

Darlington Town Centre Parking Survey
October 2015
Report

Analysis and report by
NWA Social Research

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1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Darlington Borough Council commissioned NWA Social Research in Autumn 2015 to undertake research with visitors to Darlington parking in one of six town centre car parks. The primary purpose of the research was to better understand how and why drivers make a choice on where to park in off street car parks in Darlington Town Centre. The survey also offered the opportunity to collect information on reasons for visiting the town centre, frequency of visits, location of home address and other characteristics useful for planning the provision of facilities and services in the town centre.

The six car parks, including the privately owned Cornmill Car Park, and the number of completed surveys at the car park are shown below together with a range of confidence intervals. (Statistical reliability depends both on the number of responses and the response given):

				Confidence intervals +/-%		
		Count	Col %	50/50	30/70	10/90
Location	Abbots Yard	133	16.8%	8.5	7.8	5.1
	Commercial Street	101	12.7%	9.8	9.0	5.9
	East Street	125	15.7%	8.8	8.1	5.3
	Kendrew Street	131	16.5%	8.5	7.8	5.1
	Cornmill Car Park	171	21.5%	7.5	6.9	4.5
	Beaumont Street	133	16.8%	8.5	7.8	5.1
Total		794	100.0%	3.5	3.2	2.1

Excluded from the survey were drivers using on street pay and display or parking on street outside of the town centre area.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire was designed in conjunction and with the approval of the Client.

The survey was conducted using face to face contact with drivers returning to their vehicles in the off street car parks and took place between 11am and 5pm on a Saturday and a weekday.

The questionnaire was designed to take approximately 5 to 7 minutes. A copy of the questionnaire is contained at Appendix 1.

The number of interviews undertaken and the times these interviews were undertaken is shown in the table overleaf.

		Day of week				Time of interview				Total	
		Weekday		Saturday		Before noon		Afternoon		No:	Col %
		No:	Col %	No:	Col %	No:	Col %	No:	Col %		
Location	Abbots Yard	62	16.9%	71	16.6%	31	15.5%	102	17.2%	133	16.8%
	Commercial Street	66	18.0%	35	8.2%	22	11.0%	79	13.3%	101	12.7%
	East Street	60	16.4%	65	15.2%	31	15.5%	94	15.8%	125	15.7%
	Kendrew Street	55	15.0%	76	17.8%	31	15.5%	100	16.8%	131	16.5%
	Cornmill Car Park	63	17.2%	108	25.2%	49	24.5%	122	20.5%	171	21.5%
	Beaumont Street	60	16.4%	73	17.1%	36	18.0%	97	16.3%	133	16.8%
Total		366	100.0	428	100.0	200	100.0	594	100.0	794	100.0 %

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 CAR PARK USED:

The majority of respondents had chosen the car park they were interviewed in because of 'convenience' (63%). 15% stated that they had done so out of 'habit/always park there', while 9% stated that it was the first space they found, while only small numbers gave 'ease of parking' (5%), 'price' (5%) or 'safety/security' (1%) responses. 4% gave 'other' responses.

79% of respondents who had stated that this was the first car parking space they found had been to other car parks in the area before finding the space in which they parked. 89% of respondents stated that they had found the car park they were interviewed in through 'habit/used car park before'. 5% had 'followed Blue Parking signs', while only small numbers gave 'asked someone/ someone told me' (3%), 'used SatNav' (1%) or 'looked up information on where to park in advance of visit' (3 respondents). 2% gave 'other' responses.

Three-quarters (74%) of respondents stated that it had been 'very easy' to find the car park they were using, with a further 18% giving 'fairly easy' responses. 8% gave either 'not very' (6%) or 'not at all easy' (2%) responses.

2.2 REGULARITY OF VISITS:

56% of respondents indicated that they visit Darlington Town Centre by car at least once a week (3% '6 to 7 days a week'/4% '4 to 5 days a week'/19% '2 to 3 days a week'/30% 'about once a week'). A quarter indicated that they visit by car 'at least once a month' (25%), while 18% gave either 'less than once a month' (15%) or 'this was my first visit' (3%) responses. 3 respondents gave 'not sure' responses.

Respondents were most likely to use 'Council' car parking facilities (86%) when visiting Darlington Town Centre. 5% indicated that they use 'on-street' parking (3% 'free'/2% 'paid for') and 6% use private car parks. 2% gave 'other' responses and 1% were 'not sure'.

The majority of respondents (71%) indicated that they 'never' use variable message signs when choosing where to park in Darlington Town Centre. 24% 'sometimes' use variable message signs, while one-in-twenty respondents 'always' (5%) use variable message signs when choosing where to park.

2.3 VISIT TO DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE:

81% of respondents indicated that they were visiting the Town Centre for 'shopping' purposes. 15% of all respondents had 'personal reasons (visiting doctor, banking etc.)' for

visiting Darlington Town Centre, while less than one-in-ten respondents gave 'work/business' (6%), 'leisure' (5%) or 'visiting friends or relatives' (3%) responses.

41% of the overall sample gave their total spend on the day of being interviewed as between £0 and £30 (9% 'less than £5'/7% '£5 to £10'/12% '£11 to £20'/13% '£21 to £30'). 18% gave their total spend as '£31 to £50', while 26% gave either '£51 to £100' (17%) or 'more than £100' (9%). 15% of the overall sample were 'not sure' how much they would spend on their visit.

2.4 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS:

61% of respondents were female and 39% were male. 58% of the overall sample were under the age of 50; 42% were older than this with 8% being over 70.

One-in-ten respondents (10%) reported having a long-standing illness or disability. 80% of these respondents stated that it limits their activities in some way and 66% were Blue Badge holders.

97% of respondents gave their ethnic group as 'White British'.

94% of those interviewed had used a standard parking bay, while 5% had used a disabled bay. 1% had used a motorcycle bay.

3. CAR PARK USED

Question 1: ‘What was your main reason for choosing to park your car in this space today (rather than park somewhere else)?’

Question 2: ‘How did you find this car park today?’

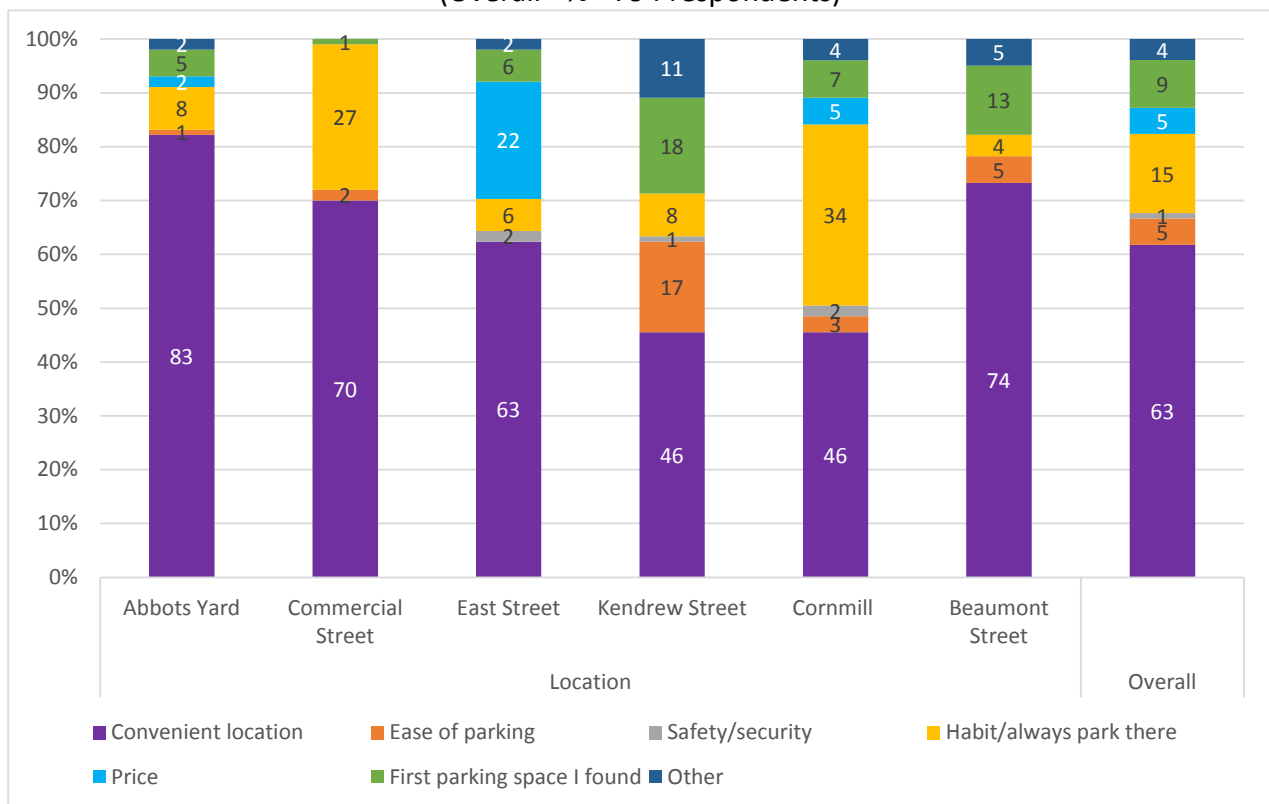
Question 3: ‘How easy was it to find the car park you used today?’

APPENDIX 2 – Pages 2 to 5

3.1 The majority of respondents stated that they had chosen the car park they were interviewed in because of ‘convenience’ (63%) with such responses being highest amongst respondents interviewed in Abbots Yard (83%) while lowest amongst those in Kendrew Street (46%) and Cornmill Car Park (46%). This was particularly the case for older respondents: 60/69 years (75%) and 70+ years (72%). 15% stated that they had done so out of ‘habit/always park there’ (rising to 34% of respondents in Cornmill Car Park), while 9% stated that it was the first space they found, while only small numbers gave ‘ease of parking’ (5%), ‘price’ (5%) or ‘safety/security’ (1%) responses. 4% gave ‘other’ responses. People with disabilities used Abbots Yard (28%) and Commercial Street (24%) in preference to other Car Parks.

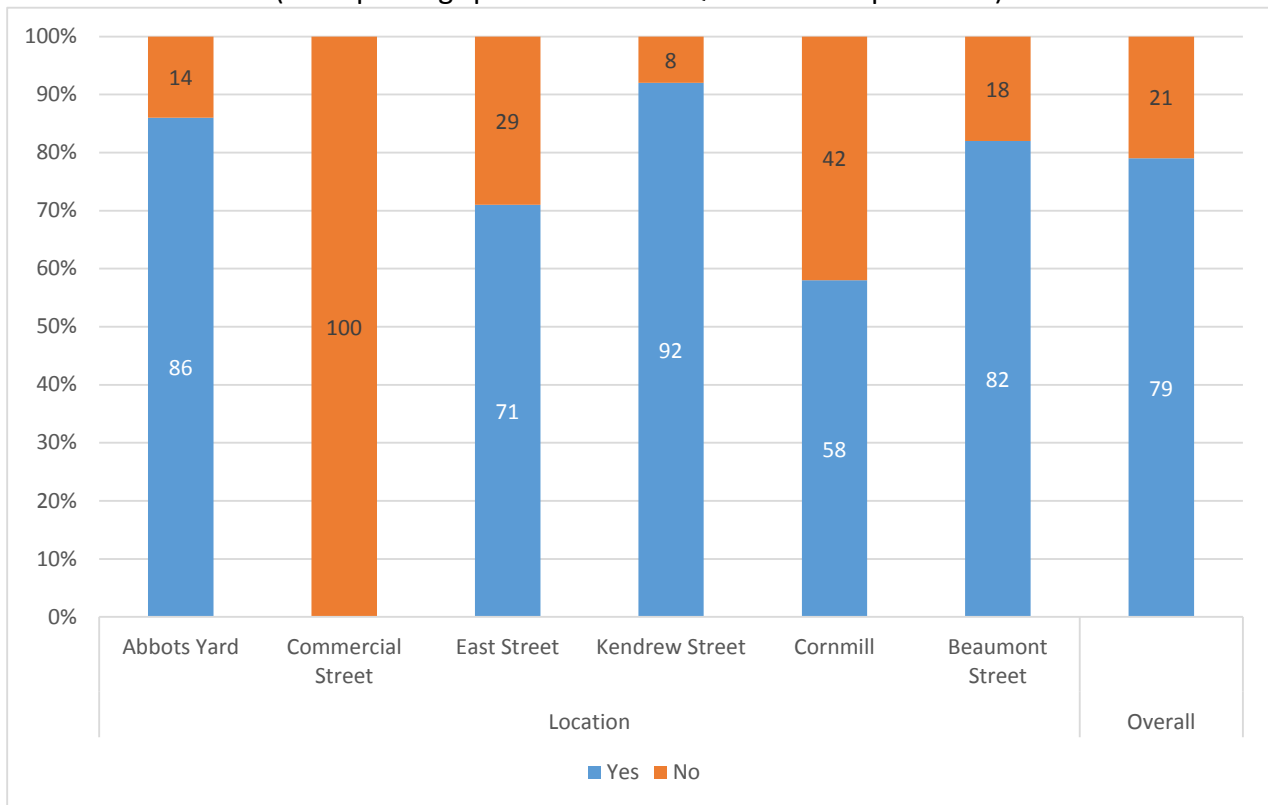
Q1: What was your main reason for choosing to park your car in this space today (rather than park somewhere else)?

(Overall - % - 794 respondents)

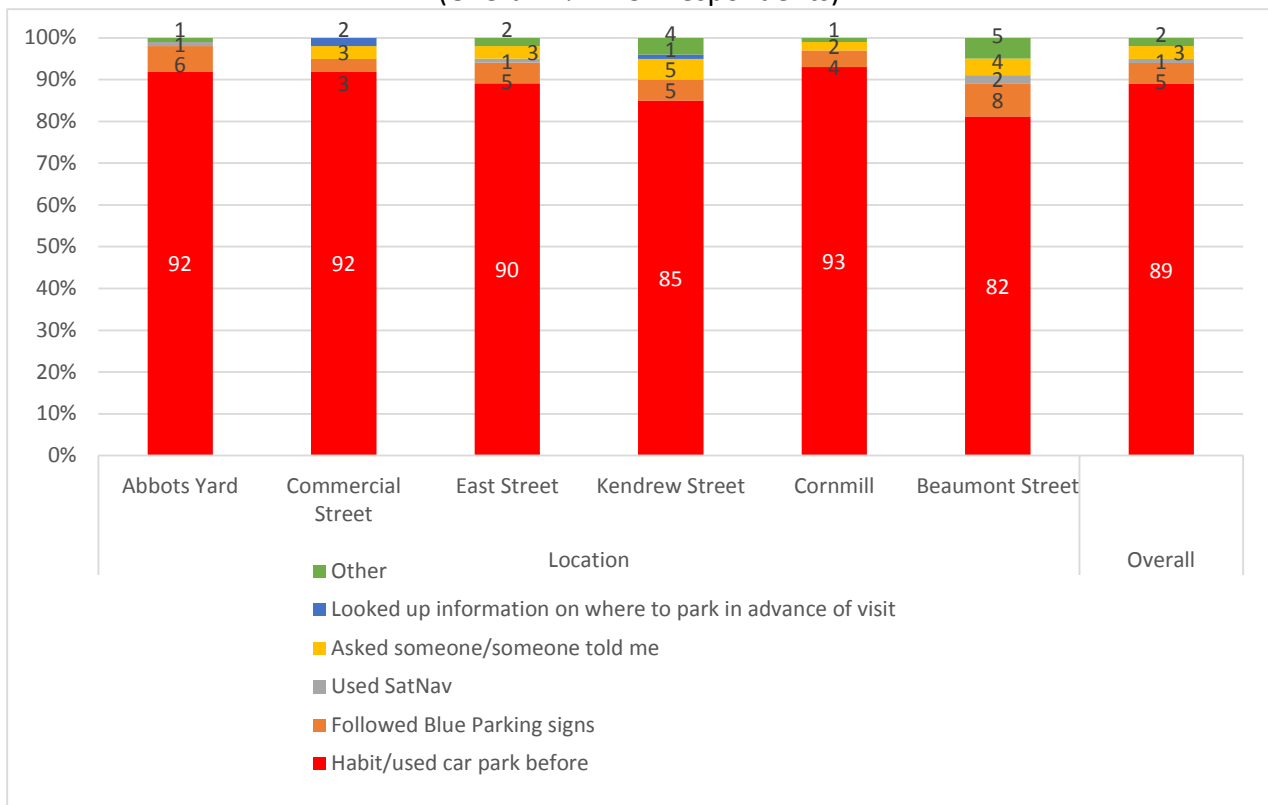


3.2 79% of respondents who had stated that this was the first car parking space they found had been to other car parks first rising to 92% of respondents interviewed in Kendrew Street. Only 50% of people with disabilities had been to another car park.

Q1a: Did you go to other car parks first?
 ('First parking space I found' at Q1 - % - 68 respondents)

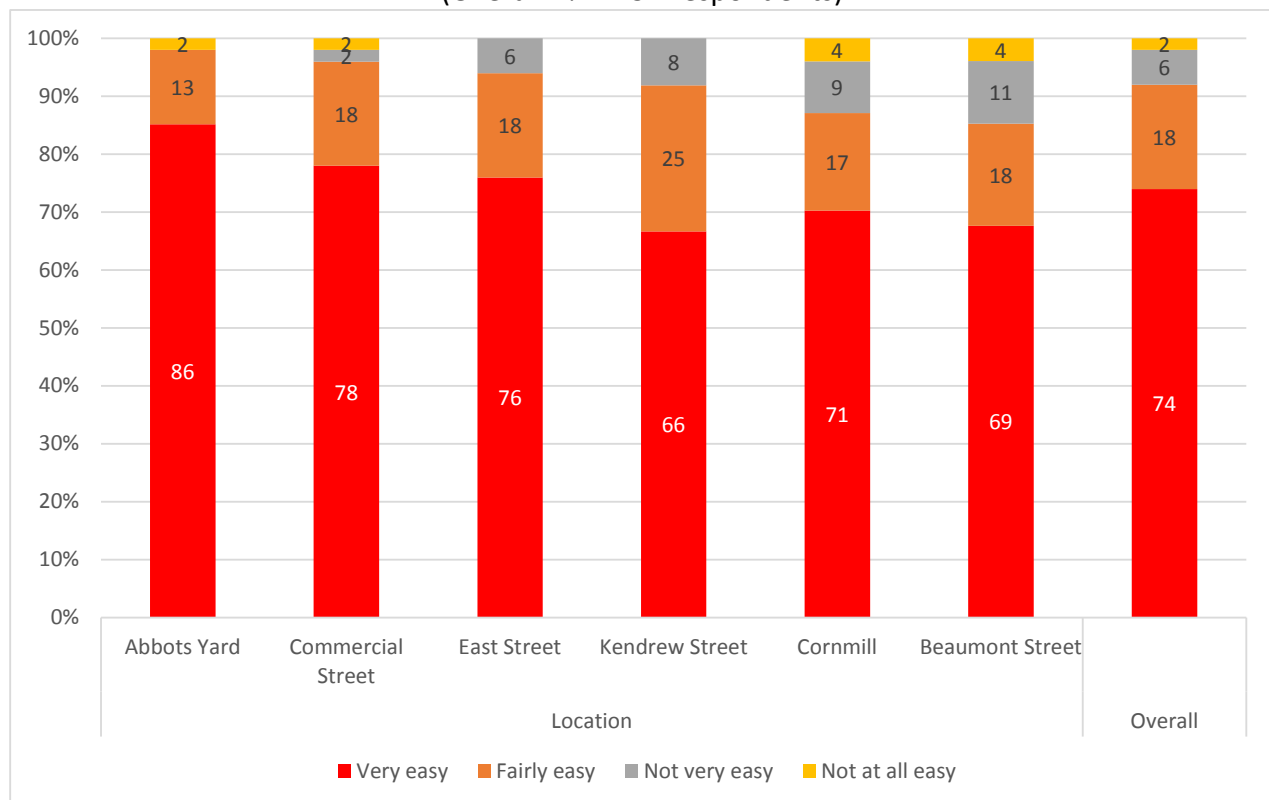


Q2: How did you find this car park today?
 (Overall - % - 794 respondents)



- 3.3 89% of respondents stated that they had found the car park they were interviewed in through 'habit/used car park before' rising to 93% of respondents using Cornmill Car Park and falling to 82% in Beaumont Street. 5% had 'followed Blue Parking signs', while only small numbers gave 'asked someone/someone told me' (3%), 'used SatNav' (1%) or 'looked up information on where to park in advance of visit' (0% [3 respondents]) responses. 2% gave 'other' responses.
- 3.4 Three-quarters (74%) of respondents stated that it had been 'very easy' to find the car park they were using, rising to 86% of respondents in Abbots Yard, with a further 18% giving 'fairly easy' responses (rising to 25% of respondents in Kendrew Street). 8% gave either 'not very' (6%) or 'not at all easy' (2%) responses rising to 13% ('not') of respondents using Beaumont Street car park. 82% of people with disabilities found finding the car park 'very easy'.

Q3: How easy was it to find the car park you used today?
(Overall - % - 794 respondents)



4. REGULARITY OF VISITS

Question 4: 'How often do you visit Darlington Town Centre in your car nowadays?'

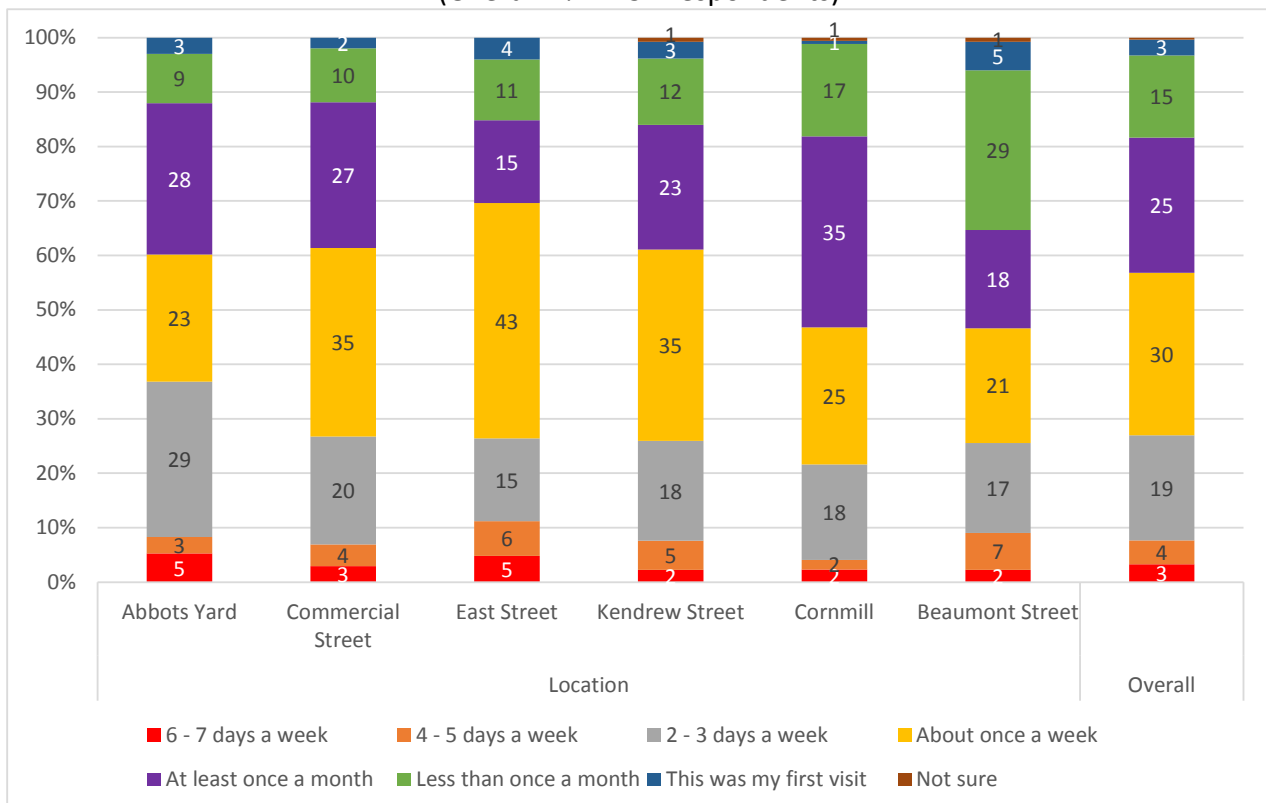
Question 5: 'When you have visited Darlington Town Centre in your car, which type of parking have you used most often in the last year?'

Question 6: 'How often do you use the variable message signs (giving information on available parking spaces in the main car parks) when choosing where to park in Darlington Town Centre?'

APPENDIX 2 – Pages 6 to 8

4.1 56% of respondents indicated that they visit Darlington Town Centre by car at least once a week (3% '6 to 7 days a week'/4% '4 to 5 days a week'/19% '2 to 3 days a week'/30% 'about once a week'), with such responses being highest amongst respondents interviewed in the East Street car park (69%). 8% of young people (17 to 29 years) (compared to 3% in the general population) visited Darlington Town Centre 6–7 days a week. A quarter indicated that they visit by car 'at least once a month' (25%) rising to 35% of Cornmill respondents, while 18% gave either 'less than once a month' (15%) or 'this was my first visit' (3%) responses. 3 respondents (0%) gave 'not sure' responses.

Q4: How often do you visit Darlington Town Centre in your car nowadays?
(Overall - % - 794 respondents)

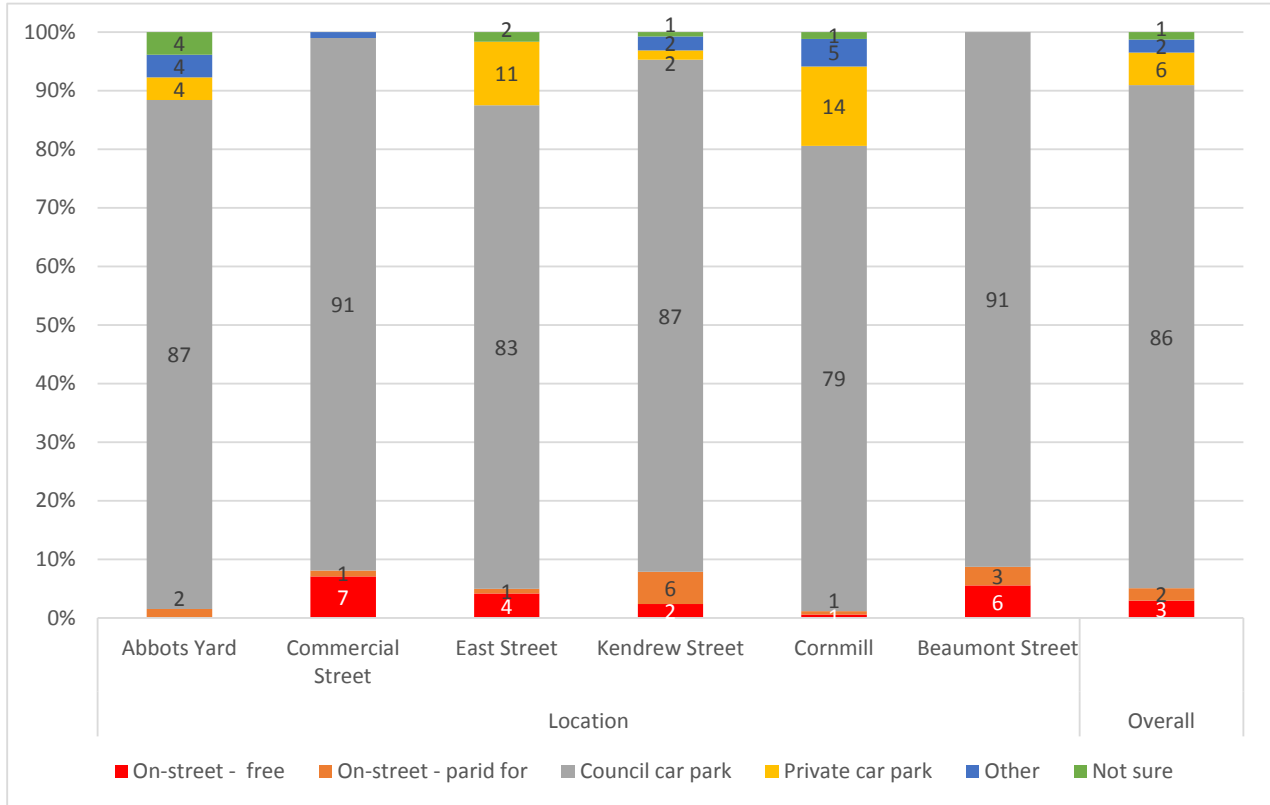


4.2 Respondents were most likely to use 'Council' car parking facilities (86%, 94% of people with a disability) when visiting Darlington Town Centre with such responses remaining at over 80% for all subgroups listed. 5% indicated that they use 'on-street' parking (3%

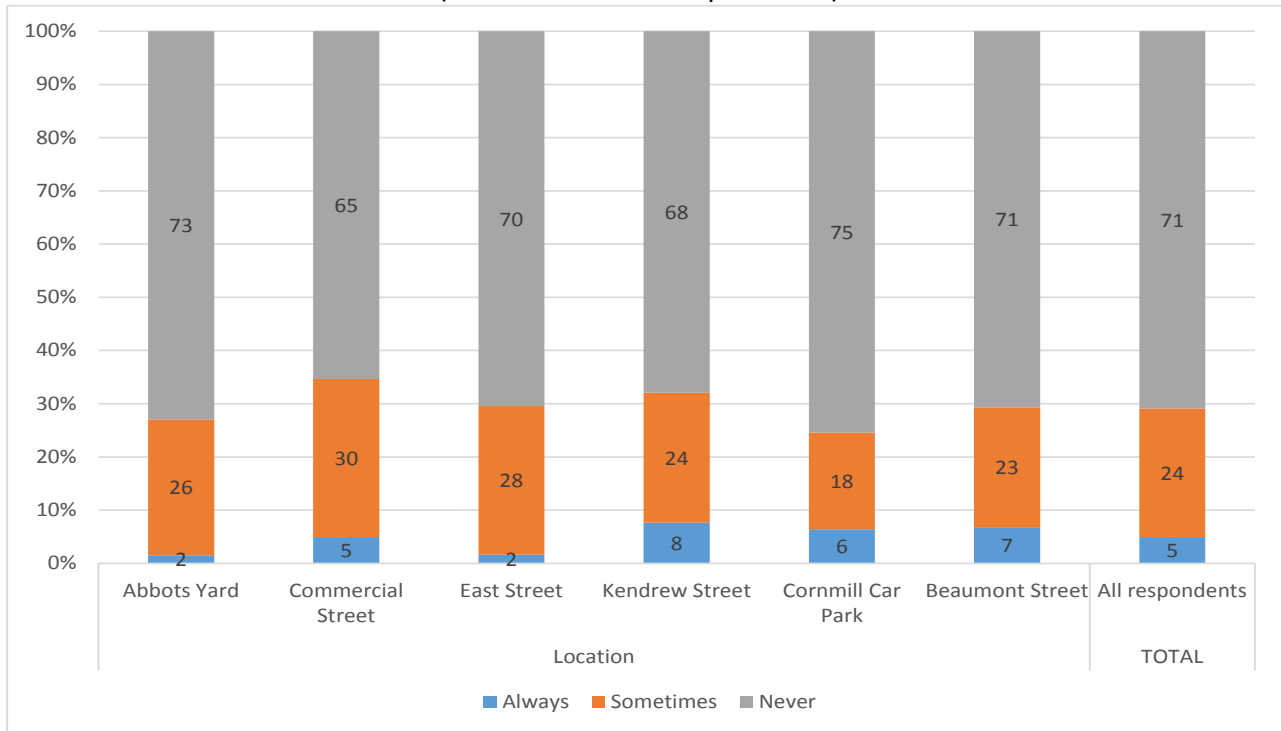
'free' /2% 'paid for') and 6% use private car parks. 2% gave 'other' responses and 1% were 'not sure'.

Q5: When you have visited Darlington Town Centre in your car, which type of parking have you used most often in the last year?

(Overall - % - 771 respondents)



Q6: How often do you use the variable message signs when choosing where to park in Darlington Town Centre?
(Overall - % - 794 respondents)



4.3 The majority of respondents (71%) indicated that they ‘never’ use variable message signs when choosing where to park in Darlington Town Centre with such responses remaining at over 60% for all subgroups. 24% ‘sometimes’ use variable message signs with respondents interviewed on a weekday being more likely than those interviewed on a Saturday to give such responses (30% cf. 19%), while one-in-twenty respondents ‘always’ (5%) use variable message signs when choosing where to park. 36% of 60 to 69 years use variable message signs when choosing where to park in Darlington Town Centre.

5. VISIT TO DARLINGTON TOWN CENTRE

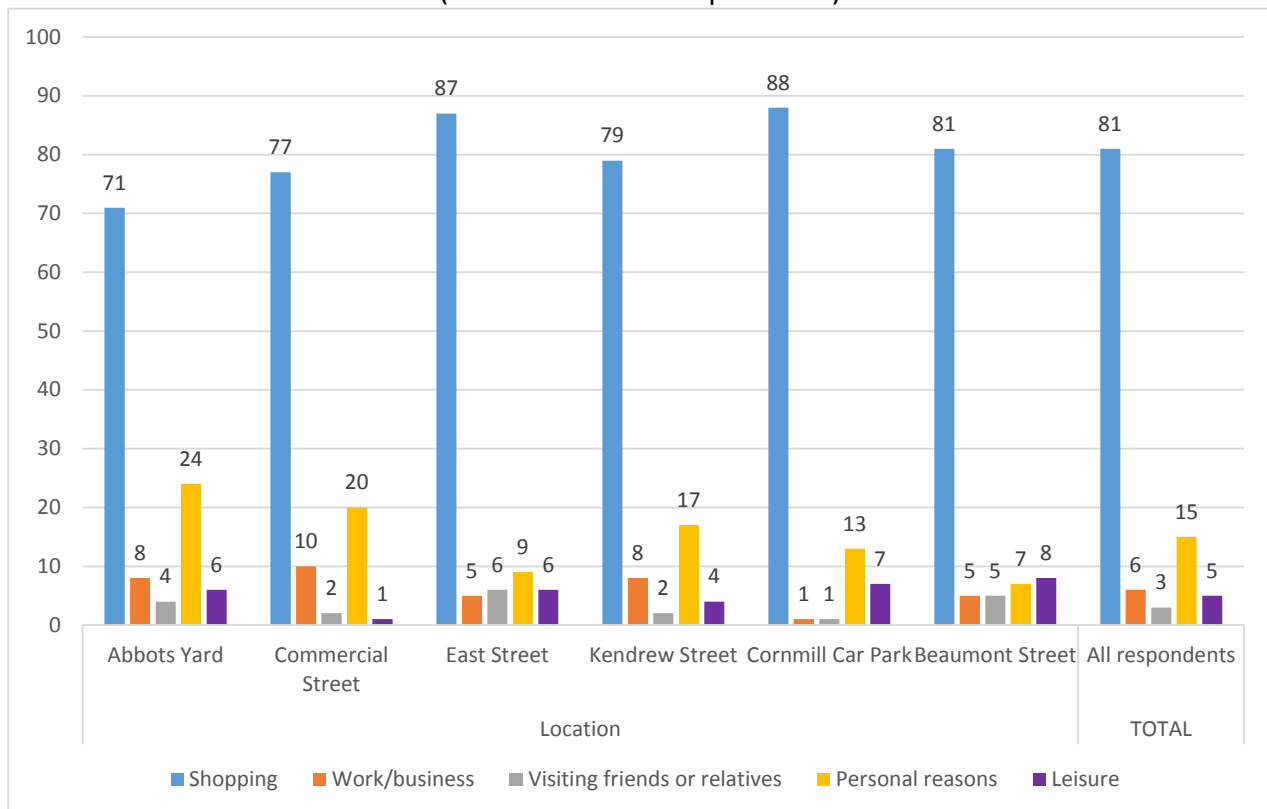
Question 7: ‘What was your main reason(s) for visiting Darlington Town Centre today?’

Question 8: ‘About how much did you spend on your visit to the Town Centre today?’

APPENDIX 2 – Pages 9 to 10

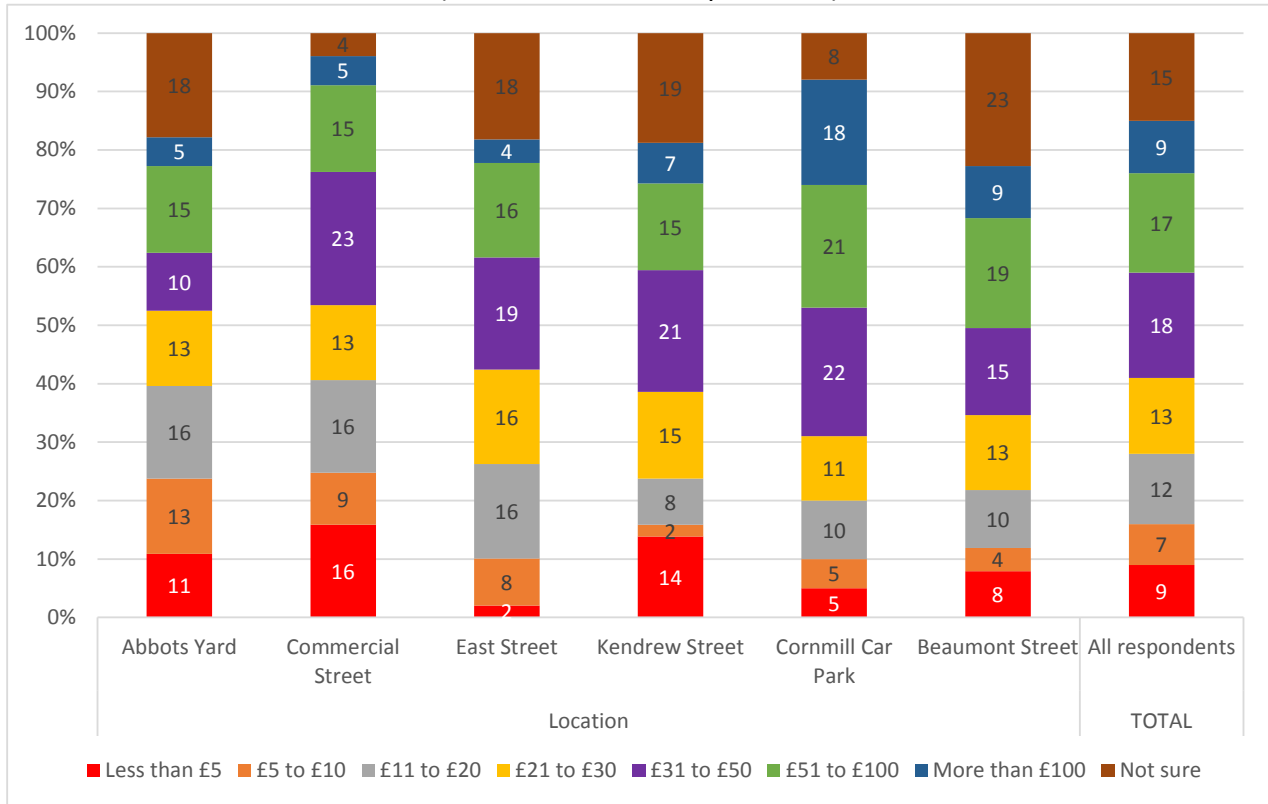
5.1 81% of respondents (73% on a weekday and 88% on a Saturday) indicated that they were visiting the Town Centre for ‘shopping’ purposes, falling to 71% of respondents in Abbots Yard and rising to 88% of those in Cornmill Car Park. 15% of all respondents had ‘personal reasons (visiting doctor, banking etc.)’ for visiting Darlington Town Centre rising to 24% of respondents in Abbots Yard, while less than one-in-ten respondents gave ‘work/business’ (6%), ‘leisure’ (5%) or ‘visiting friends or relatives’ (3%) responses.

Q7: What was your main reason(s) for visiting Darlington Town Centre today?
(Overall - % - 794 respondents)



5.2 41% of the overall sample gave their total spend on the day of being interviewed as between £0 and £30 (9% ‘less than £5’/7% ‘£5 to £10’/12% ‘£11 to £20’/13% ‘£21 to £30’), with such responses being highest amongst respondents in Commercial Street (54%). 18% gave their total spend as ‘£31 to £50’, while 26% gave either ‘£51 to £100’ (17%) or ‘more than £100’ (9%) responses rising to 39% of respondents in Cornmill Car Park. 15% of the overall sample were ‘not sure’ how much they would spend on their visit. Women were more likely than men (61% cf. 49%) to spend between £21 and £100+ on their visit.

Q8: About how much did you spend on your visit to the Town Centre?
(Overall - % - 794 respondents)



6. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Question 9: Gender

Question 10: Age

Question 11: Long-standing illness, disability or infirmity

Question 12: 'Does this illness or disability limit your activities in any way?'

Question 13: 'Are you a Blue Badge holder?'

Question 14: Ethnic origin

Question 15: Type of parking bay used

APPENDIX 2 – Pages 11 to 17

- 6.1 The majority of respondents were female (61%) and 39% were male. This was similar across all locations, interviewing times and days and also for those with, or without, a disability (44% cf. 56%).
- 6.2 58% of the overall sample were under the age of 50; 42% were older than this with 8% being over 70. Only in the youngest age group (17 to 29 years) were the genders almost balanced (48% cf. 52%).
- 6.3 One-in-ten respondents (10%) reported having a long-standing illness or disability. 80% of these respondents stated that it does limit their activities in some way and 66% were Blue Badge holders.
- 6.4 97% of respondents gave their ethnic group as 'White British'.
- 6.5 94% of those interviewed had used a standard parking bay, while 5% had used a disabled bay. 1% had used a motorcycle bay.