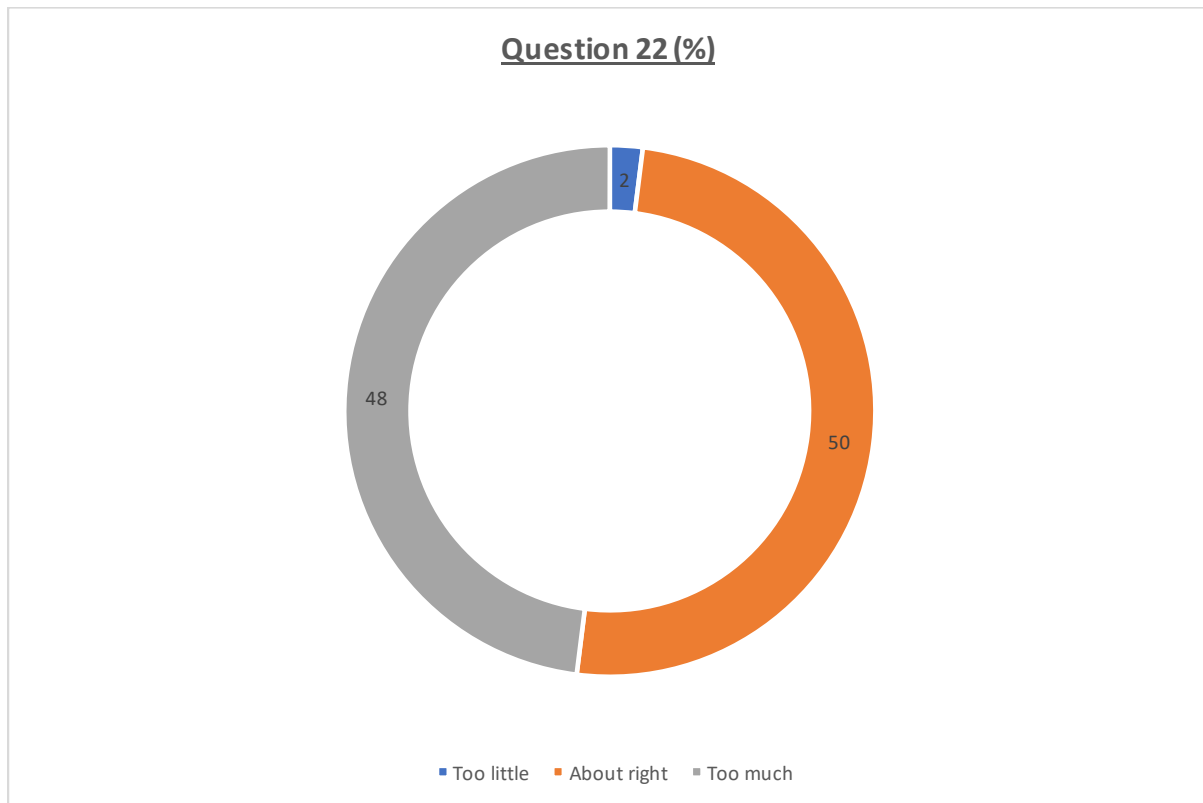


Figure 25

This question is useful to be able to obtain information against the existing pricing structure for long stay parking. The largest percentage of responses was attributed to the answer about right at 50% and the next largest being about right at 48%. There was a small amount of people (2%) that selected the answer too little.

Question 23 asks when would you prefer to pay for your parking

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1037 responses.

Figure 26 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

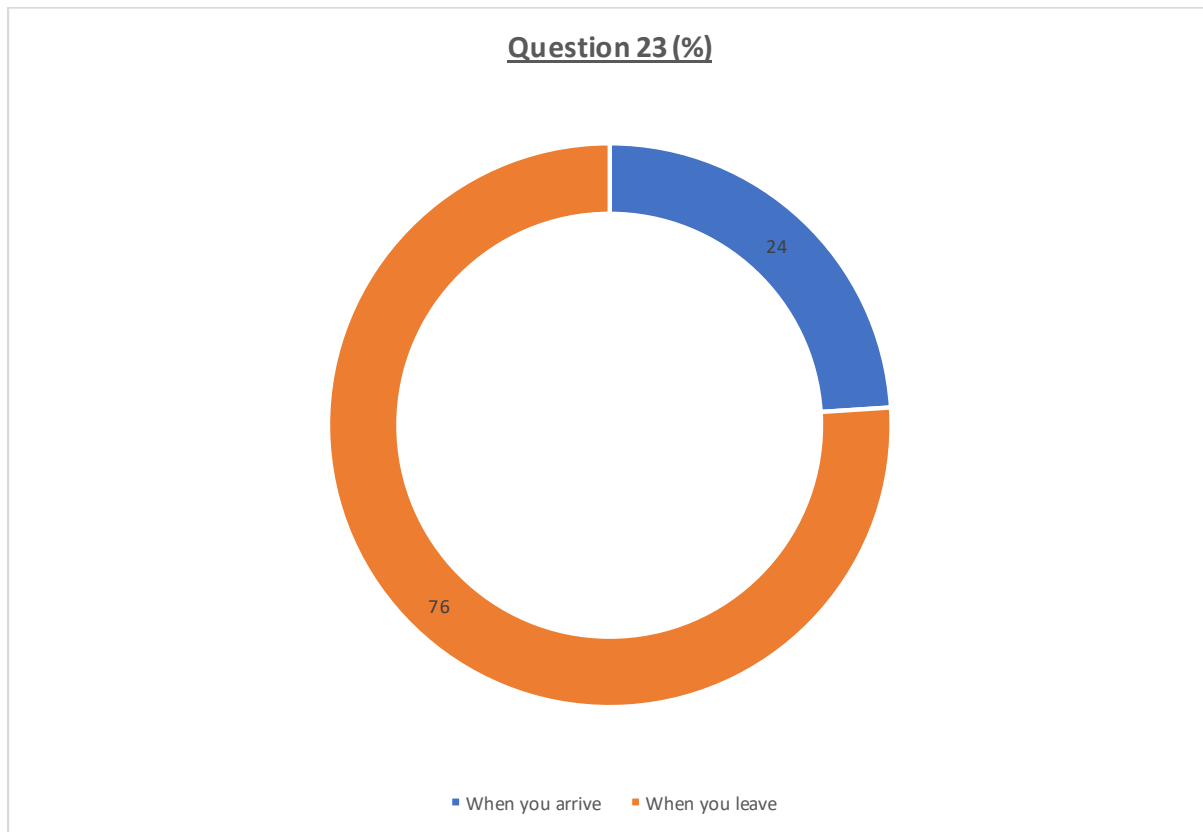


Figure 26

This question is useful to be able to obtain information from the respondents as to when they would like to pay for their parking. It shows that the vast majority of respondents would like to pay for their parking when they left the amount being 76%. This is in contrast to 24% of people wishing to pay for their parking when they arrived at the car park.

Question 24 asks How would you like to pay for your parking

This multi selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1038 responses.

Figure 27 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

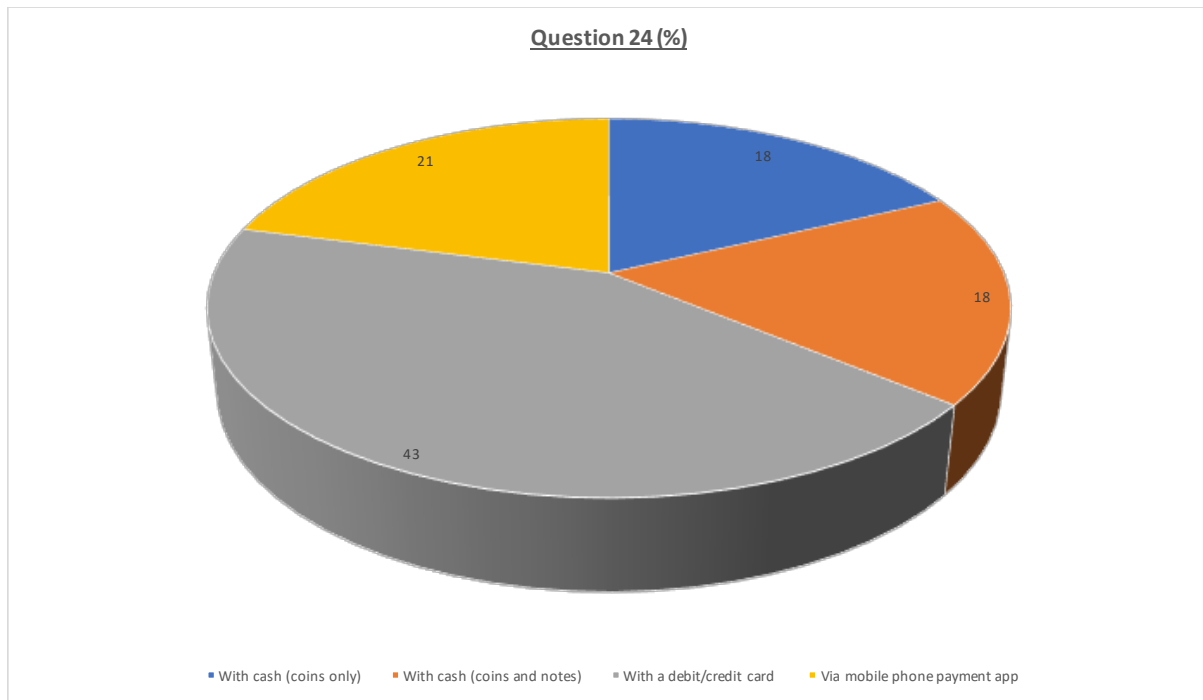


Figure 27

Figure 27 shows a breakdown of responses based on the following answers:

- With cash (coins only)
- With cash (coins and notes)
- With a debit/credit card
- Via a mobile phone payment app

This question shows that 43% of people would like to pay for parking charges with debit/credit card. The net largest option was with cash and coins at 21% of the total responses. The remaining option of with cash (coins only) totalled 18% of the responses. This shows that there is a need for various payment options to be supplied to allow for the opportunity for people to pay via a range of different means to cater for the majority.

Question 25 asks how do you think the car parking charges compare to neighbouring towns and cities

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 1049 responses.

Figure 28 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

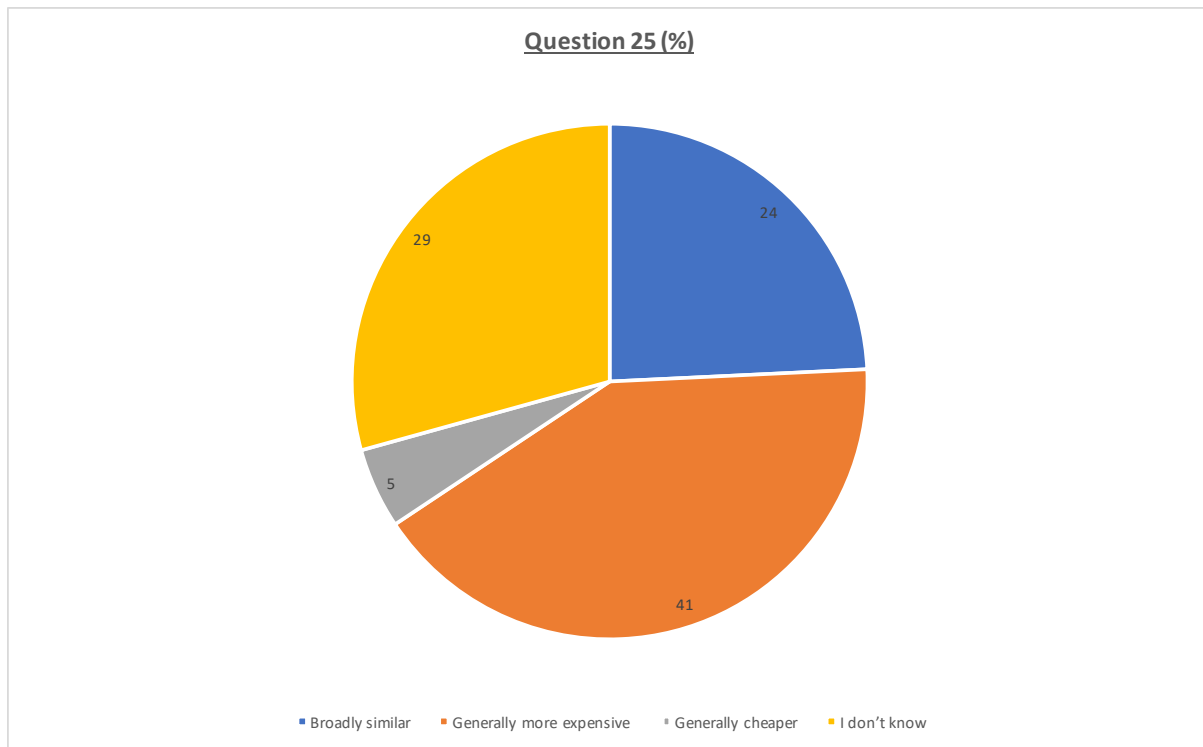


Figure 28

This question gives data that shows that 41% of respondents see the charges as generally more expensive than neighbouring towns and cities. 29% of respondents don't know how the Lichfield parking charges compare to neighbouring cities and towns. Then a further 24% of respondents deemed the charges to be broadly similar with lastly 5% of respondents deciding that the charges are generally cheaper than neighbouring towns and cities.

Question 27 asks how easy do you find it to locate an available blue badge parking space in any of the car parks in the city centre

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 264 responses.

Figure 29 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

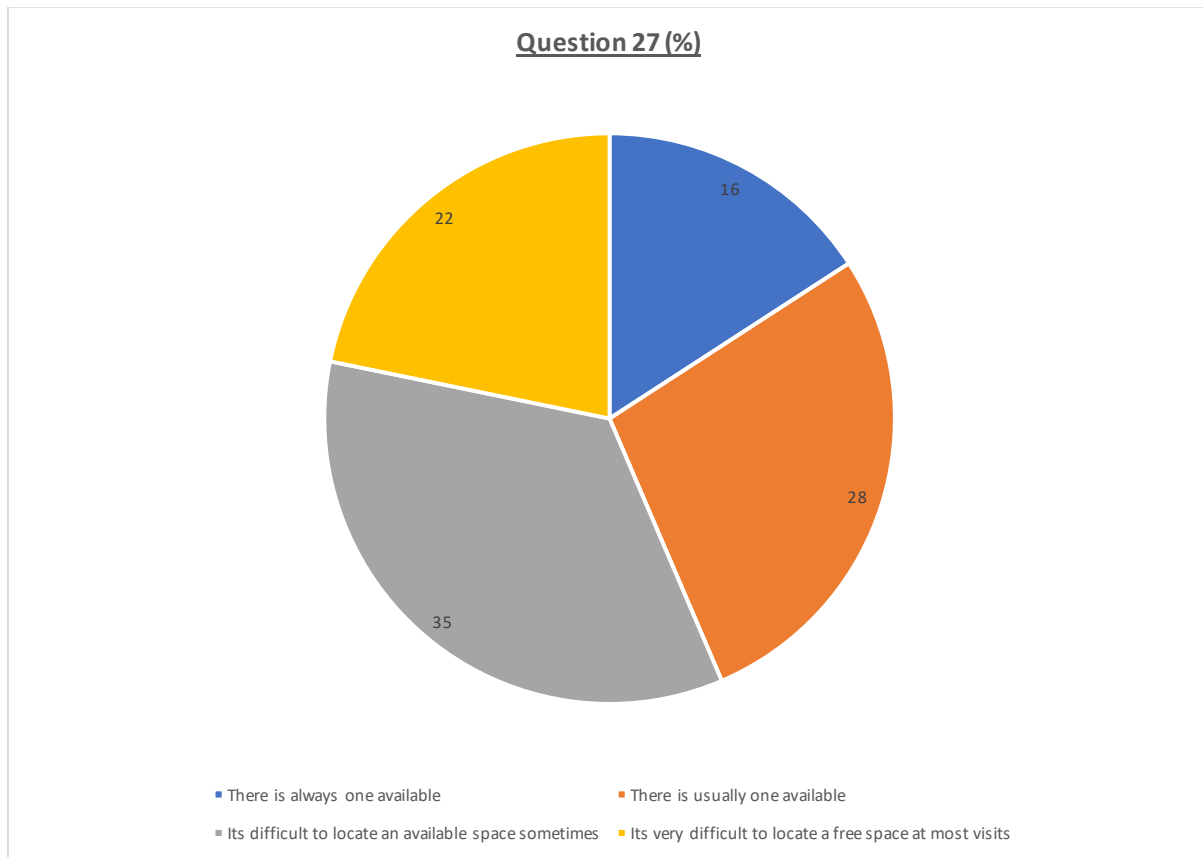


Figure 29

This question gives data that shows how easy it is to locate an available blue badge space in Lichfield car parks from the questionnaire 15% of respondents selected that they had a disability. The data from this question went on to show that 35% of respondents find it difficult to locate an available space sometimes with a further 28% of responses deciding that there is usually one available. 16% of respondents decided that there was always one available and finally 22% of respondents saying that it is very difficult to locate a free space on most visits.

Question 29 asks if so do you use the existing EV charge points in the Friary car park

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 180 responses.

Figure 30 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

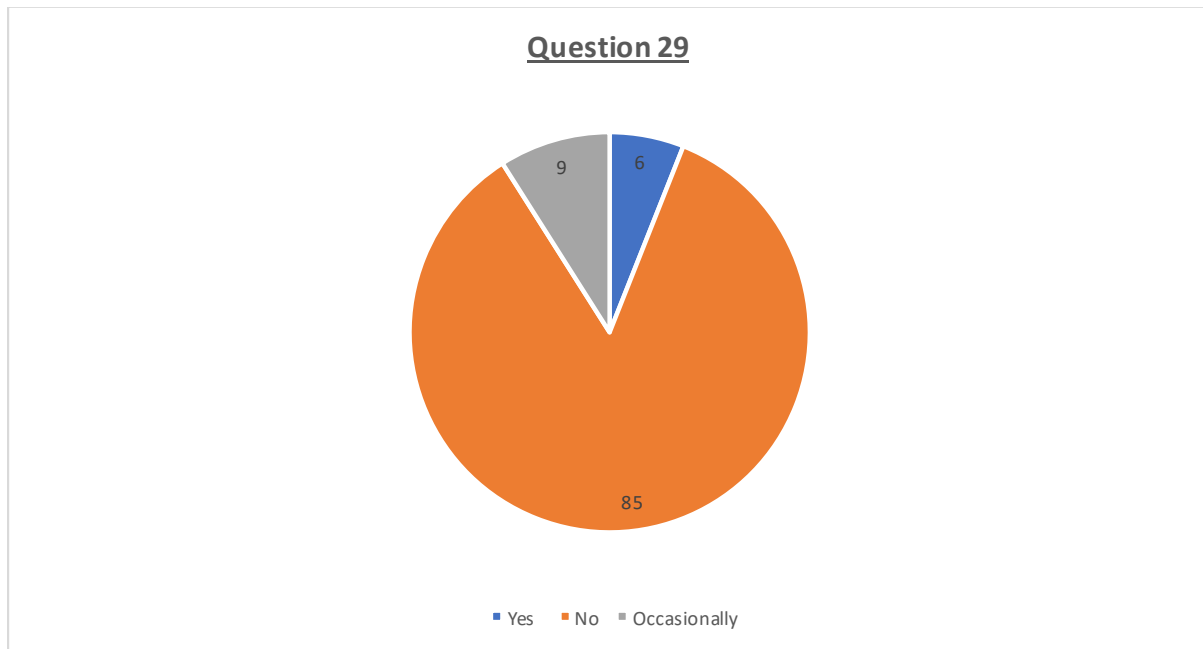


Figure 30

Previously in the questionnaire 6.6% of respondents declared that they drove an electric vehicle on a regular basis subsequently this led to the above question which shows that the large majority of electric vehicle users didn't use the EV parking bays in the Friary car park. The next most selected option of occasionally was selected by 9% of the respondents with a further 6% of responses being for yes.

Question 30 asks would you like to see more EV charge points installed within Lichfield city centre car parks

This single selection question enabled a simple tabulation of responses. This question received 476 responses.

Figure 31 below shows the breakdowns of respondents based on the criteria stated.

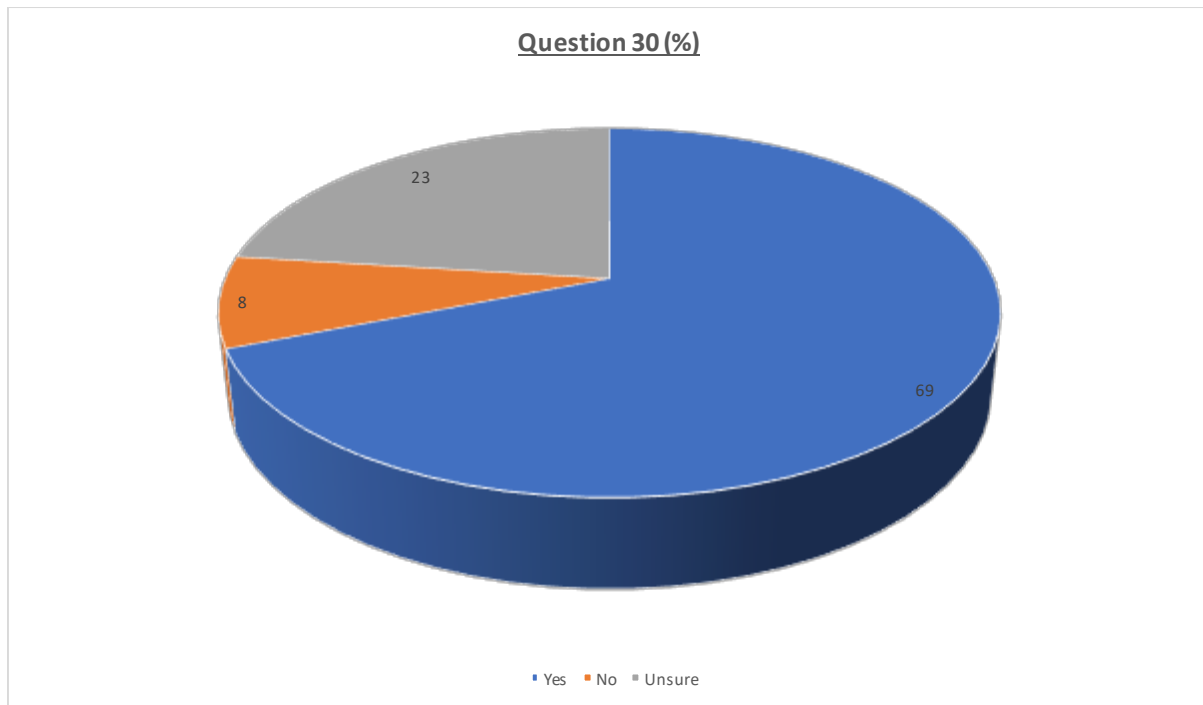


Figure 31

This question gives an understanding on if the users of the car parks would like to see more EV charge points installed at Lichfield car parks. The vast majority (69%) of responses declared that they would like to see more points installed. In turn 23% of responses said that they were unsure if they would like to see more points installed and 8% of people wouldn't like to see more points installed. A large percent of people would like to see more provision for EV charging within the car parks in Lichfield.

1.7 ENGAGEMENT CONCLUSION

The questionnaire was completed 1071 times and gave insight into a range of different car parking criteria and behaviours. It has highlighted that many car parks are under occupied compared to a select number that are more preferred. It links directly that most of the problems that are experienced by the respondents of this questionnaire occur in the more popular car parks. On the whole, it is understood from this data that the majority of respondents will continue to use the car parks and the city centre at the same level for which they did before the national pandemic started. This is surprising because of the risk that can come from gathering in large numbers and not adhering to social distancing rules. In this there is a shared responsibility to ensure that all car parking provision is safe to use post lockdown from both providers and users alike.

The choice of driving into the city centre was largely attributed to convenience, although there is an increase in well-being awareness generally I see this continuing in the future. It has been shown that 489 responses were from people that use the supermarket car parks. It has been made apparent that Tesco in the near future have decided to charge for parking in the car park if you choose not to shop in the store. With this change, there will be a deflection of numbers between the supermarket car parks and the public car parks. This is likely to cause a certain amount of unrest within the city and provisions including clear signage and improved payment options are required to try to help alleviate this.

The respondents do seem acutely aware of the balance between provision and cost. This is also the case with investment into future more sustainable parking provision in regard to EV charge points and payment options. From the feedback received during the engagement process it is felt that it was useful and informative for those who attended, with the majority thankful that they had attended. Taking into account the purpose of the engagement and the development of the scheme to date combined with the efforts to publicise the public engagement, participation is considered to have been well above average.

The number of completed questionnaires is considered to be excellent. The target engagement for the questionnaire was 300 completed responses and this was exceeded by 771 responses.

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