

Blue Badge Car Park Users Survey – July 2012

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Executive Summary

About the Survey and Respondents (see page 6)

- Approximately 1208 surveys were sent out to Blue Badge Holders:
 - o 564 recipients were identified from Shopmobility records. It is noted that these people are more likely to already visit the town for shopping.
 - o 444 from the pay on foot Blue Badge data base (Smartcard). It is noted that these people are more likely to be existing car park users and already visit the town for shopping.
 - o The other 200 recipients were identified through various other organisations with links to people with disabilities.
 - o The questionnaire was also available on line and from the Customer Service Centre.
- A total of 474 responses were received - a 39% response rate.
- The majority of respondents (78%) were aged 65+, with a further 18% aged 45-64.

Level of Car Park Use (see pages 8 to 13)

- Most respondents to the survey (94%) stated that they *do* use BDC Car Parks, and 92% said they use Bromsgrove Town Centre for shopping. Other than shopping, the most common reason for parking in Bromsgrove Town Centre was to go to the bank.
- The frequency of visits to the town is quite high with almost half of respondents stating that they visit several times a week and a further third stating they visit once a week.
- A third of respondents said they chose to park in areas other than the BDC car parks, most commonly in short stay spaces or disabled bays closer to the town centre (on The Strand and Church Street).
- The most common reason for parking outside of BDC car parks (favoured by over half of those providing an answer) was to find spaces closer to the desired location, thus limiting walking distance with several Blue Badge Holders commenting that they have difficulty walking the distance between BDC car parks and the town centre shops. Fewer respondents (40%) chose alternative parking because it was free or because they thought car parks were too expensive. This indicates that the distance to walk was slightly more influential than the cost of parking.

Bromsgrove Parking Systems (see pages 13 to 17)

- 65% of respondents said they make use of the free hour parking offer to Blue Badge Holders, with 26% stating that they were not aware of the offer.
- Most people prefer pay on foot (57%) over pay and display (14%) parking systems.
- The vast majority of respondents felt that disabled parking spaces are in the most convenient location (87% agree), that payment machines are easy to operate (92%) and that their position is suitable (85%)

The Cost of Blue Badge Parking (see pages 17 to 19)

- Half of all respondents stated that the cost of parking does not stop or reduce the frequency with which they visit Bromsgrove Town Centre - and half said that it did.
 - o 169 respondents provided a reason as to why the cost of parking stops or reduces the frequency of their visits to Bromsgrove Town Centre, of which a total of 151 (89.5%) provided reasons related to the charge to park (saying things such as it is too expensive, it's free elsewhere, Blue Badge Holders shouldn't have to pay or because it used to be free)
 - o 25 respondents provided a reason as to why the cost did not stop / reduce the frequency, 6 of which stating it was because they had no choice but to use the car parks due to the limitations of their disability.
- Similarly, half of respondents stated that the cost of parking for Blue Badge Holders means that they shop elsewhere - and half that it does not.

Other Areas People Chose to Shop and Why (see pages 19 to 22)

- The most popular other areas that respondents chose to shop were: Redditch (favoured by 52% of respondents), Droitwich (26%), Worcester (26%), out of town supermarkets (25%), Merry Hill (18%) and Kidderminster (17%).
- When asked why they chose to shop in other areas, respondents indicated that availability of free parking is equally as important as the choice / variety of shops.
- It can be broadly concluded that people are more likely to choose to shop in Redditch, Worcester, Merry Hill and Birmingham because there is a better choice of shops, whereas they go to Droitwich, out of town supermarkets or Kidderminster to use the free parking.

Other Thoughts on Bromsgrove District Council Parking (pages 23 to 25)

- Despite the responses to previous questions indicating that the variety of shops was equally as important as free parking when choosing a place to shop, when asked "is there anything BDC could do to encourage you to use car parks more regularly?", more respondents identified free parking for Blue Badge Holders (37%) than any other reason (note: respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate).
- The vast majority of respondents (67.7%) stated that there wasn't anywhere that they would like to park but were currently unable to. However, where people did provide an answer most stated they would like to be able to park closer to the High Street (11%) especially on Windsor Street or around Church Street and Chapel Walk.

Introduction

About the Survey

The Blue Badge Car Park Users survey was conducted by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) in July 2012.

564 postal surveys were sent out to Blue Badge Holders who had been identified from Shopmobility records. It is noted that these people are more likely to already visit the town for shopping. A further 444 were sent to those registered on the pay on foot Blue Badge data base (Smart Cards). It is noted that these people are more likely to be existing car park users and already visit the town for shopping. Roughly 200 surveys were also sent out to those identified through various other organisations with links to people with disabilities. The questionnaire was also available online and from the Customer Service Centre. The estimate for total surveys sent out is approximately 1208.

The preferred method of identifying Blue Badge Holders from Bromsgrove District would have been to use records held by the Worcestershire Hub (where residents can apply for their Blue Badge) - but this was not possible at the time at which the survey was sent out. This is acknowledged as a limitation of the survey.

It is noted that the method of identifying participants for the survey is likely to affect the results.

When analysis was conducted a total of 474 surveys had been returned to Bromsgrove District Council - this provides a response rate of 39%.

About the respondents

Age

The majority of respondents (78%) were aged 65+, with a further 18% aged 45-64. Just 4% were aged 44 or below. There were 5 respondents in the 0-14 category - in most cases the survey had been filled out by a parent or carer on behalf of the Blue Badge Holder.

Where they live

Though 90% of total respondents to the survey who provided an address lived within Bromsgrove District, there were a total of 44 returned surveys from residents living elsewhere. Of those:

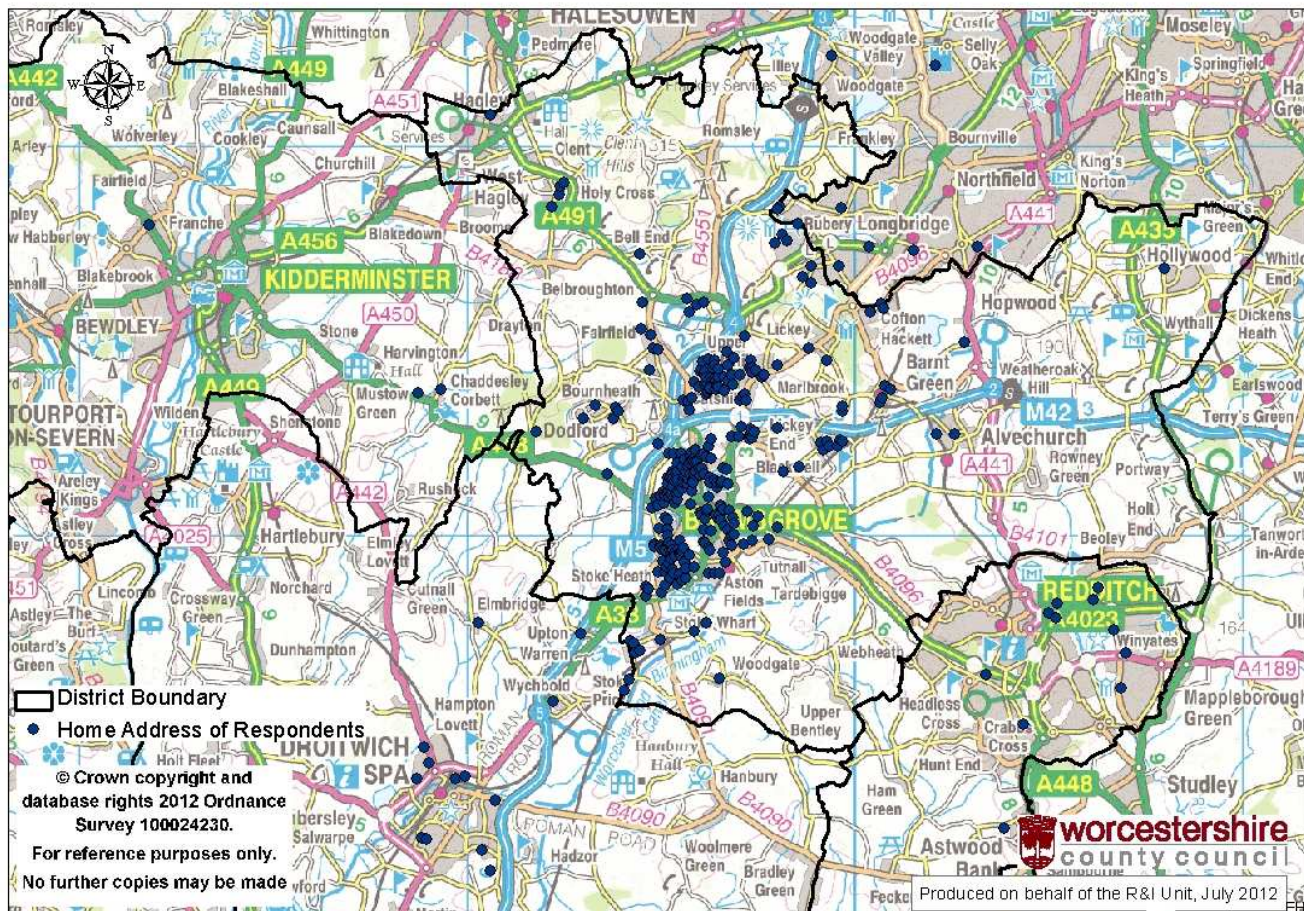
- 14 lived in Wychavon (mainly in Droitwich or the Wychbold area)
- 11 lived in Redditch
- 4 in Wyre Forest
- 1 in Worcester City

14 respondents lived outside of Worcestershire, most in Birmingham (e.g. Rednal, Kings Norton, Northfield) though two were from Cleobury Mortimer, one lived in Stourbridge and one in Stoke on Trent.

Of those who lived within Bromsgrove District, the vast majority lived in close proximity to Bromsgrove town centre with 70% having home addresses in the wards of Sidemoor, Catshill, St Johns, Charford, Marlbrook, Whitford, Norton, Slideslow or Stoke Heath.

Figure 1 shows Bromsgrove district and the immediate surrounding area, and the home location of respondents to the survey.

Figure 1: Map of Blue Badge Car Park Users Survey Respondents



About the analysis

Only 68% of survey respondents included their Blue Badge number in their response. However, this is not necessarily an indication of the number of respondents who were actually Blue Badge Holders. The section where respondents were asked to provide their Blue Badge number was not a mandatory part of the survey, and was on the very last page. Respondents were not asked “are you a Blue Badge Holder?”.

Preliminary analysis indicated very little difference in the responses to the survey questions when looking at total respondents versus those who provided a Blue Badge number. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all analysis in this report is based on total respondents to the survey.

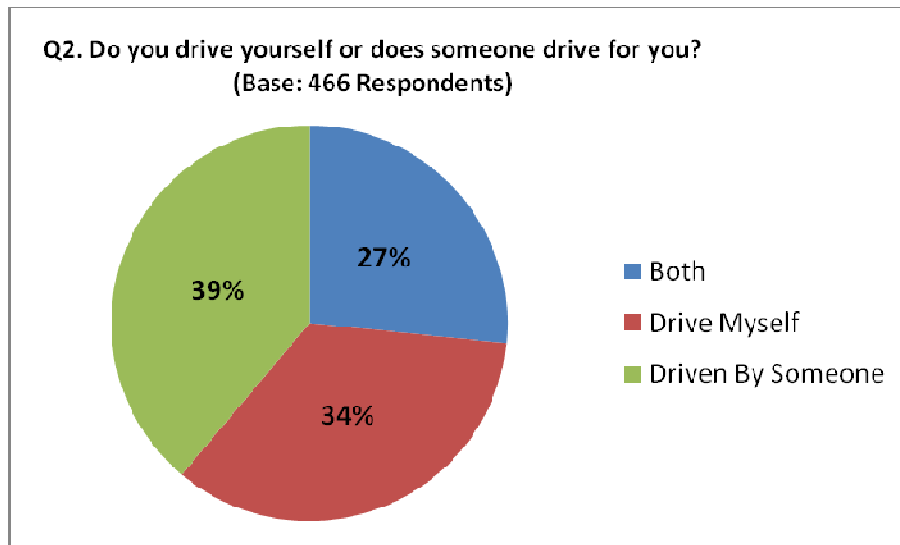
Results

Question 1: Do you use Bromsgrove Car Parks?

94% of the 465 respondents who provided an answer to this question stated that they do use Bromsgrove Car Parks.

Question 2: Do you drive yourself or does someone drive you?

Figure 2: Pie Chart of Question 2



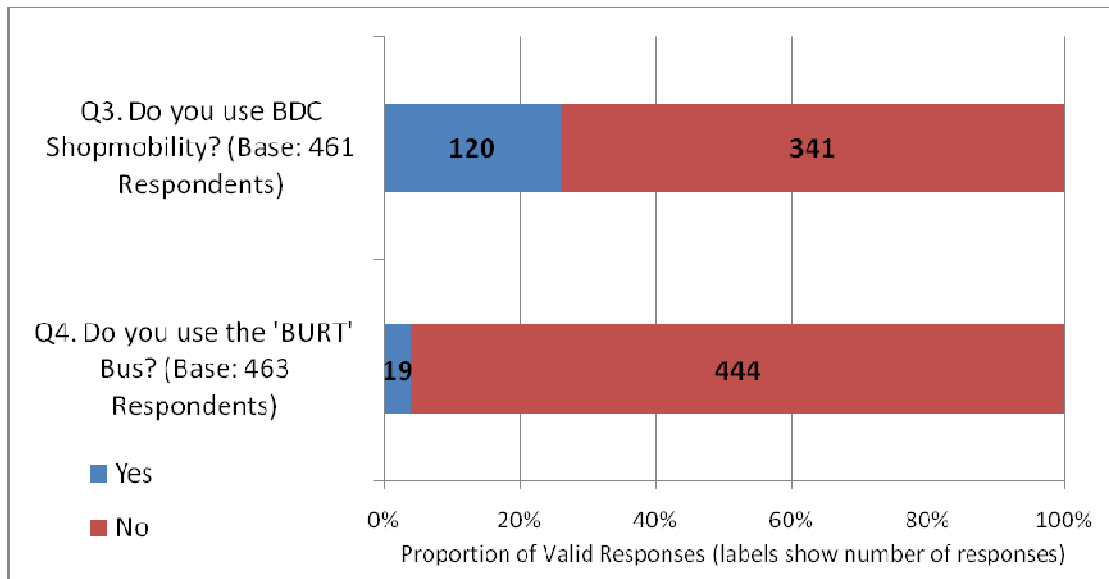
Though slightly more respondents said they were driven by someone else than the other options in question 2 (39%), the split was fairly even with a further 34% stating that they drive themselves.

Q3. Do you use BDC Shopmobility?

Q4. Do you use the 'BURT' Bus?

Roughly a quarter of respondents (120 respondents or 26%) had used shopmobility. However, just 19 people in total said that they used the BURT Bus (see figure 3). 444 respondents stated they did not use BURT.

Figure 3: Bar Chart of Questions 2 and 3



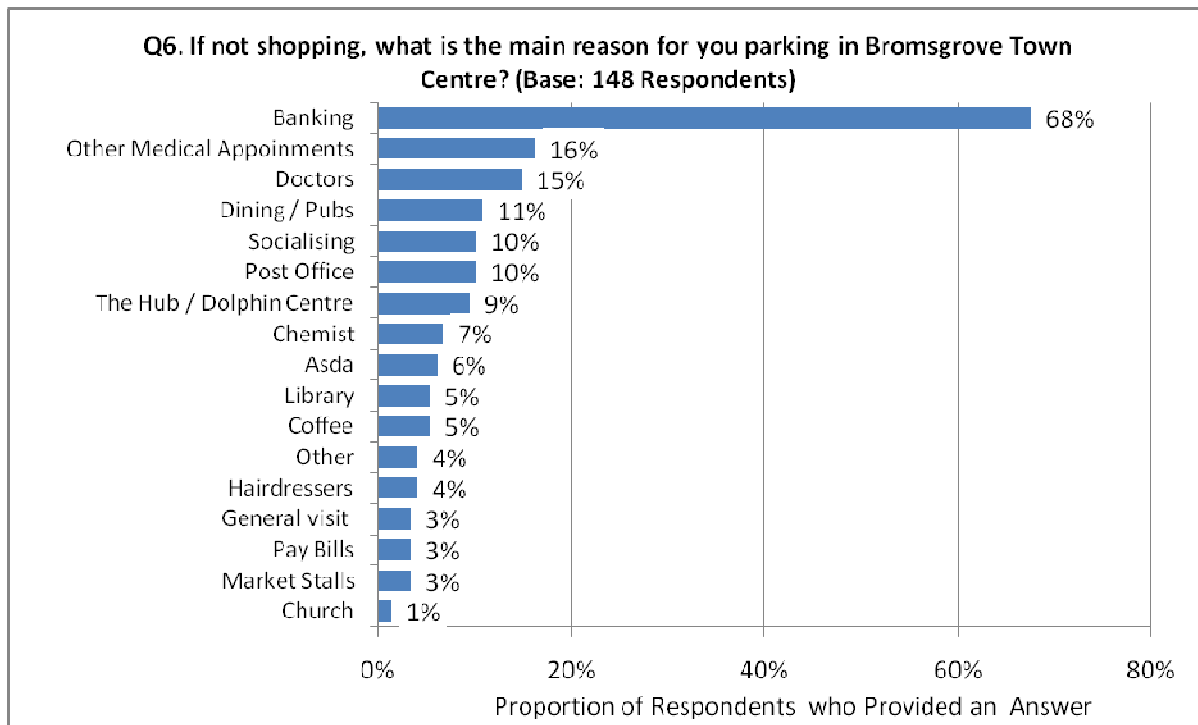
Q5. Do you use Bromsgrove Town Centre for Shopping?

92% of respondents said that they did use Bromsgrove town centre for shopping, with just 38 respondents saying they didn't.

Q6. If not shopping, what is the main reason for you parking in Bromsgrove Town Centre?

Banking (including visiting the building society) was the most commonly stated reason for people to visit Bromsgrove, other than to shop. The full list of the reasons provided can be viewed in figure 4.

Figure 4: Bar Chart of Question 6



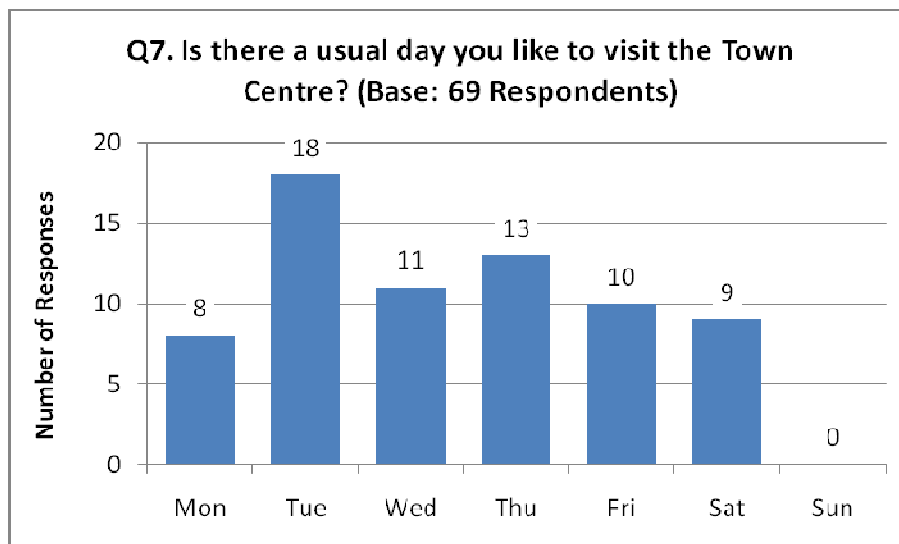
"General Visit" includes people stating they visit Bromsgrove to walk around the town, for somewhere to go, for the scenery or for window shopping. The "Other" category included those visiting to bet, get the bus to Worcester, use shopmobility, go to the solicitors or to the job centre. "Other Medical Appointments" included visits to the opticians, dentist, chiropodist, hospital, for physiotherapy or for a hearing test.

Q7. Is there a usual day you like to visit the Town Centre?

The vast majority of respondents (83%) stated there was no set day when they liked to visit the town centre.

Of those who did provide an answer, Tuesday was the most popular day of the week to visit the town centre (as shown in figure 5). However, it must be noted that the below chart is only based on the responses of 69 people (just 15% of total survey respondents), and so any conclusions drawn from the chart are less likely to provide an accurate representation of the total population than those from questions with a larger base of responses.

Figure 5: Chart of Question 7



Q8. How often would you use Bromsgrove Car Parks?

Around half of respondents stated that they used Bromsgrove car parks several times a week, with a further third stating they visited once a week. Very few (just 18 people) said they never visited the town, and a further 8 left this question blank - which ties in fairly closely with the 30 respondents who stated in question 1 that they did not use Bromsgrove Car Parks.

Figure 6: Frequency of Bromsgrove Car Park Use (Base: 466 Respondents)

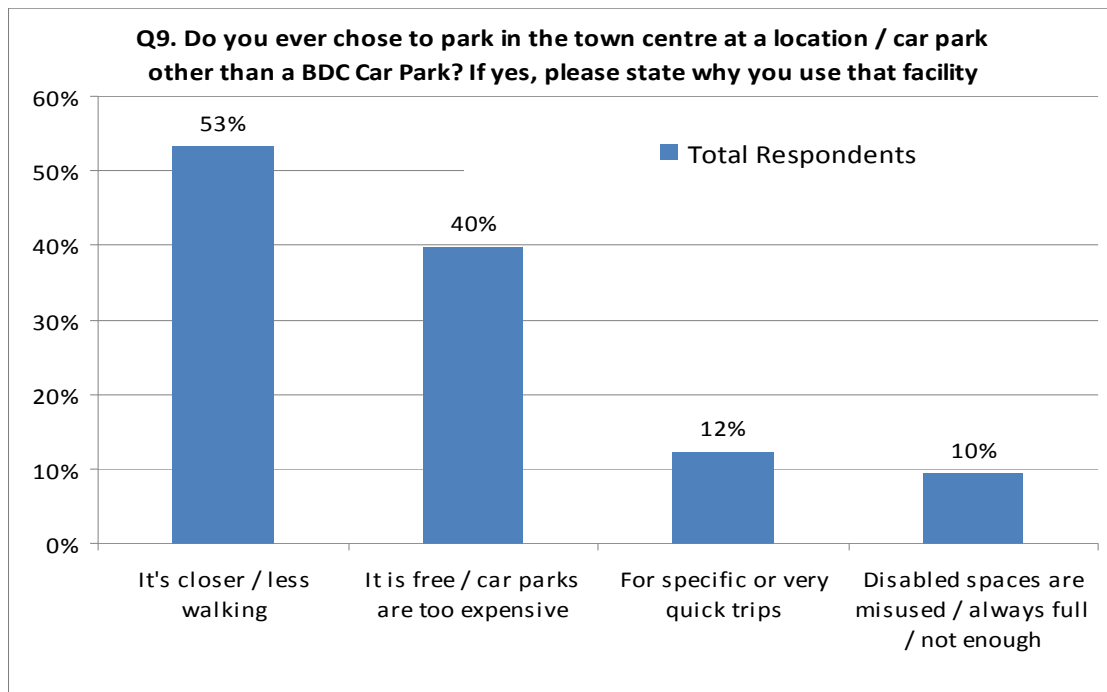
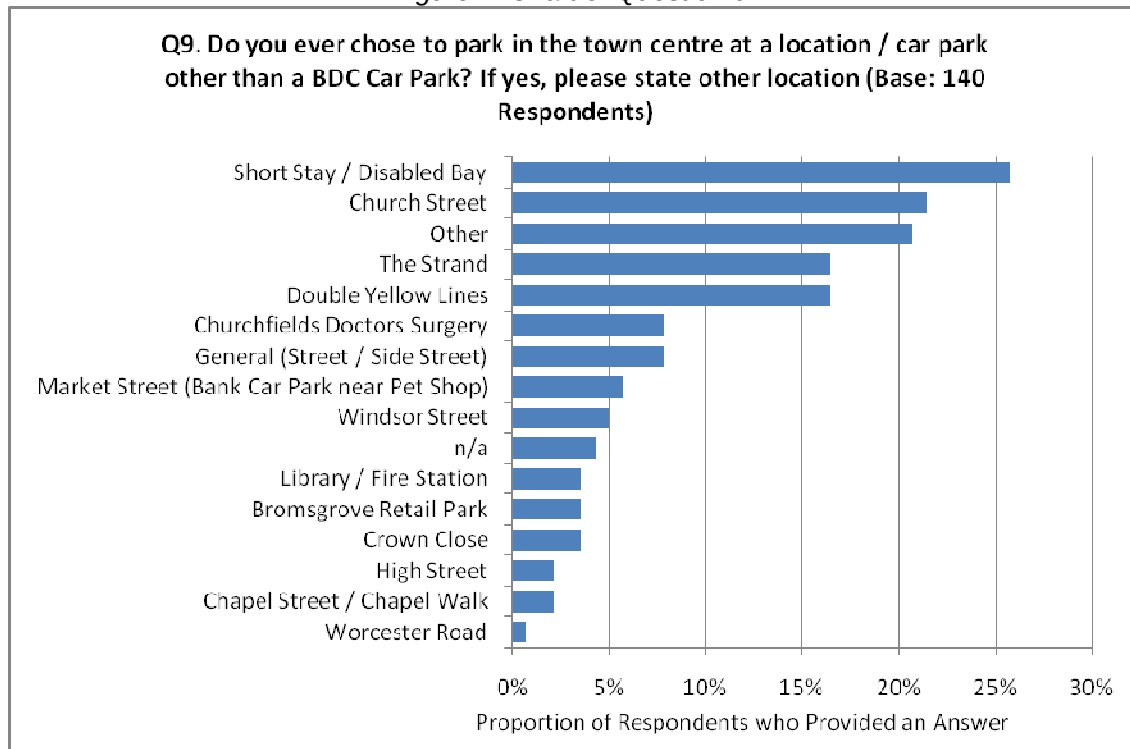
	Number of Responses	Proportion of Valid Responses
Daily	15	3%
Several Times a Week	227	49%
Once a Week	151	32%
Rarely	55	12%
Never	18	4%

Q9. Do you ever choose to park in the town centre at a location / car park other than a BDC Car Park? If yes, please state other location and why you use that facility

A third of respondents stated that they *did* choose to park in other town centre locations (from a base of 446 valid responses). This implies that the majority (66%) only park in BDC Car Parks.

A total of 140 respondents provided information on the other locations they choose to park, and 73 provided a reason why. The results as displayed in the two charts in figure 7 below. It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 7: Chart of Question 9



NOTE: Total percentages may add up to more than 100 where people provided more than one area they choose to park, and/or more than one reason why.

Short stay disabled bays were the preferred alternative parking location for respondents, especially on Church Street (opposite Korner Kitchen) and on The Strand (outside the Queens Head). Parking on double yellow lines was also a popular alternative, with 16% of the total 140 respondents to this question stating that they preferred to use their Blue Badge privileges to park for free in this way.

The most common reason for parking outside of BDC car parks was to find spaces closer to the desired location, thus limiting the walking distance (favoured by over half of respondents), with many respondents commenting that they have difficulty walking the distance between BDC car parks and the town centre shops. Fewer respondents (40%) chose alternative parking because it was free or because they thought car parks were too expensive.

This indicates that the distance to walk was slightly more influential than the cost of parking.

However, just to reiterate, overall, most respondents stated that they do not chose to park in other town centre locations, indicating that people are generally more likely to park in BDC car parks than elsewhere.

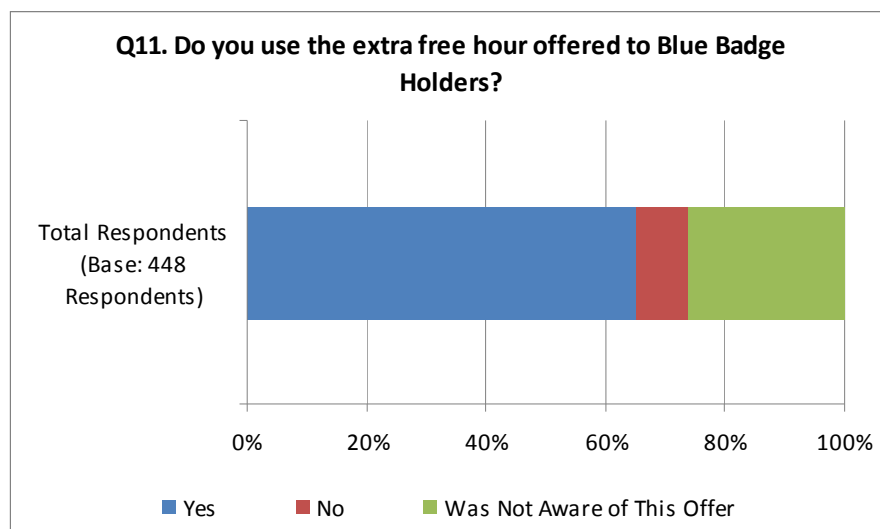
Q10. Do you find sufficient Disabled Car Parking spaces?

Responses to this question were fairly evenly split with 31% answering "yes", 29% "no" and 39% saying "sometimes".

Q11. Do you use the extra free hour offered to Blue Badge Holders?

The majority of respondents (65% of total respondents) said that they *do* make use of the free hour offered to Blue Badge Holders. Although, roughly a quarter (26%) said that they were not aware of the offer.

Figure 8: Chart of Question 11

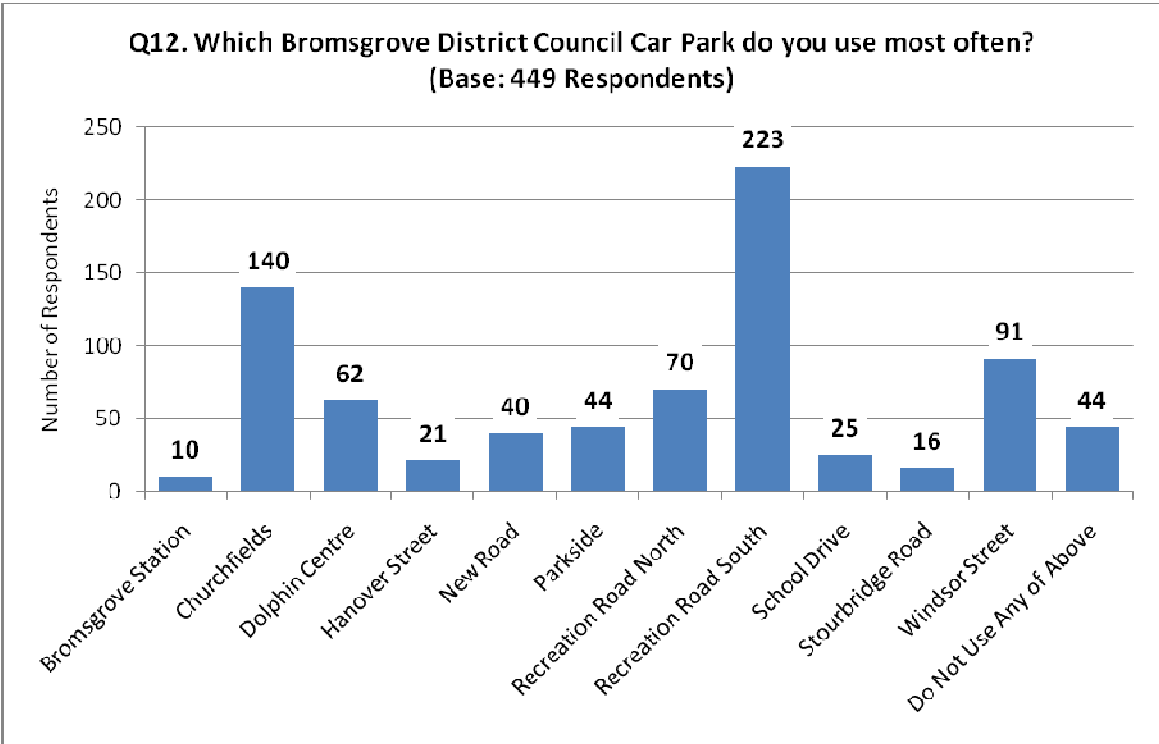


Q12. Which Bromsgrove District Council Car Park do you use most often?

The most popular car park with Blue Badge Holders was Recreation Road South with 50% of respondents saying they use this car park most often. Churchfields multi-storey was also popular (31%) as was Windsor Street (20%).

Please note: 1008 of the 1208 surveys sent out were to known users of either Shopmobility (based in Churchfields) or Smartcards (used for payments in Churchfields and Recreation Road South).

Figure 9: Chart of Question 12

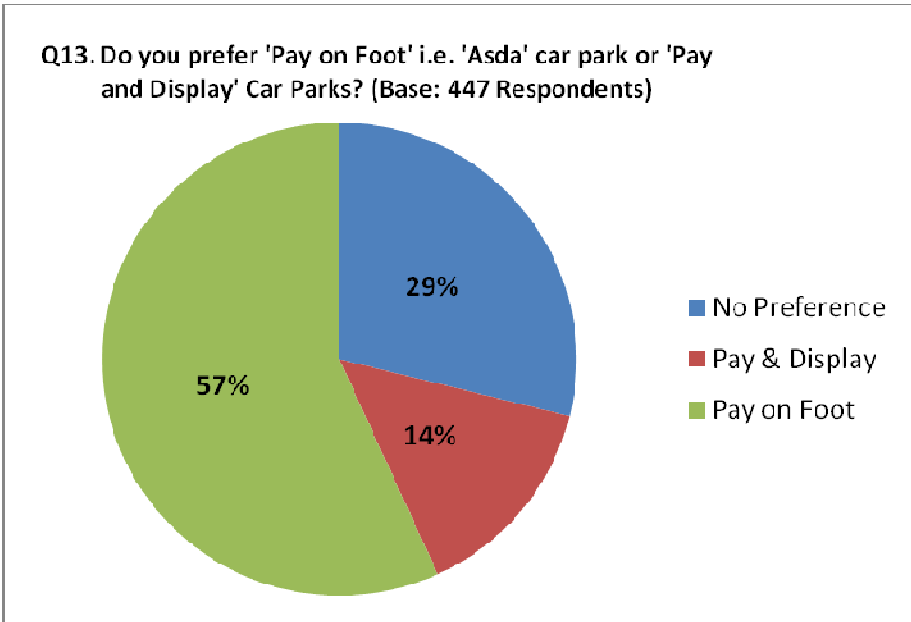


NOTE: Respondents were able to tick the box for more than one car park in answer to this question, so the number of respondents in the above chart will add up to more than the total number of completed surveys received.

Just 10% of respondents stated that they did not use any of the car parks listed.

Q13. Do you prefer 'Pay on Foot' i.e. 'Asda' car park or 'Pay and Display' Car Parks?

Figure 10: Chart of Question 13



The majority of respondents (57%) seem to favour the pay on foot system with just 14% stating they prefer pay and display. The remaining 29% had no preference. This ties in well with responses to questions 18 and 22 where some people stated that they would like more pay on foot machines, and that they would like to be able to use their smartcard to pay for parking in more areas.

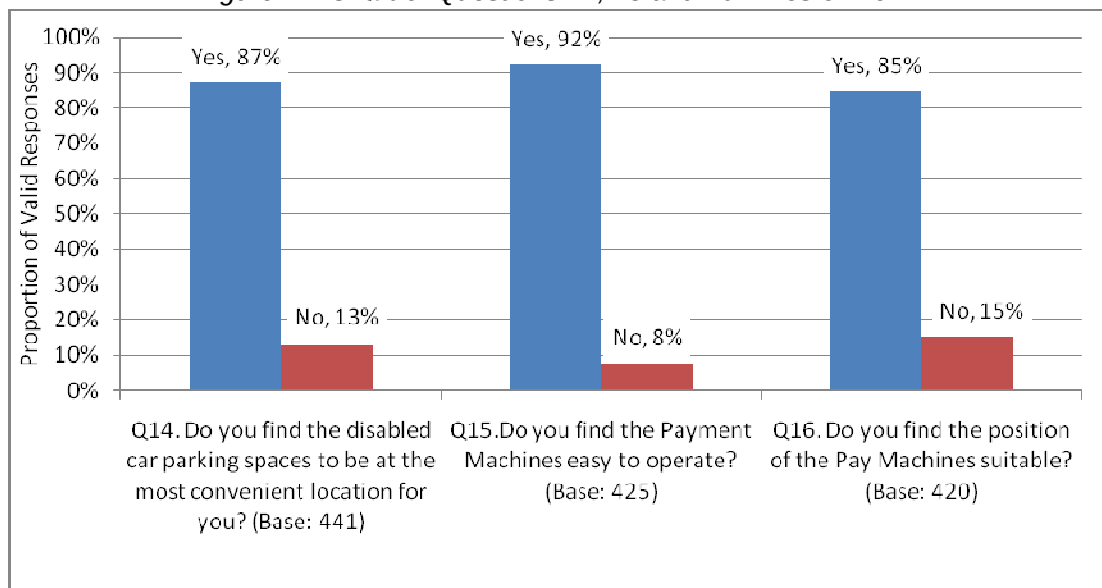
Q14. Do you find the disabled car parking spaces to be at the most convenient location for you? If no, please state reason

Q15. Do you find the Payment Machines easy to operate? Q15(a). If no, please state why and which car park

Q16. Do you find the position of the Pay Machines suitable? Q16(a). If no, please state why and which car park

The results from the above three questions are presented together as there was some repetition in the answers provided.

Figure 11: Chart of Questions 14, 15 and 16 – Yes or No



As figure 11 shows, the vast majority of respondents felt that disabled parking spaces are in the most convenient location, that payment machines are easy to operate and that their position is suitable.

The reasons provided by the small proportion of respondents who answered no to questions 14 and 15 are listed in figure 12 alongside the number of respondents who gave each reason. It is important to note that when providing reasons, residents were not presented with multiple choice answers, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 12: Table of Reasons Provided in Questions 14 and 15

Reasons why disabled car parking spaces were not thought to be at the most convenient location? (Base: 62)		Reasons why Payment Machines were not thought to be easy to operate? (Base: 46)	
Spaces are too far away / it is too difficult to walk to shops	22	Long queues (especially difficult with scooter / wheelchair; thought to be caused by having to put in car registration / out of order machines / not enough machines)	8
There aren't enough spaces	6	Too complicated (too many buttons)	5
Not enough spaces near town (e.g. Queens Head, Church Street)	4	The coin slot is too high	2
Payment Machine is too far away from spaces	3	Because change is needed (don't accept cards)	2
Spaces are not large enough (especially for wheelchair users)	3	Registered Blind	2
Not convenient because blue badge holder have to pay (principle - should be free)	2	"Arthritis in hands makes putting registration In and coins In machine difficult at times"	1
Can't move between car parks on one ticket	2	"Can be difficult to see when the sun is on the screen"	1
BB Spaces are misused (by taxi / deliveries)	2	"Difficult to stand for long enough to sort out change"	1
You have to cross Market Street (dangerous) to get to the High Street	1	"The One Closest To The Spaces Is Very Often Out Of Order (It Is Difficult To Remove The Ticket From The Machine)"	1
The slope at New Road car park is inconvenient / difficult	1	Machines are too far from disabled spaces	1

In answer to the free text question 16, "do you find the position of the Pay Machines suitable?", the most common complaint provided related to the location of the pay stations in Recreation Road South:

- 17 people stated that the position of the machines was fine if they were visiting Asda, but those people who park in the disabled bays then go over the crossing in to the town centre, then had to walk all the way to Asda to pay the ticket.
- Seven people also stated that when parking in Churchfields, the distance to the pay machine was too far, and that there should be an additional machine in the multi-storey car park itself. This was especially problematic to people who forgot to pay when outside the supermarket then had to walk back to the store.
- It was suggested that more machines spread out across the car park would be beneficial.

Five people also mentioned that when parking in the disabled bays in the Dolphin Centre, which are conveniently near the entrance, they have to walk into the centre of the car park to get a ticket, which was thought to be too far for some, with others mentioning difficulties with the slope of the car park.

Other general comments included that the pay machines were too far away from spaces in all car parks, that queuing was difficult with a mobility scooter, that some machines are too high (difficult in a wheelchair). For a full list of comments made in answer to questions 14, 15 & 16, please contact ehumphreys@worcestershire.gov.uk

Q17. Do you find parking difficult in any other areas of Bromsgrove District Council area? If so please state where:

It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

A total of 71 people (15% of the total respondents to the survey) provided an answer to question 17. This indicates that 85% of respondents did not find parking difficult in other areas of Bromsgrove.

Most people either gave a location *or* a reason why they did find parking difficult, so it is not easy to match up specific issues to specific areas of the town. In general, answers were widely varied, but a few patterns did emerge - though it must be noted that these patterns are based on the opinions of just a few people and so should not be used as an indication of the thoughts of the entire Blue Badge Holder population.

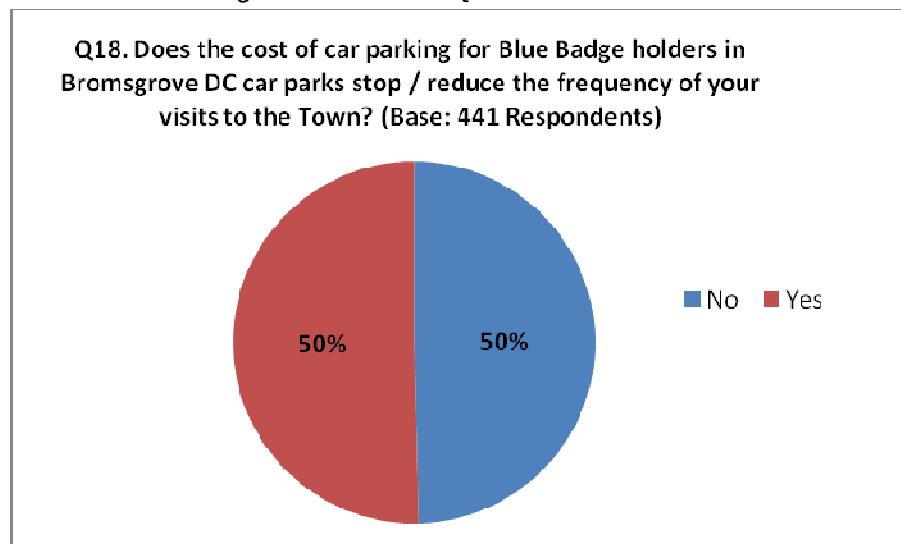
Overall, 21 people stated that they found parking difficult in other areas due to a lack of spaces. Specific areas mentioned include: Church Street, Crown Close, Dolphin Centre, New Road, Parkside, Rubery, Sanders Park and the train station.

- 10 people stated they found it difficult to park in Windsor Street, four of those because there were not enough spaces.
- 10 people stated they found it difficult to park on Church Street, four of those because there were not enough spaces.

Other responses to this question were very limited.

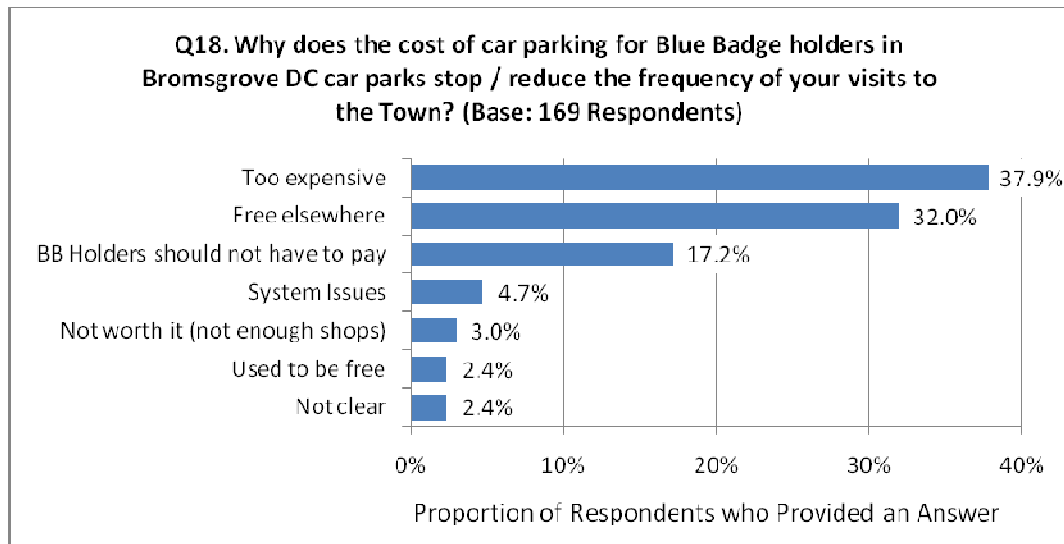
Q18. Does the cost of car parking for Blue Badge holders in Bromsgrove DC car parks stop / reduce the frequency of your visits to the Town? Why?

Figure 13: Chart of Question 18: Yes or No



Answers to this question were split evenly, with half of all respondents stating that the cost of parking does stop or reduce the frequency with which they visit Bromsgrove Town Centre, and half saying it did.

Figure 14: Chart of Question 18: Reasons Why



Of the respondents who stated that the cost of parking *did* stop or reduce the frequency of their visits to the town, a total of 169 people further provided a reason for their answer in the free text section provided.

- The most common reason was that the cost of parking is too expensive (38%) - specifically for pensioners or those on reduced income (such as those unable to work due to their disability)
- A close second was the fact that parking for Blue Badge Holders is free elsewhere (32%), for example in supermarkets, on double yellow lines or in neighbouring districts (32%).
- A further four (2.4%) people said that they didn't use the car parks anymore because they used to be free in Bromsgrove - indicating that they used to park there, but no longer do since charging was introduced.
- 17% felt that Blue Badge Holders should not have to pay for parking, either because they have no choice but to use their cars as they can't walk very far; because it takes them longer to shop; or because they already pay for the Blue Badge so should not have to pay again to park. This caused some respondents to avoid BDC car parks on principle.
- Five people (3%) stated that the cost of parking was not worth it because there were not enough shops.

Eight people stated that they didn't use the car parks because of "system issues". These issues included:

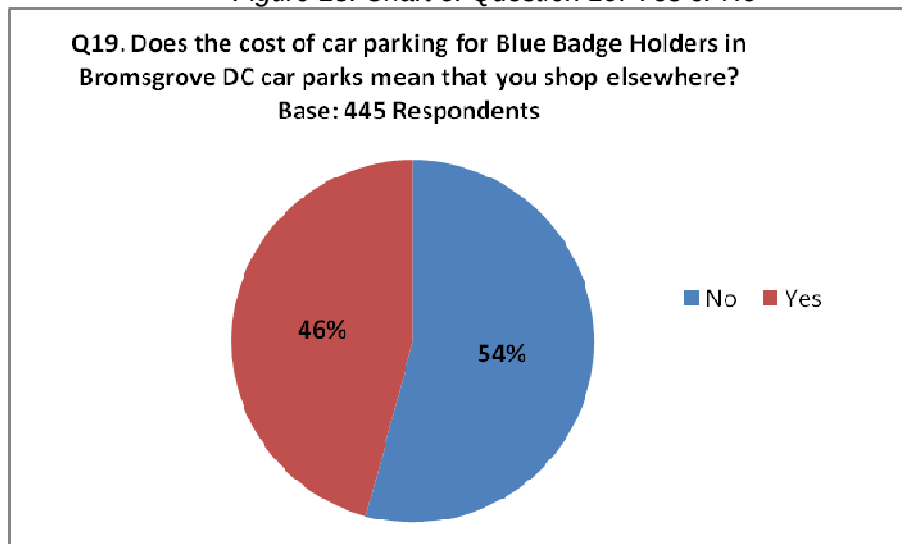
- Having to use two or three car parks to get what they wanted, moving between those closest to the shops they needed
- Finding the system confusing
- One respondent felt frustrated that they could only use the smartcard in Recreation Road, feeling it would be better if it could be used in all car parks, whereas one other stated that they didn't like the pay on foot system
- One stated that they thought supermarkets should refund parking (as some other shops do)
- One thought that the day time charges were ok, but that it was too expensive to park in the evening.
- One stated they would prefer an annual pass.

Just 25 people provided a reason as to why the cost of car parking *didn't* stop them from using BDC car parks. Of those:

- Six stated that it was because they had no choice - being disabled, they have to use their car to shop as they can't walk from home, and so they have little other choice but to use the car parks provided.
- Five people stated that they thought the cost was reasonable, and two thought that it was right that Blue Badge Holders should have to pay, just like everyone else - though it was noted that free parking might help to attract more visitors to the town.
- One person thought that having to pay to use disabled spaces helped to prevent misuse of spaces.
- One person also said that close proximity is more important than cost.

Q19. Does the cost of car parking for Blue Badge Holders in Bromsgrove DC car parks mean that you shop elsewhere?

Figure 15: Chart of Question 19: Yes or No



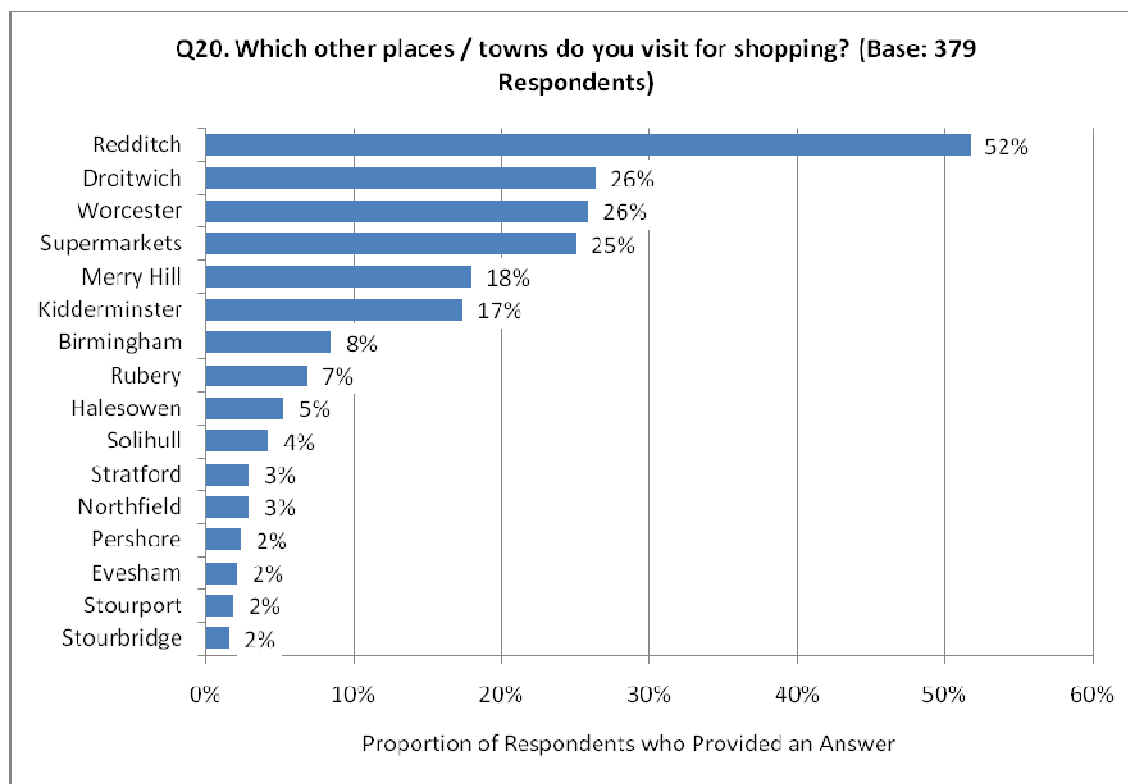
In a similar result to that of question 18, just over half of respondents (54%) stated that the cost of parking for Blue Badge Holders does *not* mean that they shop elsewhere. Leaving just under half (46%) who state that it does.

Q20. Which other places / towns do you visit for shopping?

In question 19, 204 respondents stated that the cost of parking causes them to park elsewhere - that is just under half (46%). However, regardless of the answer to question 19, 379 people (80% of total respondents) provided a list of other places or towns they visit for shopping (Q 20) and 371 provided a reason why (Q 21). This indicates that those people who do shop elsewhere are not necessarily doing so because of the charge for Blue Badge Holders to park in Bromsgrove. For both questions 20 and 21, respondents were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

The top 17 other places / towns visited for shopping (those given as answers by 5 or more people) are shown in figure 16

Figure 16: Chart of Question 20



Redditch was by far the most popular answer with half of all those who provided an answer including the town in their list. Droitwich and Worcester were also popular, favoured by around a quarter of respondents, as were out of town supermarkets (who are more likely to provide parking for free).

Other areas listed (by four people or fewer and so not included in figure 16) were: Bewdley, Malvern, Dudley, Oldbury, Harbourne, Webbs of Wychbold, Cheltenham, Wolverhampton, Leamington, Barnt Green, Warwick, Gloucester, Quniton, Coventry and Hagley.

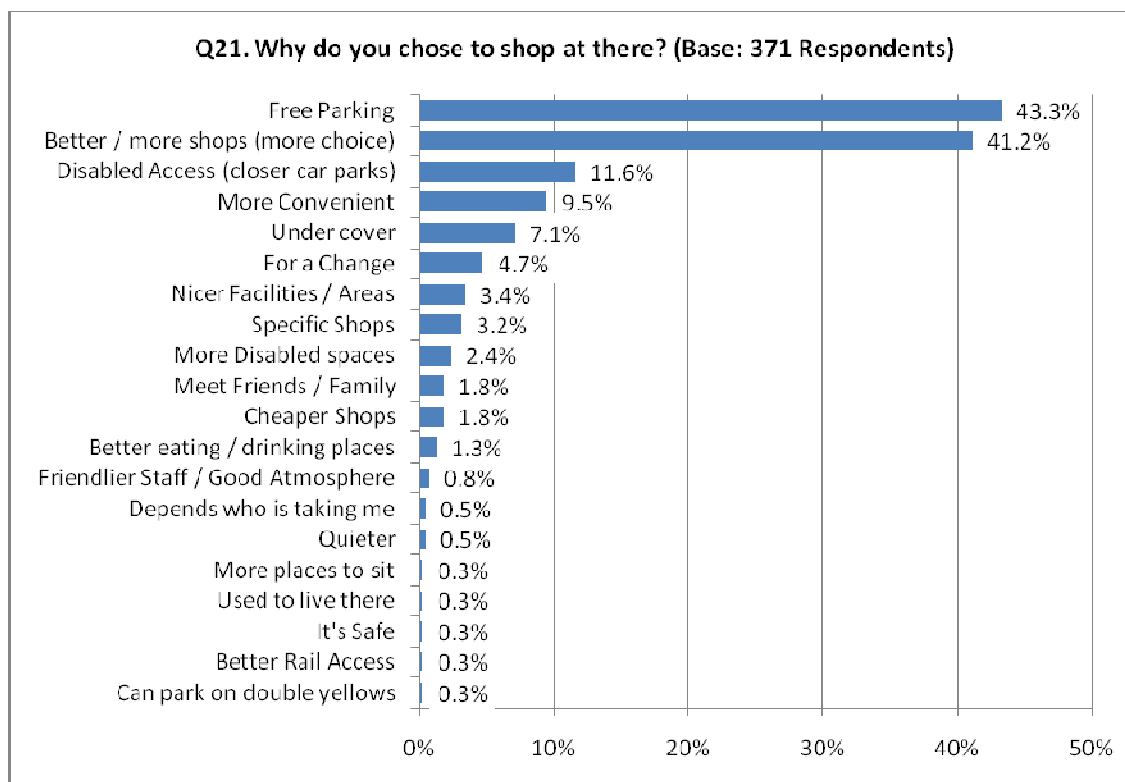
Q21. Why do you choose to shop at there?

The most frequently provided reason for visiting other towns / places to shop was because free parking was available (43.3% of respondents). Though, it must be noted that nearly as many (41.2%) stated that they chose other towns because they had better shops, or a greater variety of shops.

All other reasons were provided by a much smaller proportion of the total respondents to this question, though 12% say that they chose to shop in place that have better disabled access, and 7% stated they preferred shopping centres that were under cover with comments such as "you can get everything you need under one roof".

All the reasons provided and the relative proportions can be seen in figure 17.

Figure 17: Chart of Question 21



The "More Convenient" category included people choosing to shop in places because they were closer to where they lived, or easier to get to via road or bus / train

Many of the reasons listed in figure 17 have links to accessibility and ease of access. Even where free parking was the main reason, many blue badge holders stated that they liked areas where you could park for free because it meant they could move around car parks to limit the distance they needed to walk to reach the shops they needed. Merry Hill especially was good for this.

In answer to questions 21 and 22 many respondents listed a number of different towns and a number of different reasons why they chose to shop there, without stating which reasons related to which town(s) so it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions as to what attracts shoppers to specific towns / places. However, figure 18 shows the towns / places listed by 30 or more respondents¹, and the top five "reasons why" also listed by those respondents.

So, it is possible to say, for example, that more people who included Redditch in their list of other places they like to shop gave "better shops / more variety" as one of the reasons why they like to shop elsewhere. Hence this method provides *some* indication as to the reasons people favour certain areas.

¹ Where fewer than 30 people had given an answer, the proportions related to the reason were skewed by the opinion of one or two people leading to less accurate results.

Figure 18: Towns / places listed by 30 or more respondents, and the top five "reasons why" also listed by those respondents

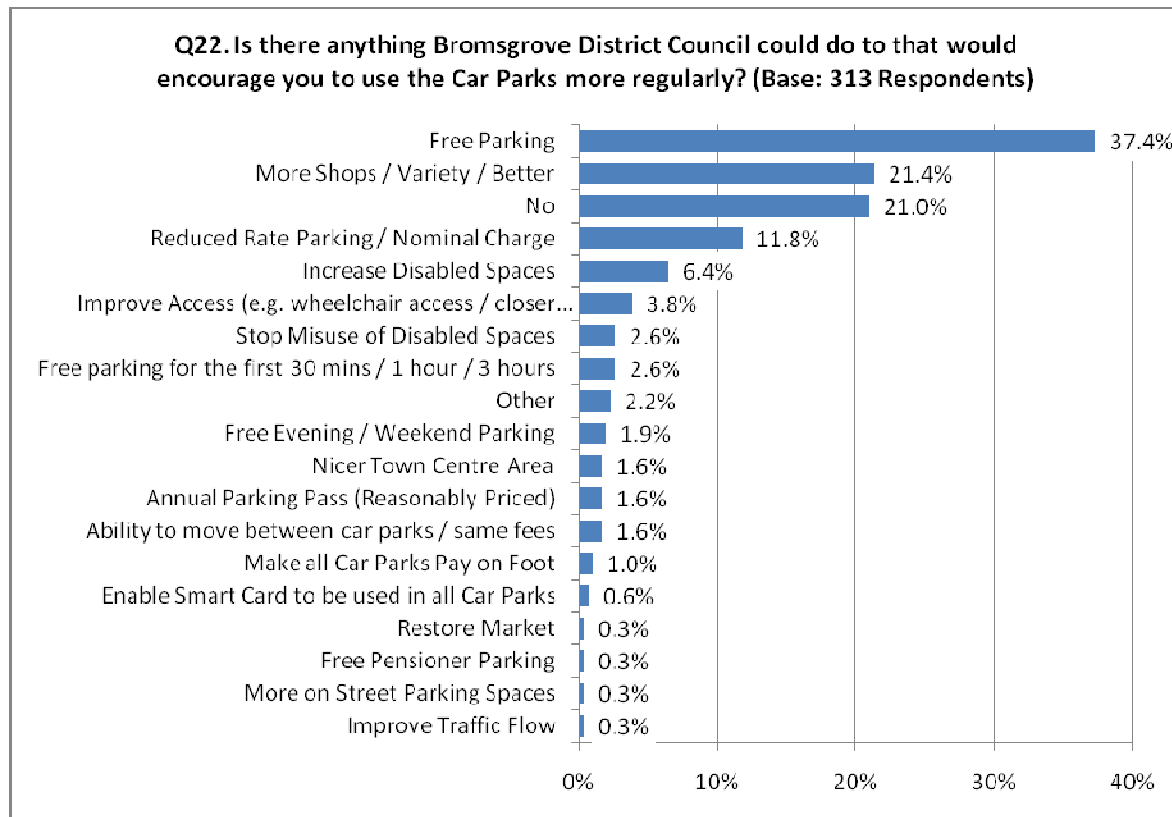
Town / Place	Top Five Reasons also listed & Proportion				
Redditch Base: 196	Better / more shops (more choice) 60.7%	Free Parking 26.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 11.2%	Under cover 10.2%	More Convenient 7.7%
Droitwich Base: 100	Free Parking 56.0%	Better / more shops (more choice) 36.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 11.0%	Nicer Facilities / Areas 6.0%	More Convenient = For a Change 5.0%
Worcester Base: 98	Better / more shops (more choice) 53.1%	Free Parking 43.9%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 9.2%	More Convenient 7.1%	Nicer Facilities / Areas = For a Change = Undercover 4.1%
Supermarkets Base: 95	Free Parking 64.2%	Better / more shops (more choice) 15.8%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 11.6%	More Convenient 9.5%	More Disabled spaces 7.4%
Merry Hill Base: 68	Better / more shops (more choice) 55.9%	Free Parking 50.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 10.3%	Under cover 10.3%	More Convenient 8.8%
Kidderminster Base: 66	Free Parking 57.6%	Better / more shops (more choice) 47.0%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 7.6%	More Convenient 6.1%	For a Change 6.1%
Birmingham Base: 32	Better / more shops (more choice) 43.8%	Free Parking 31.3%	Disabled Access (closer car parks) 15.6%	More Convenient 12.5%	Under cover 12.5%

It seems that people are more likely to choose to shop in Redditch, Worcester, Merry Hill and Birmingham because there is a better choice of shops, whereas they go to Droitwich, Supermarkets or Kidderminster to use the free parking.

Q22. Is there anything Bromsgrove District Council could do to that would encourage you to use the Car Parks more regularly?

It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 19: Chart of Question 22



62 people stated that there was not anything that Bromsgrove District Council could do that would encourage them to use the car parks more regularly, and 161 people did not answer this question. That leaves a total of 251 people who did provide a suggestion.

Despite the answers to previous questions indicating that the variety of shops was equally as important as free parking, by far the most common answer to question 22 was to make parking for Blue Badge Holders free. This must be considered alongside the fact that half of respondents stated that the cost of parking did not reduce the frequency or stop them from visiting the town.

17% of people suggested that alternatives to the current charging system might encourage them to use the car parks more regularly:

- 37 people suggested a reduced parking rate or a nominal fee for Blue Badge Holders;
- Eight people suggested making the first portion of parking time free, rather than the last hour (as in the current system), with suggested times ranging from a free first half hour, up to the first three hours;
- Five people suggested the use of a reasonably priced annual pass for disabled parking.

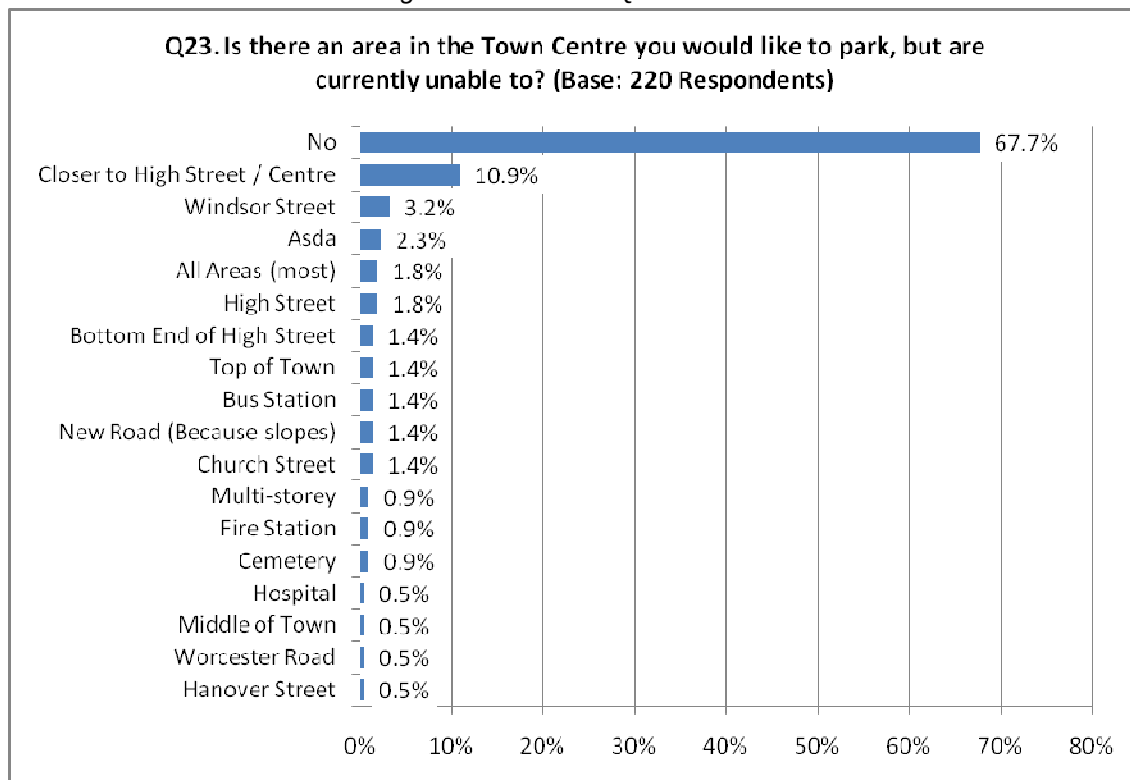
One respondent suggested that making all the car parks "pay on foot" would be especially encouraging for Blue Badge Holders as it would prevent them from having to rush back to their car when a pay and display ticket was about to run out, which is often an issue for those who cannot walk very quickly.

There were also five positive comments in answer to question 22, with people stating that they found the parking in Bromsgrove adequate.

Q23. Is there an area in the Town Centre you would like to park, but are currently unable to?

It is important to note that respondents were not presented with multiple choice answers to this question, but were free to write anything they felt was appropriate.

Figure 20: Chart of Question 23



The vast majority of respondents (67.7%) stated that there wasn't anywhere that they would like to park but were currently unable to. However, where people did provide an answer most stated they would like to be able to park closer to the High Street (11%) especially on Windsor Street or around Church Street and Chapel Walk.

Additional Comments

A selection of the additional comments left by some survey respondents are listed in figure 21.

Figure 21: Additional Comments from Respondents

Can You Tell Me Why We Have To Pay More On Windsor Street Car Park.
Have Used Asda And Found Problems The Disabled Parking Is Always Full And The Others Too Far To Walk
Why Is Windsor Street More Expensive & Yet It Is The Car Park Nearest To The Centre Shops Which As A Disabled Person I Pay More Than An Able Bodied Person
Make Parking For Disabled People Free. We Have No Choice To Be Able To Park Further Away & Walk Into Town. Also If It Was Free I Could Move From Car Park To Car Park To Get Within My Walking Distance
Act Sensibly & Re-Introduce Foc Blue Badge Parking I Know Many Who Live In Local Areas Who Avoid Bromsgrove On Principle No Wonder The Town Shops Are Empty 5 People X £100 Week X 52 = £25,000
I Really Don't Have A Problem With Being A Blue Badge Holder And Paying For My Parking As The Bays Are Near To Where I Want To Shop. I Get Really Annoyed When People Complain About Having To Pay.
I Enjoy Shopping In Bromsgrove But Paying For The Car Park Has Put Me Off So I Don't Visit Very Often
Too Expensive To Park Poor Shops
I Used To Use Bromsgrove At Least Twice A Week For Shopping & Banking When The Parking Charges Were Introduced I Stopped Why-Because I Objected To Paying Banking Etc I Park On Yellow Lines Most Times In Protest At Councils Current Policy Of Charging Blue Badge Holders
Visits To Library. Visits To Antiques Market (Much Truncated Since Councils Act Of Vandalism In Demolishing The Market Hall)
Poor Quality Of High St In General Complete High St An Eye Sore
Not Main Shopping As Having To Pay Parking Fees On Top Of Grocery Bill Makes It More Expensive. We Are Both On Pension And Pay Full Council Tax And Find Unfair.
Town centre car parking is severely restricted & grossly misused. Plus poorly monitored. The pay spaces are very well monitored. Windsor Street and Market Street car parks could quite easily and successfully be converted to barrier access and exit using the pay before you leave format like Asda, but with the 1st hour or 2 for free, incorporating more designated spaces. There is no objection to paying for a sensible service, (Asda is a joke) encouraging more disabled to shop in Bromsgrove instead of going elsewhere.