Report to:	**TOURISM, RESOURCES AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**
Relevant Officer:	Paolo Pertica, Head of Visitors Services
Date of Meeting	16 June 2016

PARKING SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To provide information on the performance data of Council owned car parks, both with regards to patronage and income. The report includes additional information on Talbot Multi-Storey car park and the Devonshire Road site. The report provides the rationale for the Parking Services targets.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the performance of parking services and to identify any further areas for scrutiny as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure constructive and robust scrutiny of the report, which had been requested by the Committee.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

None.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is
"The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool"

5.0 Background Information

5.1 There are two types of car parking: ‘On Street’, which relates to the parking bays along a street such as those on Topping Street and Albert Road, and ‘Off Street’, which relates to parking within a car park. There are approximately 870 pay and display On Street bays, mainly within the town centre and along the Promenade.

5.2 There are 21 Council owned car parks and a total of 5231 parking spaces, of which 5135 are for cars, 96 for coaches and four for Motorhomes. There are also some areas specifically designated for use by motorcycles within West Street, East Topping Street, Lytham Road, Central, Chapel Street and Bonny Street car parks. Some of the car parks are located within the town centre and could be described as short term car parks as they are mainly used by those shopping in the town centre. These include Tower Street, West Street, Queen Street and East Topping Street car park. Some are located outside the town centre and are used by commuters during quieter periods, or by those attending large events such as the Illuminations or the Fire Works when the town is very busy. These include Gynn Square, Bank Street, Cocker Street and Cocker Square car park.

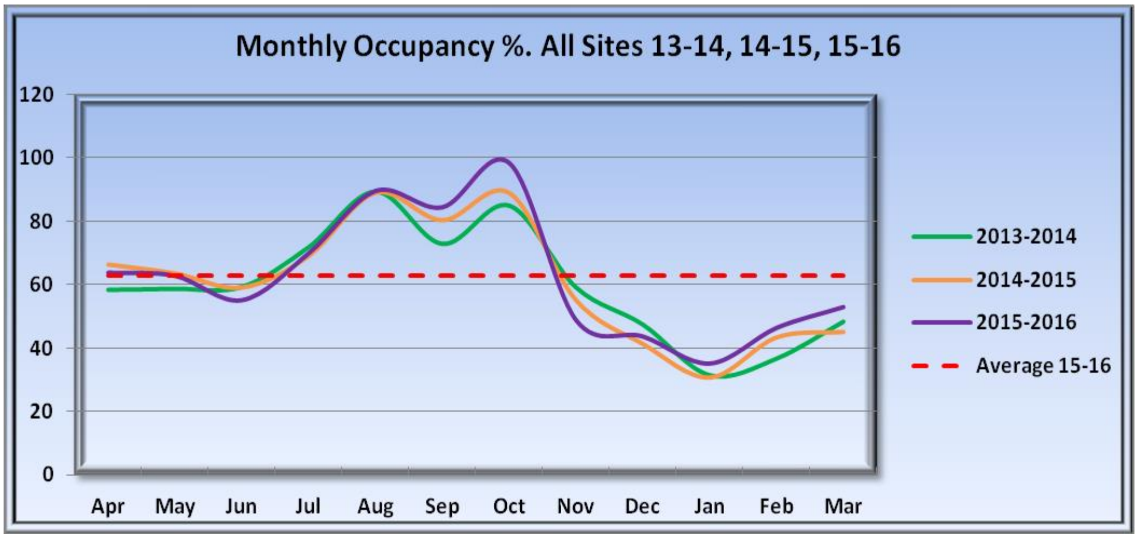
5.3 An additional number of car parks are located alongside Yeadon Way and Seasiders Way and are used by visitors during busy periods, those going to football matches, those based at the offices within the Blackpool Stadium and some commuters. These include South, Bloomfield Road, Lonsdale Road and Seasiders Way car parks.

5.4 The income target for car parks was set about seven years ago before the Houndshill car park was sold. This target was also set before the Starr Gate car park was lost due to the new tram station being built and before Rigby Road, Sandsway and Blundell Street (alongside Seasiders Way) were lost to create space for the Foxhall Village Housing estate. Further, this was also prior to the loss of Swainson Street, Seed Street and the ground floor of Talbot Multi-Storey car park due to the development of Bickerstaffe House and Sainsburys within the Talbot Gateway. During this time only one new car park has been created, Tower Street, and the Council also receives a percentage of the income generated by a privately owned car park near the Promenade, Filey Place. During these changes the total number of bays lost was 1,791, of which 1749 were for cars and 42 were for coaches.

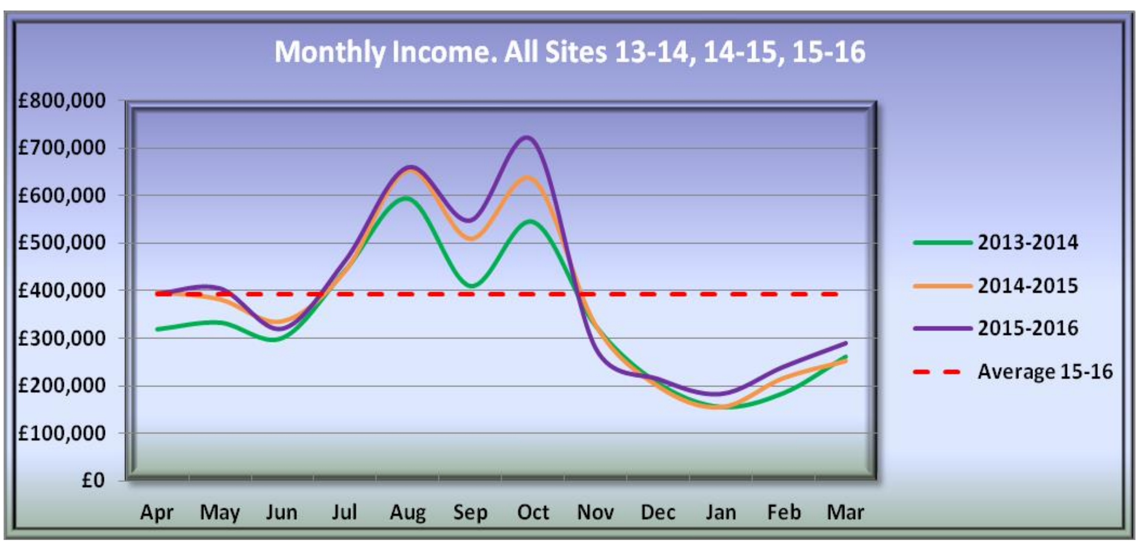
5.5 These changes will have not only impacted on the amount of income that parking can generate, but also on the overall capacity of the town to accommodate its parking needs, particularly during very busy periods such as Easter Bank Holiday weekend and October half term.

5.6 However, as the report shows in the following paragraphs and graphs, both occupancy and income in 2015/16 improved. The income generated from the car parks and on street parking during 2015/16 was up by 5.1% from the 2014/15 income. This is the highest amount received in the last five years, despite the closure of a number of car parks as referred to above. The majority of car parks showed improved performances in 2015/16 compared to the previous year. The service expenditure was within budget for the sixth year and the 2015/16 cost of running the service was the lowest in the last 15 years.

5.7 The overall performance for car parks for the last three years (April 2013 to March 2016), both in relation to patronage and income, is highlighted in the following graphs:



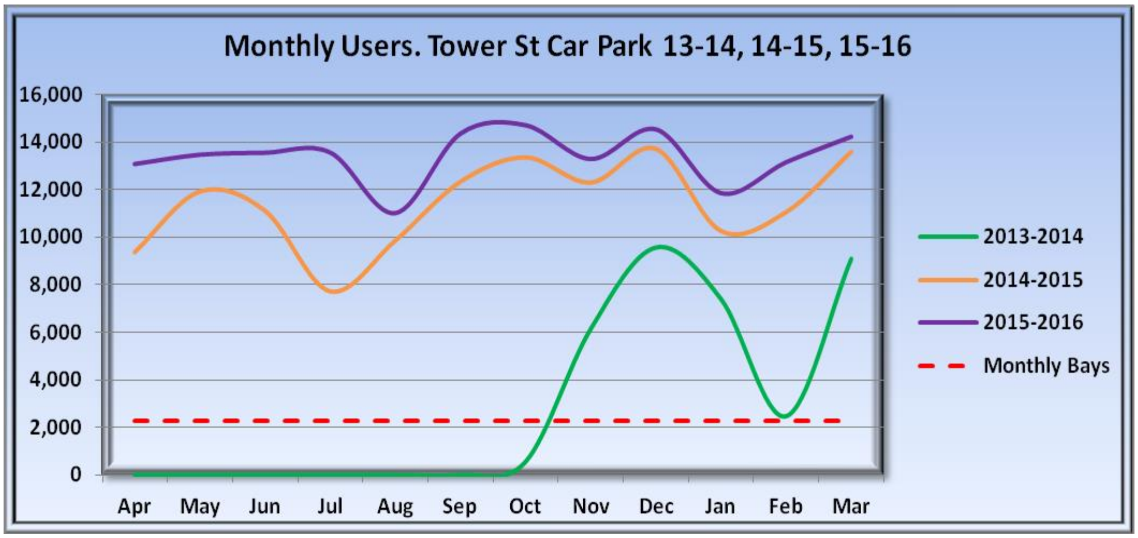
The overall average Occupancy for all car parks during the previous two years was 58%, but during 2015/16 it has improved to 63%



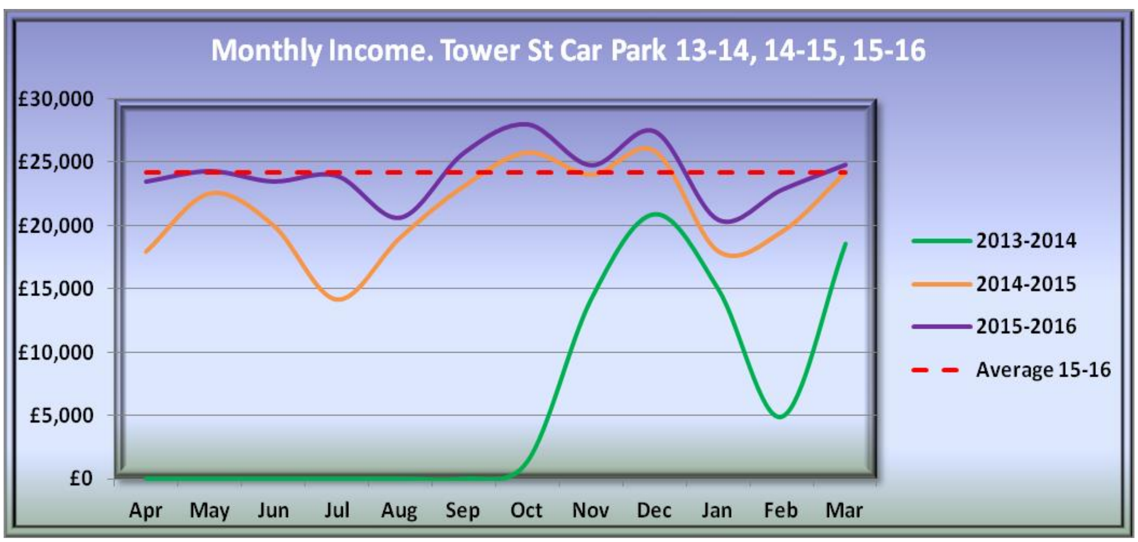
The average income per month improved as well during 2015/16 as per the above graph

5.7.1 The above graphs demonstrate that the parking patronage in Blackpool is affected greatly by seasonality patterns, which are very similar each year. Demand for parking starts to increase during the Easter period in March/April and then continues to do so during the school holidays in July/August. It then decreases in September and increases again for the October half term period. After that, it gradually decreases reaching the lowest levels in January.

5.8 The following graphs show the patronage and income details of some of the best performing car parks:

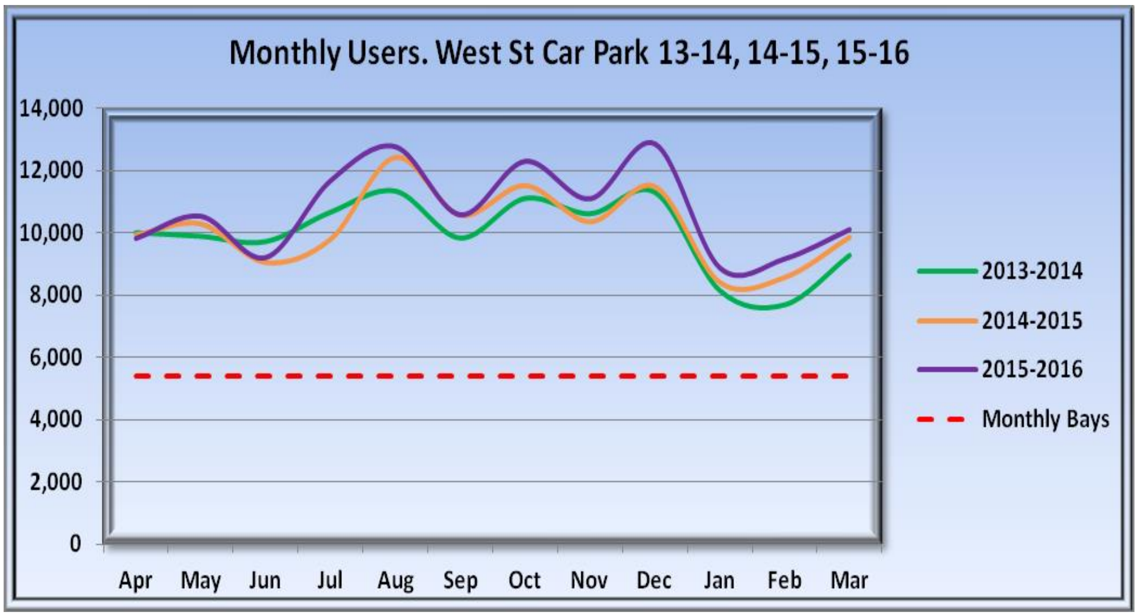


Monthly Bays 2,281

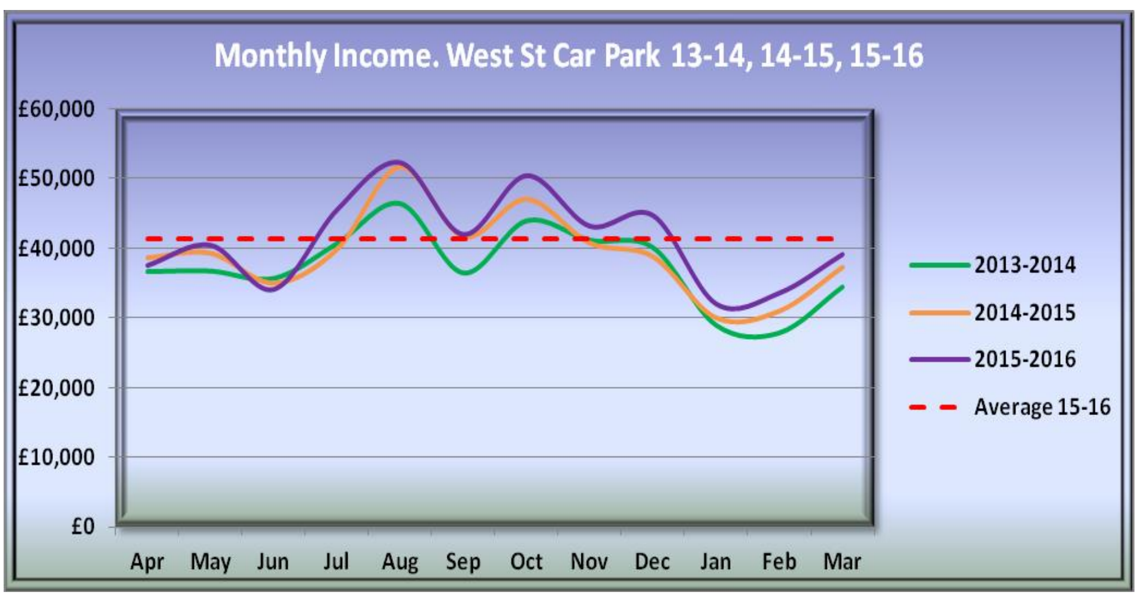


The average income per month for Tower Street car park improved in 2015/16

5.8.1 The above graphs show that Tower Street is a very popular car park due to its location, and that it is used as a short term car park. Hence the same bay is sold numerous times each day which is shown by how much higher the patronage is each month, compared to the number of bays available on a monthly basis. Although the Tower Street occupancy patterns are similar to the ones highlighted for all car parks, in contrast Christmas is clearly a busy period for Tower Street, something which is not seen across the other car parks. Given the location of Tower Street, this is not surprising. This car park will only be available for the first few months of 2016/17 as the site will be developed, and during these months the income generated will be shared with the new owners of the site.

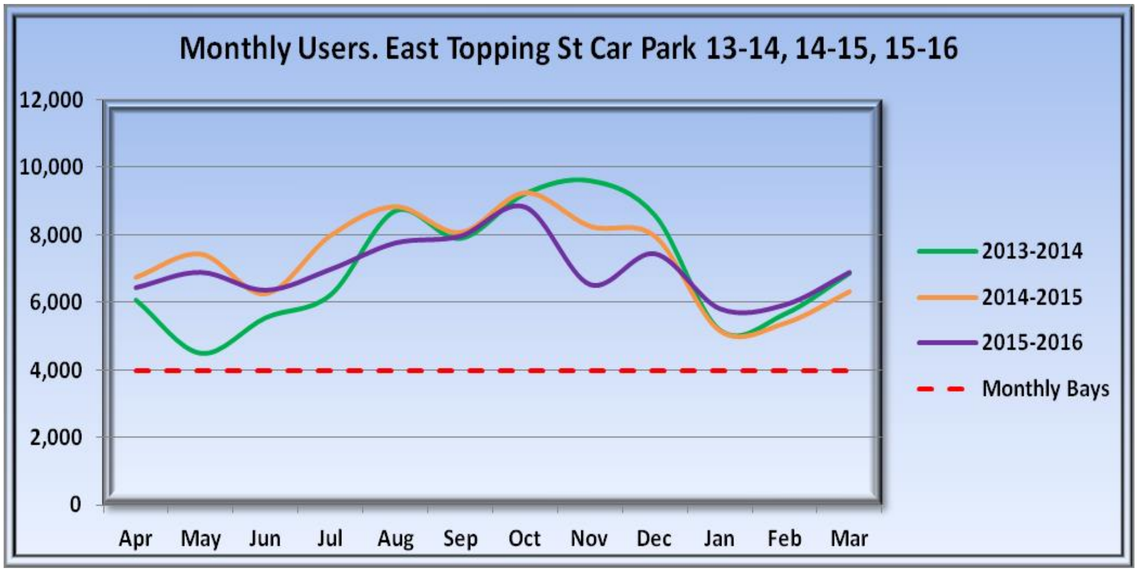


Monthly Bays 5,384

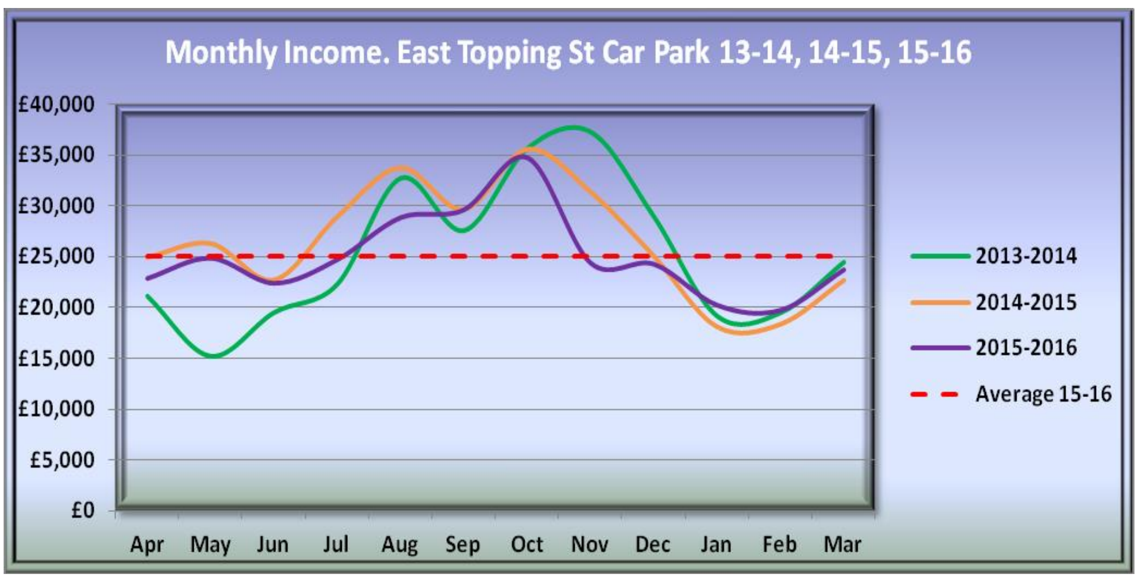


The average income per month for West Street car park improved in 2015/16

5.8.2 West Street car park, similarly to Tower Street, is very popular due to its location. However, the bays are not sold as frequently as those in Tower Street which indicates that its users are a mix of short and medium stay patrons. Its occupancy patterns are very similar to those in all car parks.



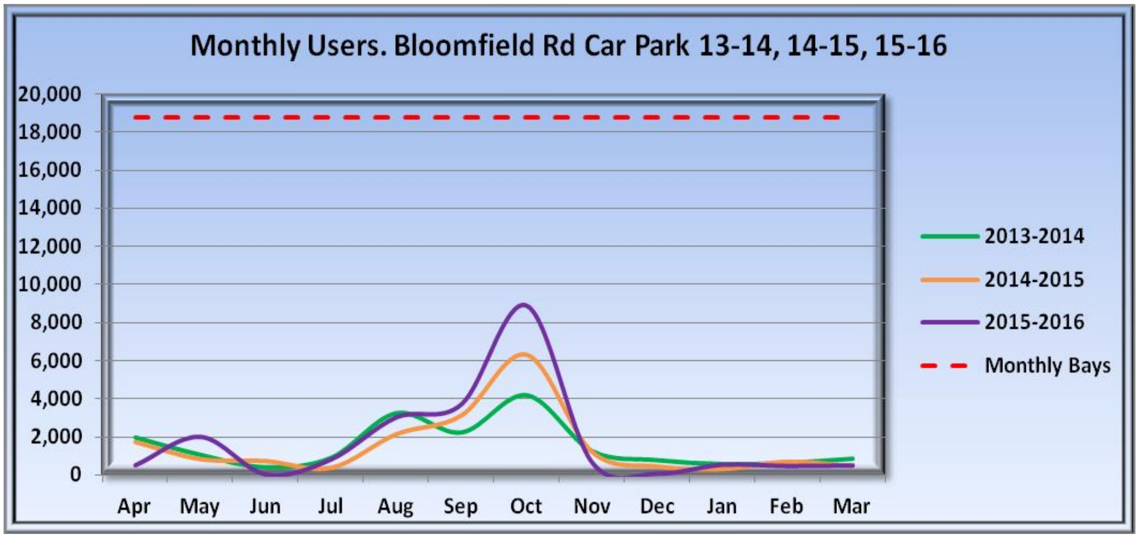
Monthly Bays 3,985



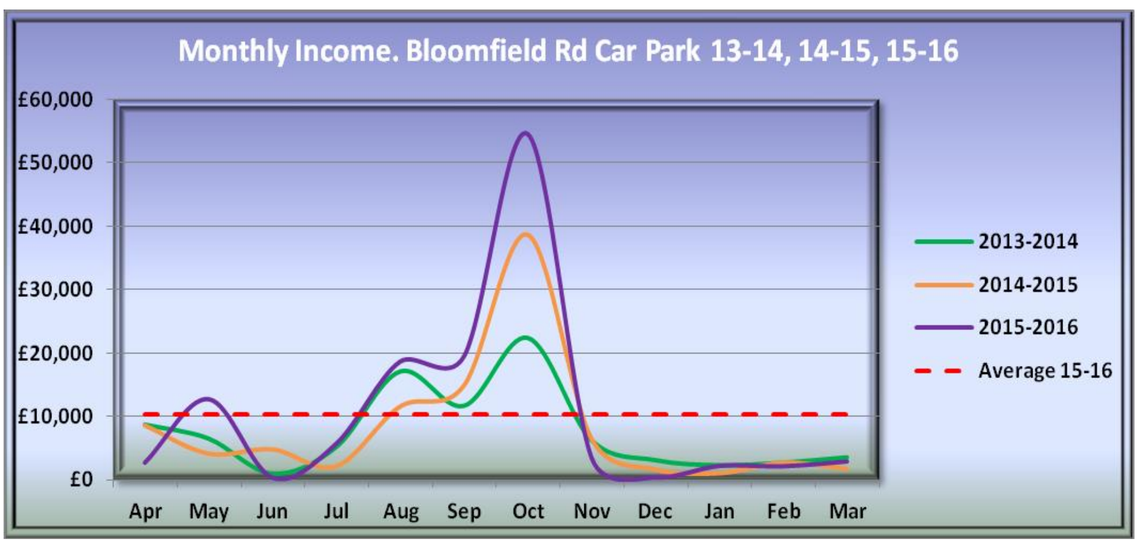
The average income per month for East Topping Street car park in 20015/16 was slightly down compared to the previous two years

5.8.3 East Topping Street car park occupational patterns are somewhere in between those of Tower Street and West Street car parks. This shows that its users are a mix of short term and medium term patrons, probably due to the fact that it is located nearby a shopping area, but also a number of offices. The reduction of revenue generated by this car park in 2015/16 is due to the fact that part of the car park was unavailable for a number of months during the demolition of the Syndicate building, and also because of the increased number of staff permit holders using this car park due to its location nearby Bickerstaffe House. In order to address the latter, changes to the staff parking scheme will be introduced in August 2016 which should impact positively on the income generated by this car park.

5.9 The following graphs show the patronage and income details of some of the least performing car parks:



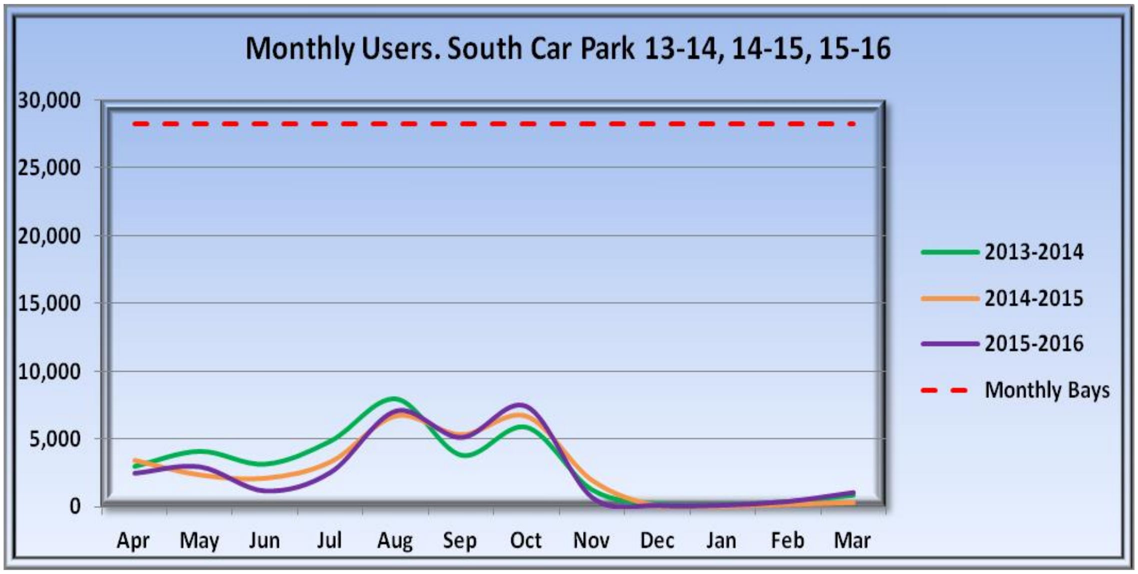
Monthly Bays 18,767



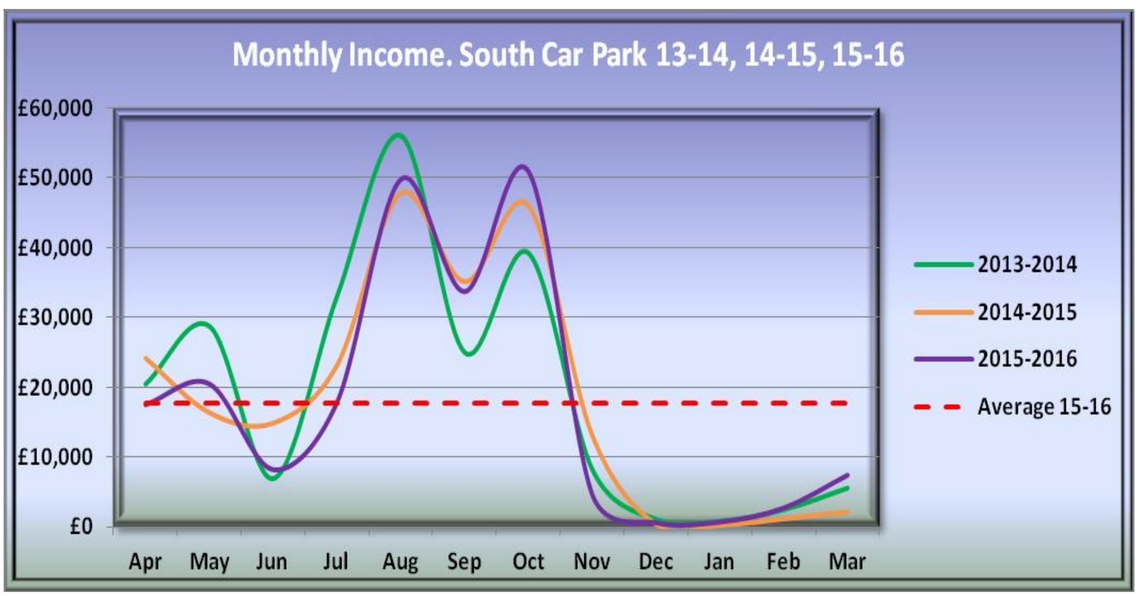
The average income per month generated by this car park during 2015/16 improved compared to the previous two years

5.9.1 The above graphs show that Bloomfield Road car park occupancy levels follow similar patterns to all other car parks, with occupancy levels increasing during the Easter period, although not to the same degree as the car parks in the town centre.

Occupancy levels increase again during the school holidays, but by far the busiest period is during the October half term. Although the overall occupancy level of this car park is 36% (compared to 226% for West Street car park) the use of Bloomfield Road car park and the neighbouring car parks is paramount in supporting the visitor economy during busy periods, which is also when most of the income is generated.

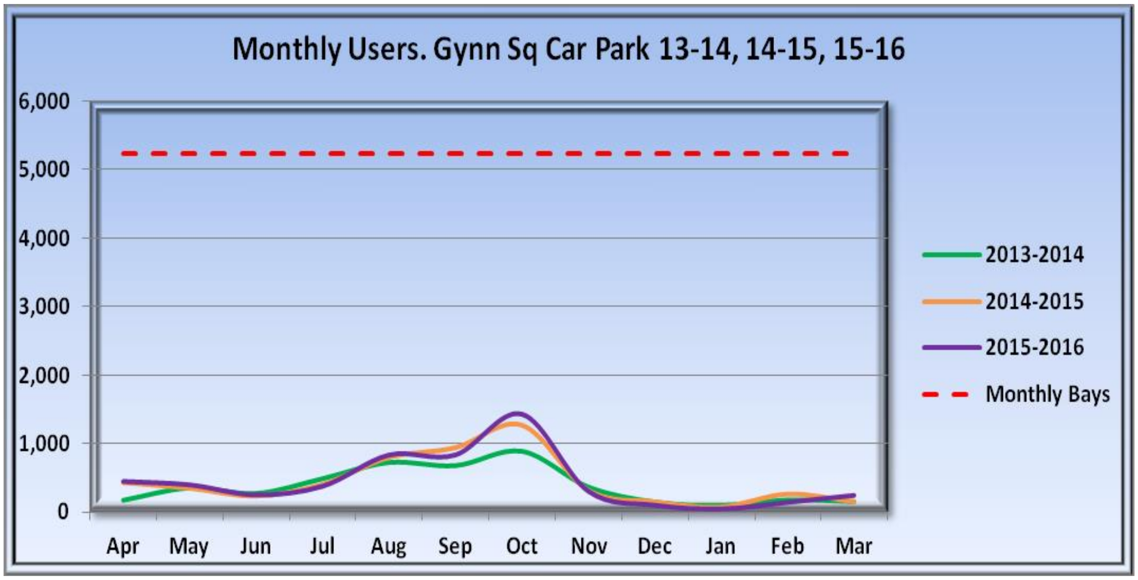


Monthly Bays 28,227

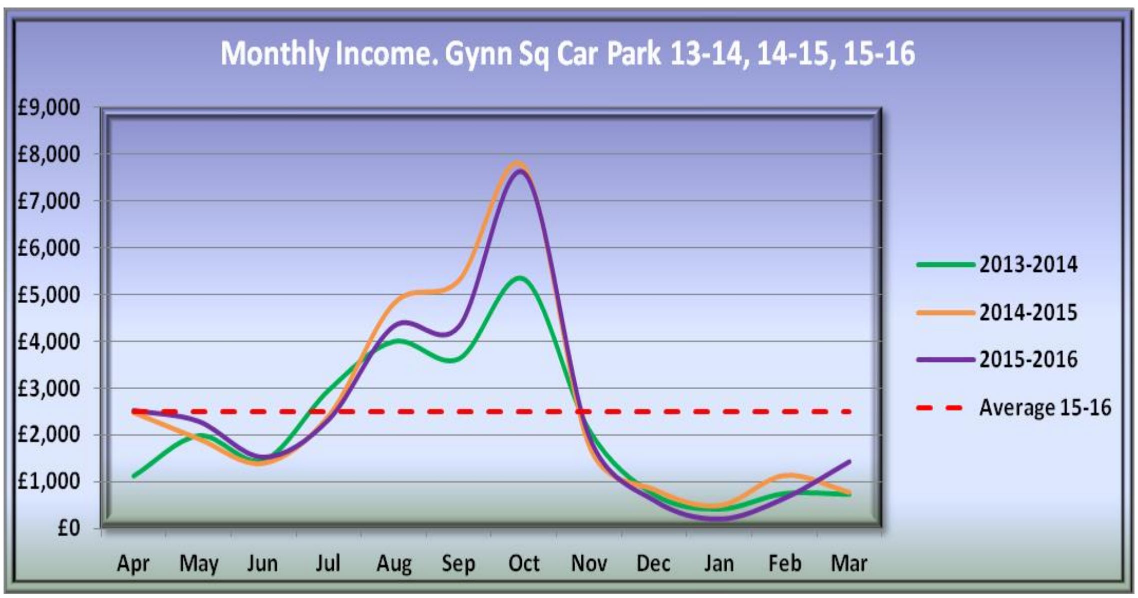


The average income per month during 2015/16 was slightly down compared to the previous two years

5.9.2 The above graphs for South car park show very similar patterns to those for Bloomfield Road car park, with the same seasonal patterns for both occupancy and income generation.

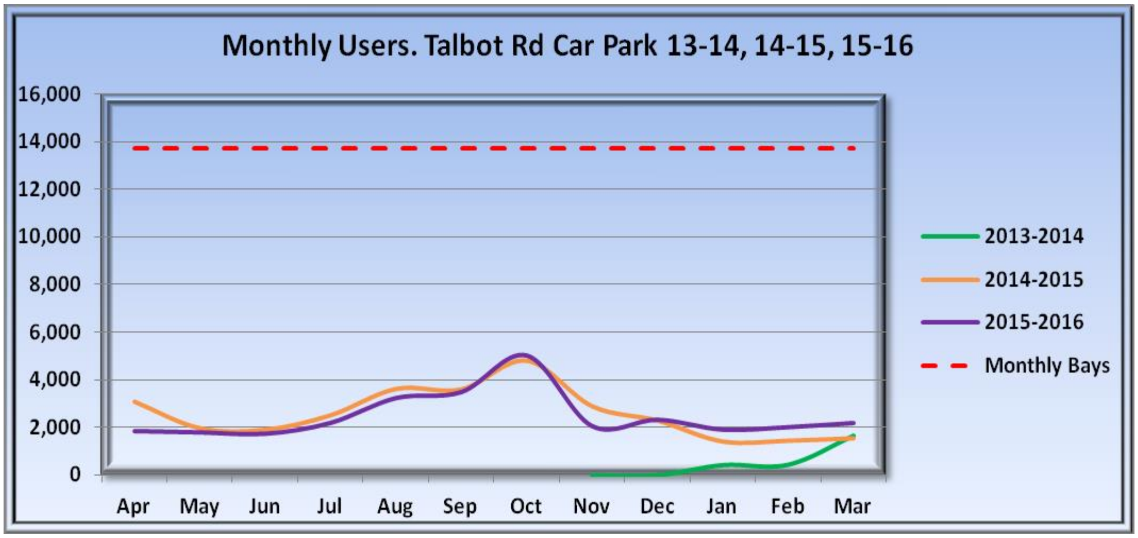


Monthly Bays 5,232



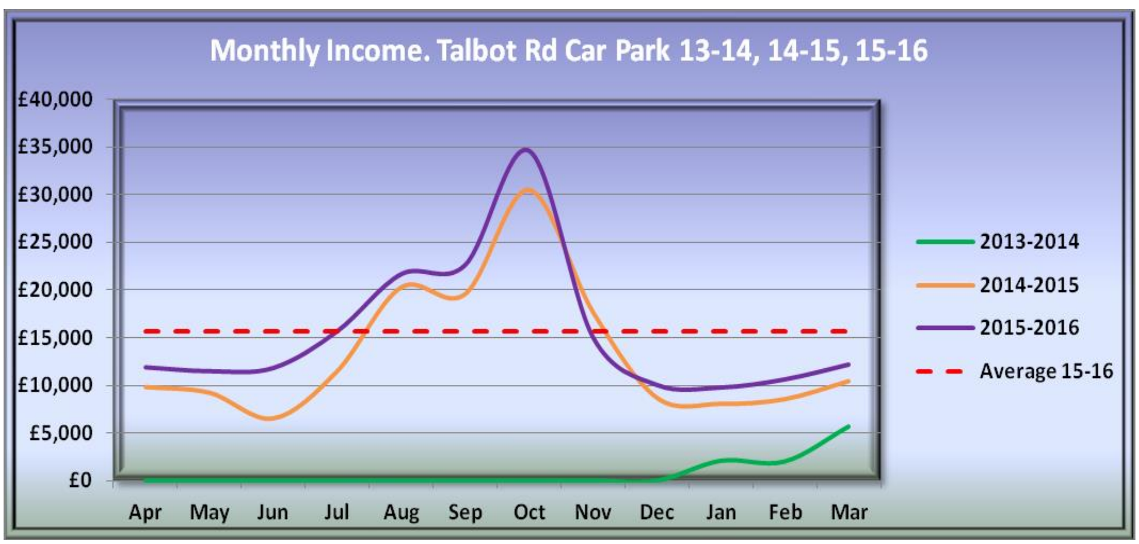
The average income per month during 2015/16 slightly improved compared to the previous two years

5.9.3 The above graphs for Gynn Square car and coach park show the same occupancy and income patterns as Bloomfield Road and South car parks, but with an overall occupancy of only 23% making it one of the least performing car parks in Blackpool. The main reason for this is its location and its distance to Blackpool town centre and the main attractions.



Monthly Bays 13,698

Please note: The car park re-opened on the 5 October 2013 and until July 2014 was only used by members of the public. In August 2014 Council also started to use it when staff permits became available. During 2014/15 the patronage figures were 55% staff, 13% Public.



The average income per month for this car park during 2015/16 improved compared to the previous two years

5.10 The above graphs show that occupancy levels of Talbot Road Multi-Storey car park have changed considerably since it was made available for the staff parking scheme introduced in August 2014. Although use by the public during ordinary evenings and weekend remains low, during major events, such as the Air Show and recent firework displays the car park has proven highly popular amongst the public and has reached full occupancy. This is further evidenced by the fact that the monthly income per month has almost doubled during 2015/16 compared to the previous two years.

5.11 **Former Devonshire Road Hospital Site** – This car park will no longer be included in the car parks used for the Staff Parking Scheme from the 1 August 2016 and the site will be returned to its owners in September 2016.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

List of Appendices: None

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The car parking service has made a surplus of income over expenditure every year as far back as records go. During the last seven years though the car parking income has fallen below the target set. However, against all predictions the service has managed to almost meet its target in 2015/16, which proved a very well performing year for car parking in Blackpool. A number of influencing factors can be attributed to this improved performance such as the continued review of the parking tariffs, the implementation of some of the recommendations from the recently commissioned Strategic Parking Review, the good management of the expenditure budget by the service and the favourable weather experienced in 2015/16. However, the data also suggests that the improved visitor economy and increased number and quality of attractions, shows and events have clearly had a positive impact on the parking patronage.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None