

Car Park Charges Golden Acre and Otley Chevin

Date: 2 January 2024

Report of: Development Manager

Report to: Chief Officer Climate Energy and Green Spaces

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report outlines the response to proposals to introduce car park charges at Golden Acre Park and Otley Chevin Forest Park following recent public consultation. A modest parking charge would be introduced to fund surface improvements, bay marking, signage, and ongoing maintenance. Drivers would pay a charge for each visit, with a season ticket option to be introduced for those who regularly visit. A range of payments methods would be offered including card, mobile phone, or cash for pre-paid tickets. 'Blue Badge' holders would be exempt from paying car park charges.

The consultation results highlight clear opposition in principle to introducing charges but acknowledge that some car parks need improvement and no viable alternative proposals to raise the required funding to maintain the car parks have been made. There is a clear majority in favour of 'blue badge' holders going free and for discounts to be offered at Golden Acre café. A minority of people use cash to make payment with the majority choosing card or

Recommendations

The Chief Officer Climate, Energy and Green Spaces is recommended:

- a) To note the finding of the report and support the principle of the introduction of modest car park charges at Golden Acre Park and Otley Chevin Forest Park. This concept will now move forward to the next stage of reporting the proposal jointly to the Chief Highways Officer and set out the relevant legal requirements and key considerations to implement all necessary arrangements as per the Council's scheme of delegation.
- b) To note that specific car parking tariffs findings and that these will be finalised and advertised as part of meeting relevant legal requirements to enforce charges introduced as part of the statutory test.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report outlines the response to initial proposals to introduce car park charges at Golden Acre Park and Otley Chevin Forest Park following public consultation that ended on Sunday 5 November with 7,457 responses received. This is non statutory consultation and informs the key considerations of the principle of introduction of charging in these specific car parks. The location of each car park at these two sites is contained in Appendix One.
- 2 A summary of the proposals are as follows.
 - To introduce a modest parking charge to fund the surface improvements, bay marking, signage, and ongoing maintenance. It is proposed that work would commence on improvements to Arthington Road at Golden Acre and Upper and Lower Shawfield at Otley Chevin as a priority.
 - Drivers would pay a charge for each visit, although there is potential for a season ticket option to be introduced for those who regularly visit.
 - 'Blue Badge' holders would be exempt from paying car park charges.
 - A range of payments methods would be offered including credit or debit card, mobile phone, or cash payment for pre-paid tickets. Cash payments on-site are not proposed due to the risk of theft and/or vandalism.
 - The need for measures to prevent overspill parking would be assessed after introducing any charges if this was a problem, for example by introducing double yellow lines.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 3 The introduction of a modest charge for car parking would enable improvement works to be carried out as well as meet costs associated with maintaining car park areas. If funding is not identified, then the car parks will continue to decline with limited opportunity for any significant improvements.
- 4 It is recognised that there may be the potential for displaced parking onto the adjacent highway network. Any obstruction to the highway or any other resulting road safety concern would be closely monitored before the instigation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Provision has therefore been made to introduce TROs if required to manage and control parking on the adjacent highway such as for example the introduction of double yellow lines.
- 5 The proposal seeks to address the concerns raised during consultation (considered in more detail later in this report) whilst acknowledging the risks associated with allowing car park surfaces to deteriorate and the revenue costs associated with maintenance.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 6 The proposal contributes to the Best City Ambition as follows.
 - Health and wellbeing: enabling every community in the city to have safe connected spaces, streets and paths to access a local park or green space, providing somewhere to be active and to play, helping to improve mental and physical health across all ages.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

- 7 The consultation commenced on Wednesday 11 October and ended on Sunday 5 November. Posters were displayed at both sites containing details of how to respond with paper copies made available at the café at Golden Acre and at local libraries and links to the survey widely shared on social media. Overall, 4,493 people completed the survey for Golden Acre Park and 2,964 for Otley Chevin Forest Park.
- 8 Appendix Two provides a summary analysis of the results. Whilst there is clear opposition, the consultation results are largely in accordance with the more detailed aspects of the proposal with examples as follows.
- The individual car parks in most need of improvement at Arthington Road, Upper and Lower Shawfield are rated the lowest in terms of their condition.
 - There is a clear majority in favour of 'blue badge' holders going free.
 - A minority of people use cash to make payment with the majority choosing card or app payment.
- 9 A briefing was provided to local ward members in Adel and Wharfedale, Guiseley and Rawdon and Otley and Yeadon along with meetings held with those ward members who wished to attend. Feedback given by local ward members was generally in opposition to the proposals.
- 10 A letter was also received by Otley Town Council indicating that they cannot support proposals for introducing car park charges at Otley Chevin Forest Park.

What are the resource implications?

- 11 The level of charge proposed are described as 'modest' in the consultation document and from the consultation results, the average of what would be considered as a reasonable charge is as follows:
- Up to £1 for the first hour.
 - £1.35 up to 2 hours.
 - £2.50 for half a day.
 - Up to £4 per day.
 - Season ticket: £60 per annum.
- 12 Based on the times indicated when people visit the park, it is proposed that charges could be levied from 8am to 8pm as follows:
- £1 up to 2 hours.
 - £2.50 for half a day
 - £4 for a full day
 - Season ticket: £10 per month or £80 per annum

13 This compares favourably with core city averages as set out below which indicates that charges start from 90p for the first hour rising to £5 for a full day.

Core City	Site(s) and Hours	Charges	Payment
Birmingham	Cannon Hill Park 7am to 11:30pm, every day	Up to 4 hours £2.80 Up to 16.5 hours £4.20 Blue badge holders are free No season ticket option	Cash or Pay by Phone app
Nottingham	Wollaton Park charges apply all day	Up to 2 hours £3 All day £5 Blue badge holders are free Season ticket £75	Pay by RingGo app or in shops/cafés
Manchester	Heaton Park 10am to 5pm	First hour £1 1 to 3 hours £2 over 3 hours £3 Disabled badge holders are free Season ticket £75 (limited number)	Cash or card using machine or Pay by Phone app
Sheffield	Graves Park, Endcliffe Park, Millhouses Park and Hillsborough Park 9:30am to 6:30pm, 7 days a week	90 pence per hour over 4 hours £3.60 Blue Badge holders and motorcycles have free unlimited parking in these car parks	Cash or card using machine or Pay by Phone app

14 It is not proposed that a decision on actual charges to apply is made at this stage, however for budget purposes, financial projections for introducing charges at the two sites highlighted are contained in the table below.

Major Park	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Golden Acre	-74,835	-27,213
Otley Chevin Park	-48,545	-17,653
Total	-123,380	-44,866

15 This takes account of prudential borrowing costs associated with capital improvements along with other revenue costs and year one costs associated with implementing traffic regulation orders.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

16 It is clear from the consultation analysis that there is opposition in principle with 80% disagreeing with the proposal at Golden Acre and 84% at Otley Chevin. This is not surprising given that people are being asked to pay for something that they have considered to be 'free'. This stated opposition does however need to be addressed if a decision to proceed with the proposals is made.

17 The questionnaire went on to ask, "If no, how do you suggest the costs of maintaining the infrastructure are met?". Nearly half the respondents volunteered comments stating that costs could be met from existing Council budgets which increases to around two-thirds if stopping or limiting other projects is also factored in. Most of the other comments reflect this theme, which include efficiencies elsewhere, sponsorship and other sources of income already considered.

18 It should be noted that there have been considerable pressures on council budgets in recent years with Leeds at the forefront of a civic enterprise approach whereby attractions (including

retail and cafés) have been developed to increase net income and support the overall parks budget along with cost saving measures. There continues to be pressure on council spending however, which has led to a need for further limitations to the budget for infrastructure improvement and maintenance. It is important to note any revenue generated from charging for car parking at these parks will be used to mitigate the impact of funding reductions and therefore be used to fund and invest in parks.

What are the legal implications?

- 19 Local authorities may under the powers of section 35 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, impose charges for parking in car parks provided under section 32 or 33(4) of that Act.
- 20 A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is a legal order made by a Local Authority and would be required to be implemented to charge and enforce payment via fixed penalty notices.
- 21 This is a significant operational decision and therefore not subject to call in. There are no access issues with regard to this report.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 22 There are many options which were considered in respect of the Council budget set out in a report to Executive Board in December 2023. Developing a Council capital programme for the improvement of car parks in green spaces is not considered a viable option and there are no other sources of suitable sustainable funding available to improve and maintain car park areas.

How will success be measured?

- 23 Success will be measured by the introduction of car park fees coinciding with improvements in progress to car parks at Arthington Road (Golden Acre) and Upper and Lower Shawfield (Otley Chevin). The funding raised from car park charges will then enable the development of a capital programme to enable further improvements to be made to other car parks and support the cost of maintaining the car park areas.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 24 The timetable to prepare and implement traffic regulation orders (TRO) is as follows.
 - Draft schedules and statement of reason.
 - Prepare and publish orders.
 - Advertise and undertake consultation.
 - Resolve objections.
 - Finalise design of signs and markings.
 - Report objections to Committee.
 - Issue work instruction.
 - Arrange to seal orders.
 - Completion and implementation
- 25 It is anticipated that this would take around 5 months to complete. Once this is completed then preparations could be made on site install signage and payment machines anticipated to be completed within one month of TRO implementation.

Appendices

- One: car park locations at Golden Acre Park and Otley Chevin Forest Park.

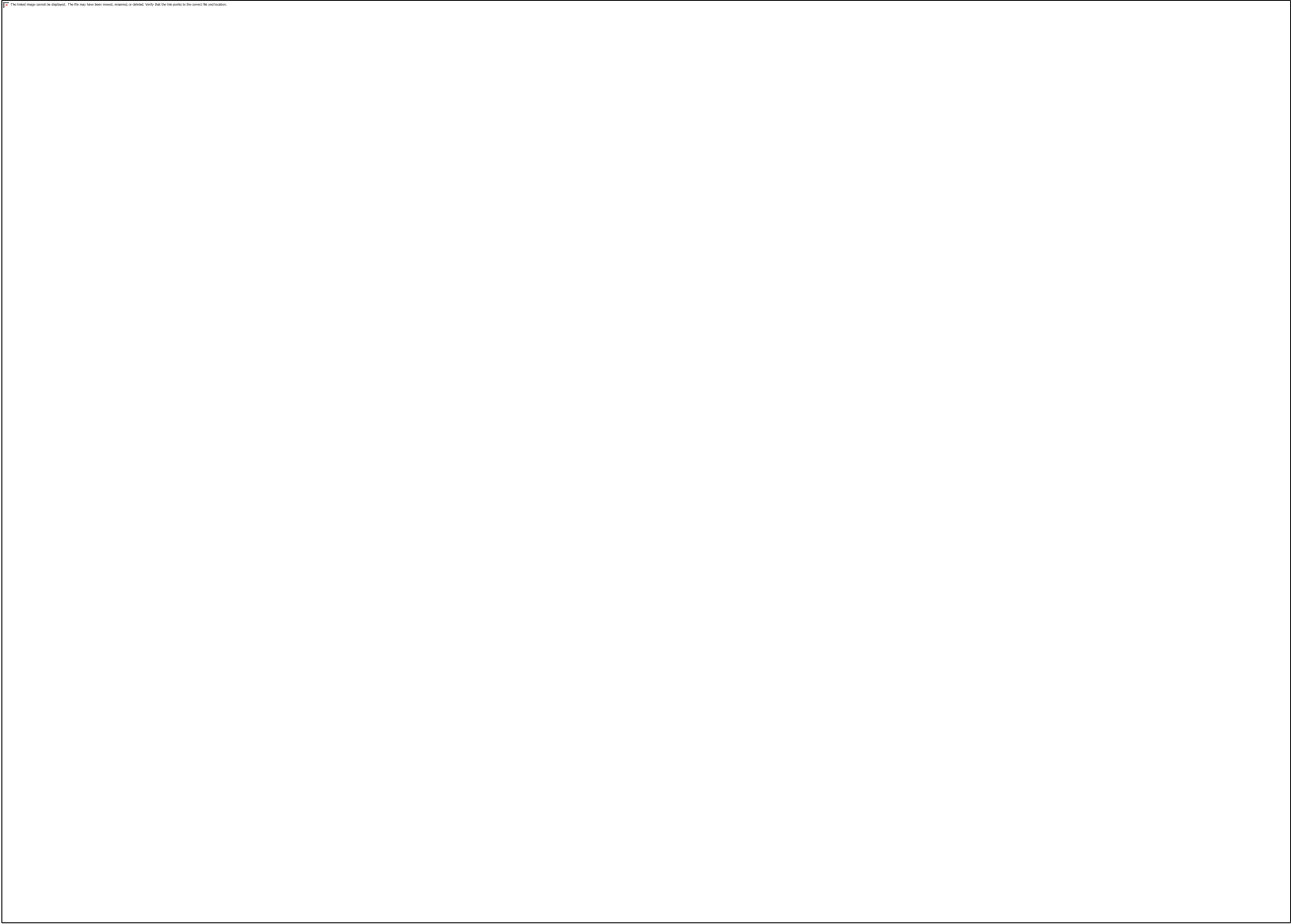
- Two: analysis of consultation results.

Background papers

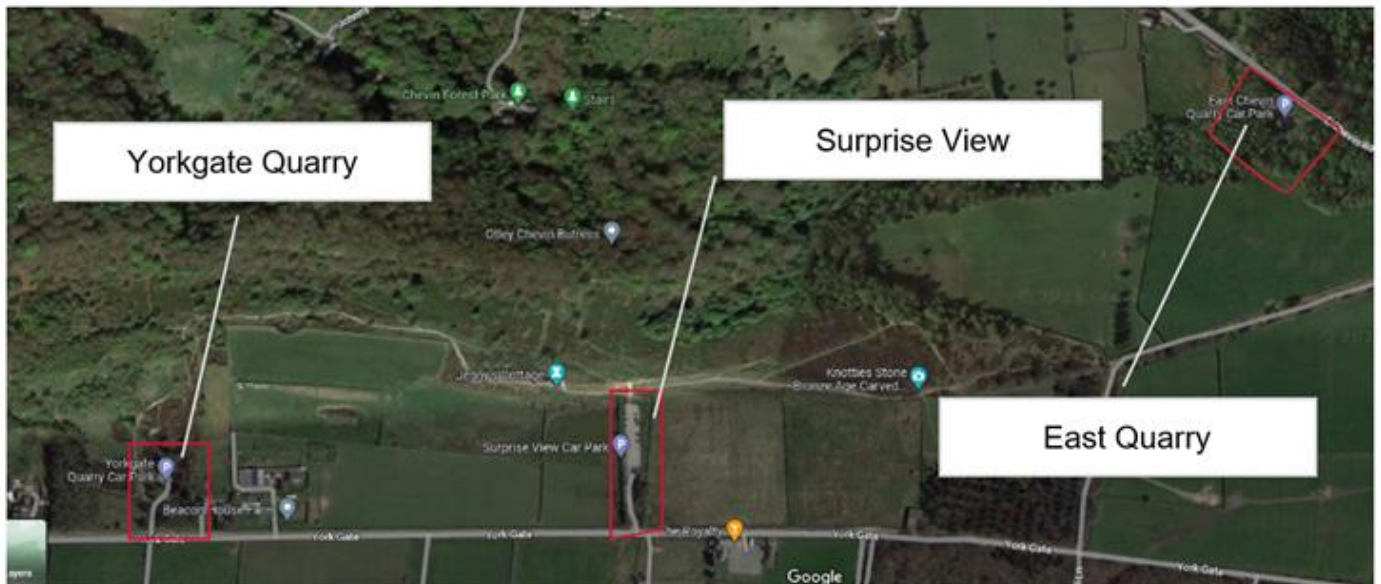
- None.

Appendix One: Car park locations at Golden Acre Park and Otley Chevin Forest Park

Golden Acre Park

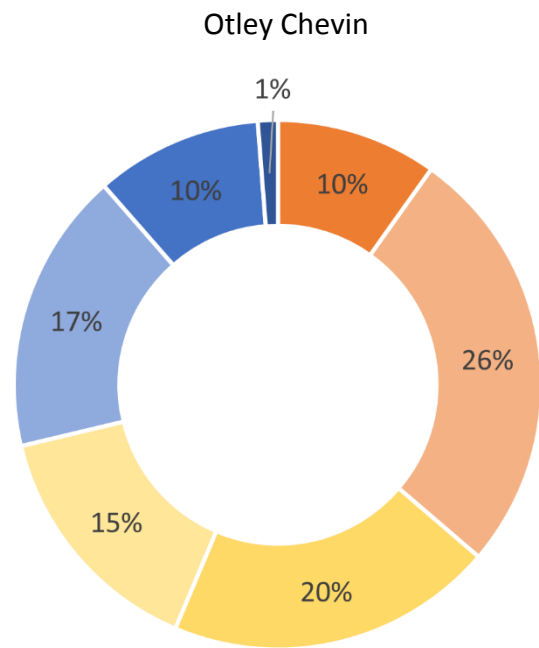
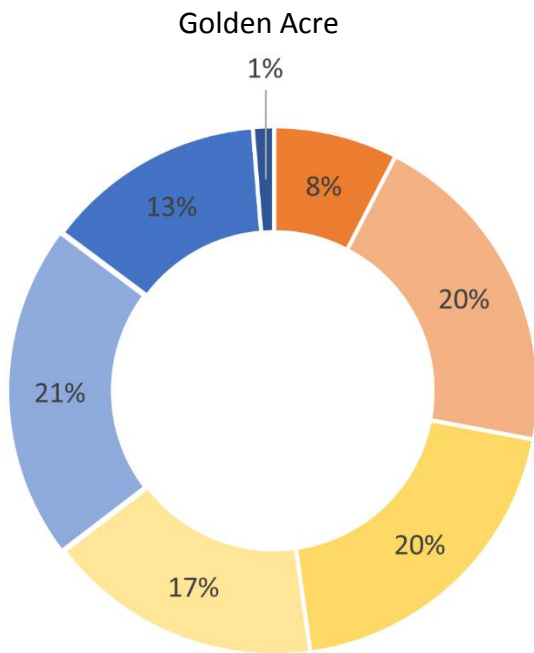


Otley Chevin Forest Park



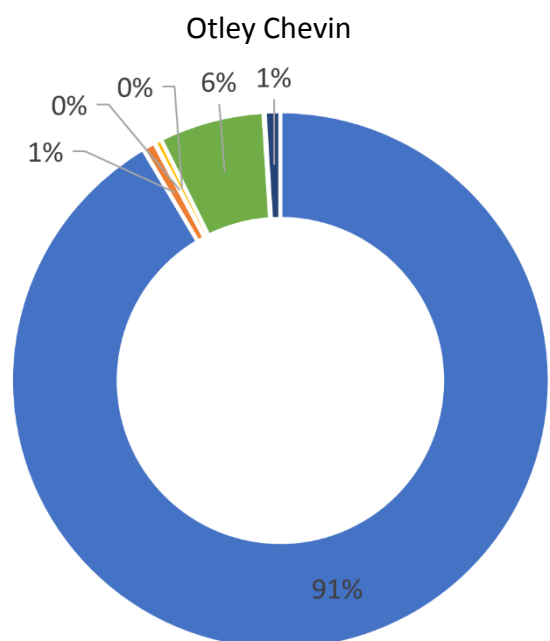
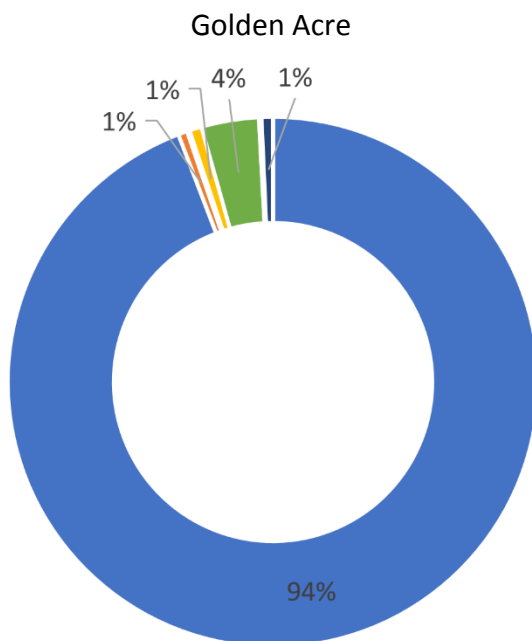
Appendix Two: Analysis of Consultation Results

How often do you usually visit?



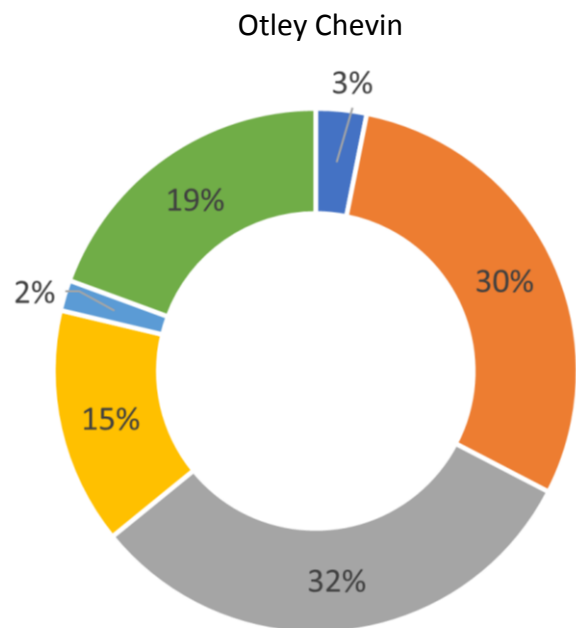
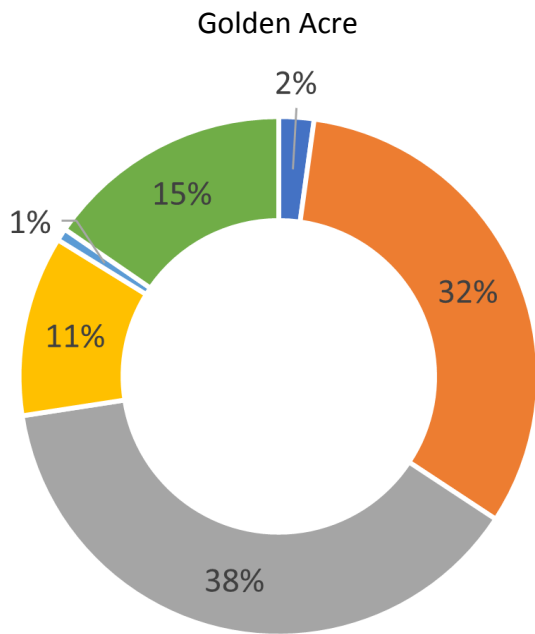
- Daily or almost daily
- Once or twice a week
- Twice a month
- Once a month
- Once or twice every three months
- Less often
- I do not visit the park

How do you usually travel to the park?



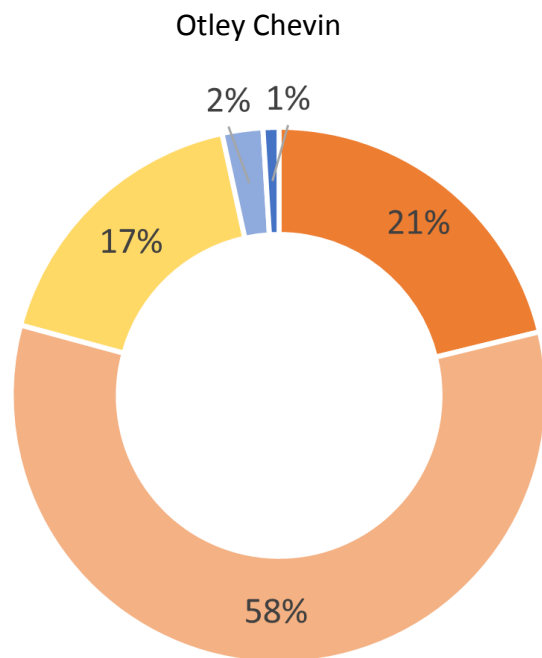
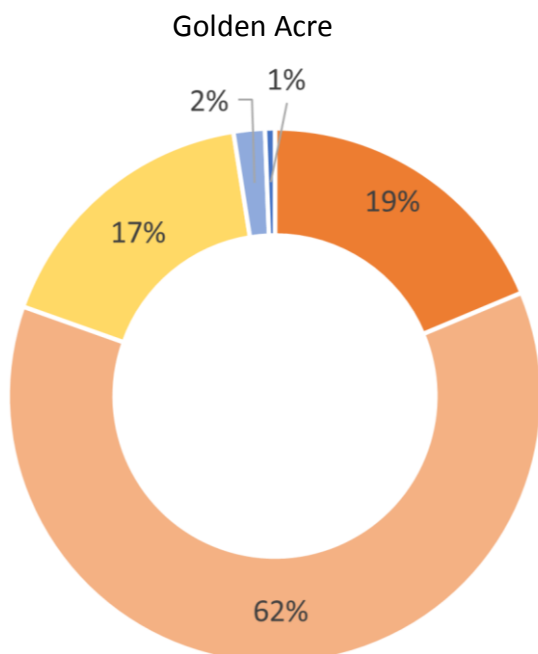
- Car
- Cycle
- Motorcycle
- Public Transport
- Walk
- Wheelchair/ mobility vehicle
- Other

At what time of day do you usually visit?



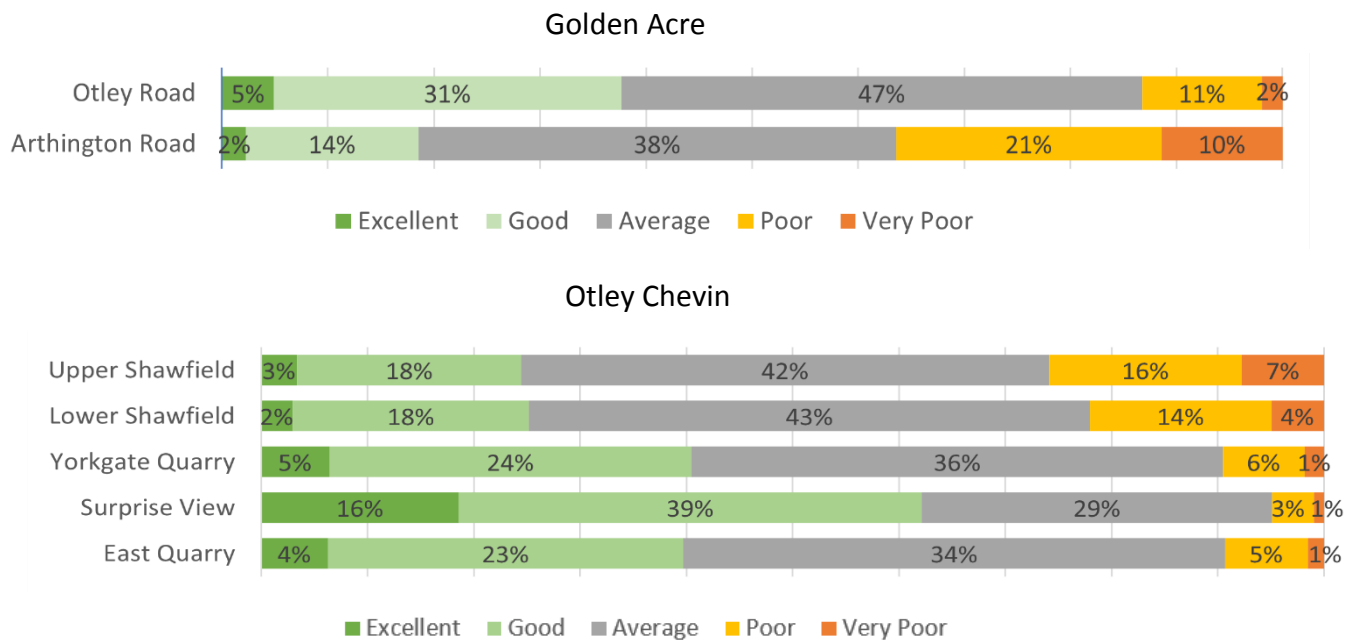
■ Before 8am ■ 8am to 12pm ■ 12pm to 4pm ■ 4pm to 8pm ■ After 8pm ■ No particular time

How long do you usually stay?

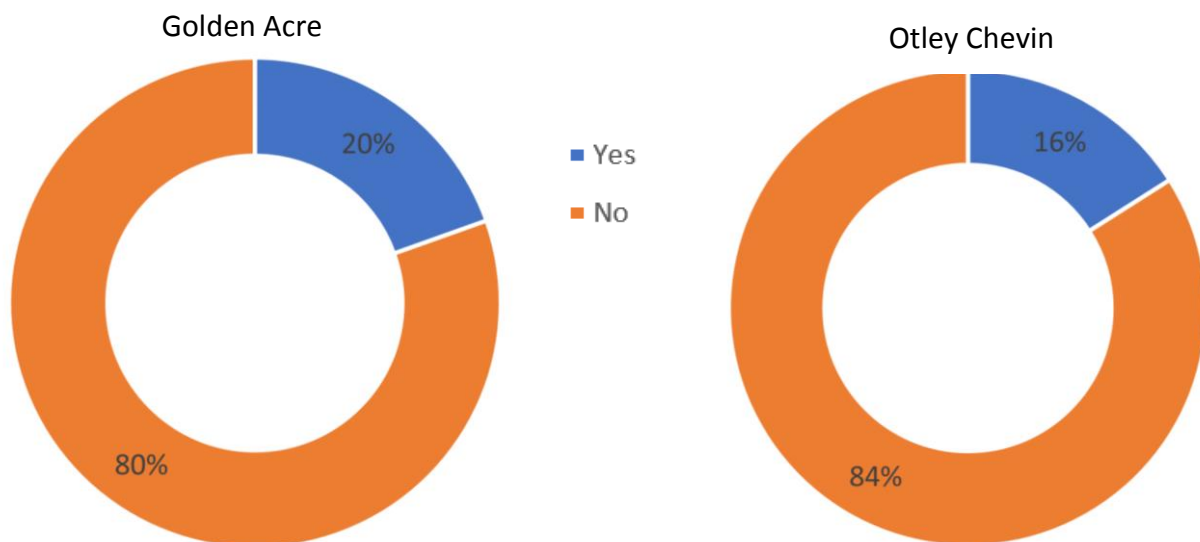


■ Upto 1 hour ■ 1-2 hours ■ 2-3 hours ■ 3-4 hours ■ More than 4 hours

How would you rate the conditions of the car parks?



Do you agree with the proposal to introduce parking fees?



If no, how do you suggest the costs of maintaining the infrastructure are met?

Theme of comments	Golden Acre % of comments	Otley Chevin % of comments
From council tax/ budgets	46%	44%
Stop/ limit other projects e.g., City Square, cycle lanes, Leeds 2023	18%	13%
Fundraising/ voluntary donations	8%	11%
Savings/ efficiencies in services	7%	8%
Maximise other commercial income e.g., cafes, city parking, tourist attractions	5%	6%
Sponsorship/ advertising	5%	2%
Reduce staff numbers/wages/ benefits	5%	7%
Maintenance unnecessary / minimal	4%	8%
Other	2%	1%

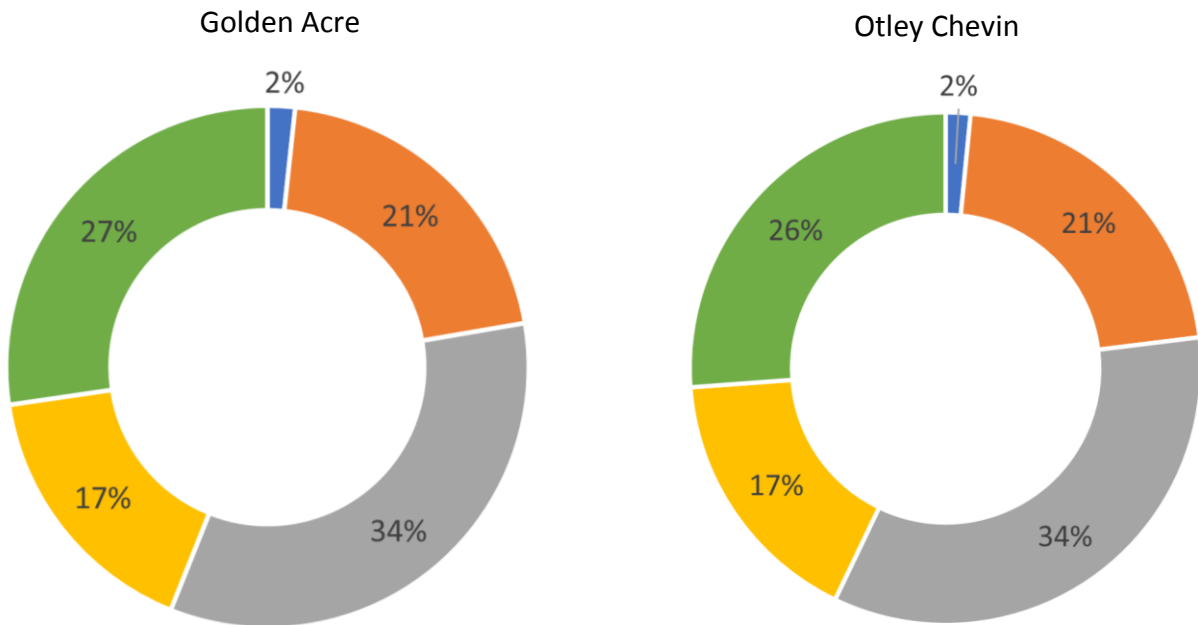
What would you regard as a reasonable fee for car parking, if it was introduced?

	Average			
	First hour	1-2 hours	Half day	All day
Golden Acre	£0.89	£1.35	£2.47	£3.54
Otley Chevin	£1.01	£1.36	£2.45	£4.00

What would you regard as a reasonable fee for an annual season ticket, if this was introduced?

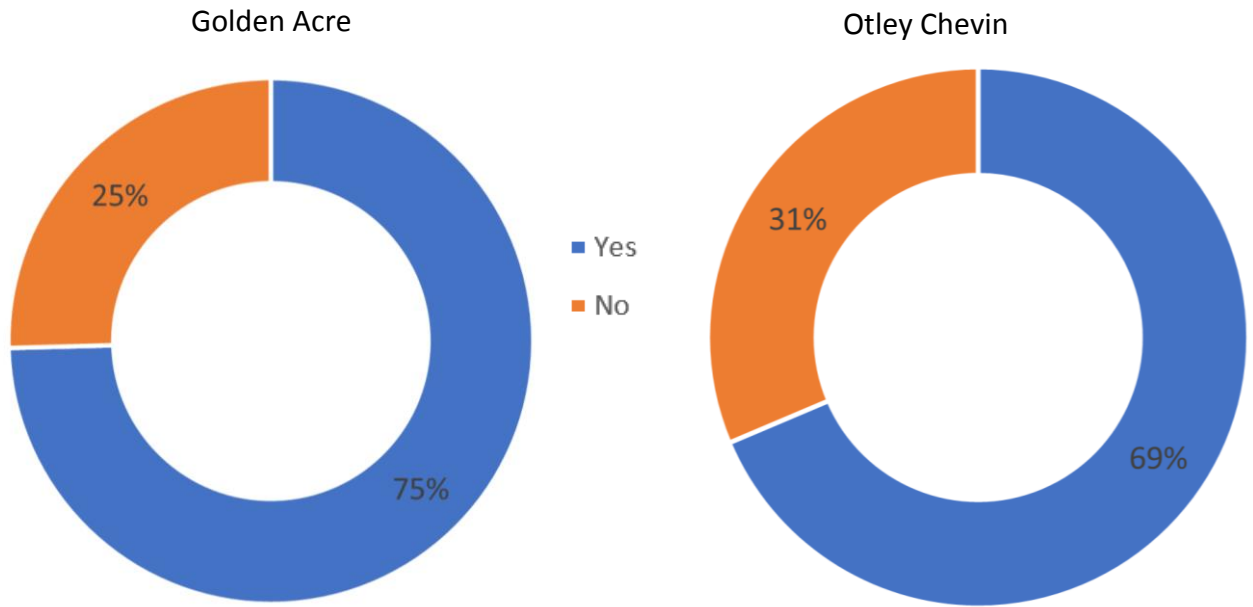
	Average
Golden Acre	£57
Otley Chevin	£62

How do you prefer to pay for car parking when you visit a pay and display car park?



- Mobile Phone – ring the number on the sign
- Mobile Phone – use app
- Credit or debit card
- Cash
- I do not visit pay and display car parks

Do you agree that Blue Badge holders should park for free?



Do you agree that those who visit the Golden Acre Park Café should receive parking discounts and other offers?

