



Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party 30 November 2010

Options for Off-Street Borough Car Park Charges 2011/2012

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to note the improvements to the off-street car parks in Bury St Edmunds over the last year and to consider proposals for alterations to parking charges for 2011/2012.**

2. Background

- 2.1** The past year has seen many management initiatives in the Borough's off-street car parks in Bury St Edmunds, which include:-
- (a) co-ordinating and traffic management for major events such as the Christmas Fayre, funerals, Tour of Britain, Remembrance Sunday, Royal Anglian Freedom of the Borough and the Royal visit;
 - (b) car park maintenance including re-surfacing and re-lining works at Robert Boby Way;
 - (c) refining and improving traffic management strategies as a result of upward demand at the Cattle Market/arc car park;
 - (d) providing traffic management and ambassadorial meet and greet services for The Apex opening events;
 - (e) creating a brand new parking facility for over 40 cars at School Yard West and planning for the implementation of a low emissions car park at School Yard East;
 - (f) creating two electric car charging bays at the Parkway Multi-Storey Car Park;
 - (g) partnership project working with major Anglian Water works at Ram Meadow which involved close parking management for 10 weeks leading up to Christmas 2009, de-silting works by Environment Agency at Ram Meadow and providing contractor parking for fitting out work at The Apex;

- (h) working with Highways on expansion to neighbourhood schemes including changes to Zones H and F, and introduction of Zones J and K and implementing charged parking on Cotton Lane; and
 - (i) providing additional parking to meet demand at Bury Leisure Centre to include a new pay machine and signage.
- 2.2 A new gritting contract for all Borough car parks was entered into after identifying an inconsistent historic service which resulted in the most extensive gritting service ever seen in the Borough car parks, coinciding with the worst winter weather in decades.

3. Proposals on car parking charges

- 3.1 Every year the Council undertakes a review of the parking charges for off-street car parks. Like all other fees and charges there is a need to keep parking charges under review in order to maintain a good quality service and keep pace with rising costs. There is an underlying principle of 'user pays' so those who do not use the car parks do not subsidise their maintenance and running costs. The variation in car park charges is also aimed at ensuring parking occurs in the most appropriate location for the length and type of stay.
- 3.2 The following changes to the car park charges in the Borough are suggested for implementation from 4 April 2011. VAT is currently applied to the parking charges and the change in the VAT rate from 17.5% to 20% needs to be reflected in the charges. The VAT increase applies from 1 January 2011, but these proposed changes, if accepted, would not be applied until April 2011. The impact of price inflation is also a factor we need to take into account when reviewing charges.
- 3.3 In reviewing the proposed charges for 2011/2012 regard was given to charges set by others in the Borough and nearby regional centres. A wide selection of comparative data is shown at Appendix D. It is highly likely that other car park operators are also reviewing their charges for 2011/2012 and the figures shown are the current prices.
- 3.4 A number of proposals have been prepared for consultation with local stakeholders. In summary the proposals being considered are set out below:-
- (a) to assist brief drop ins and offer more customer choice, introduce a 50p short stay option at St Andrews and Lower Baxter in Bury St Edmunds;**
 - (b) to offer a short stay facility at Parkway Surface on Saturdays;**
 - (c) increase a number of charges by between 10p and 50p;**
 - (d) make season tickets available on line;**
 - (e) amend rate of excess charges; and**
 - (f) extend hours of charging on Cattle Market/arc and Lower Baxter to 24 hours per day. Fixed rate applies outside current charging hours.**

A table of the current and proposed charges is set out at Appendix A.

3.5 **Bury St Edmunds**

3.5.1 Cattlemarket/arc

This is a very popular car park and prime destination for many drivers. It is regularly full with other drivers circulating to seek a space whilst other nearby car parks have spaces freely available. The increase in price is intended to displace some of this parking demand to less heavily used car parks where minimal price changes are proposed.

This car park is important for the town centre evening economy and has enhanced importance with the recent opening of The Apex. This increased night time use has resulted in the need for regular presence of staff to manage this facility. On the principle that the user pays, there is a need to introduce a charge to cover these costs. In addition there have been historic problems of antisocial activity and the introduction of a charge and presence of staff will help to manage this more effectively. A flat rate charge will apply as indicated.

3.5.2 Parkway Surface

The key change in this car park is to make it short stay only on Saturdays. This is in line with the policy on giving priority to short stay parking in the town, adopted in January 2004, prior to commencement of the Cattle Market redevelopment. This car park is well used by commuters throughout the week, including Saturdays; many of which are season ticket holders. The changing pattern of parking in the town and the increased short stay demand on Saturdays indicates it would be appropriate to increase the supply of short stay car parking on that day. Currently this extra parking demand is likely to make use of the multi-storey.

The displaced long stay car parking can be accommodated in the adjacent multi-storey car park. The proposed short stay prices are the same as those proposed for the St Andrews car park, but without the 30 minute or all day option. These prices will be below those on the Cattle Market/arc car park and in combination with increased prices will attract parking, thereby reducing pressure on that car park.

The long stay price has not increased since 2009 and the modest increase proposed reflects inflation and the VAT increase. It will also impact on season ticket prices as these are based on a discounted long stay price (See Section 4).

3.5.3 Parkway Multi-storey

The only change suggested for this car park is to increase the long stay price by 10p. This charge has not increased since 2009. It will impact on the season ticket price (see Section 4).

If the change to Parkway Surface outlined in paragraph 3.5.2 above is implemented there is likely to be increased use of this car park by commuters on Saturday, but a reduced use by shoppers as they make use of the surface car park.

3.5.4 Robert Bobby

The 20p pop in facility is well used by visitors to the town centre, however the pressure on this car park is such that it does not always operate to the benefit of the adjacent businesses. There is also some evidence of users 'feeding the meter' to prolong their stay beyond 1 hour at the cheapest rate. The Borough Council does not own this car park, but has an operating agreement with the owners. Under this agreement the owners set the up to 1 hour charge, the Borough Council the others. The Borough Council retains all income from this car park.

Initial contact has been made with the owners. Increasing the 1 hour price to 50p would have the benefit of making the car park less attractive to general shoppers (see also Lower Baxter and St Andrews proposals) whilst increasing the likelihood of the customers of the adjacent shops finding a space.

It is suggested that the up to 2 hour and up to 3 hours prices are increased by 10p to reflect inflation and the VAT increase.

3.5.5 St Andrews

The main change proposed is to introduce a 30 minute tariff band. This will introduce a pop in facility for those with short term business in the town centre, it is also intended to reduce pressure on the Robert Bobby car park by offering alternative lower cost parking. This will also be of benefit to nearby traders.

All day parking is still permitted, albeit at a premium compared to the other long stay car parks. It is suggested that this is continued, but to prevent these users occupying those spaces closest to the town centre it is proposed to split the car park in to a short stay parking (up to 4 hours) on the main part of the car park, with long stay parking only permitted on the annexe area near Parkway/Bishops Road as outlined on the plan attached as Appendix B.

Increases are also proposed to the 1 hour, 2 hour and 3 hour prices of 10p to reflect inflation and the VAT increase.

3.5.6 Lower Baxter

In a similar way to St Andrews, a 30 min tariff band is suggested. This will provide a pop in facility on the east side of the town centre. It will also attract more custom to this increasingly popular facility. Increases of 10p are proposed for the other tariffs in line with similar car parks elsewhere in the town.

This is a popular evening car park and in a similar manner to the Cattle Market/arc requires managing. A night rate charge as indicated is also proposed.

3.5.7 Manor House

An increase of 10p is proposed for each tariff band to reflect inflation and the VAT increase.

3.5.8 Ram Meadow

The only suggested change is increasing the over 4 hour charge by 10p to reflect inflation and the VAT increase. This will impact on the cost of season tickets (see Section 4).

3.5.9 Leisure Centre

The current charge in this car park is £2.00 for up to 3 hours. Users of the Leisure Centre can obtain a refund on their car park charge. Historically the reason for charging in this car park is to deter use by students attending West Suffolk College. Currently the college charges £2.00 per day, although students can obtain a discounted rate of £1.50. It is not proposed to make any change to the charge for this car park.

3.5.10 Hardwick Heath

Charges were introduced into this car park to deter West Suffolk Hospital visitors from using it when charges were implemented at the hospital. Since then the Hospital has raised their charges on a number of occasions. There is a need to review the charges to ensure that the car park remains available for users of the Heath.

The current and proposed charges, together with the current parking charges at the Hospital are shown at Appendix A. The difficulty in setting these charges is to strike a balance between deterring use by hospital visitors without unduly penalising users of the Heath. Many users of the Heath are relatively short stay users, e.g. dog walkers and those with children visiting the play area. The second significant group are those associated with football on the Heath who generally require a stay of up to 3 hours, this use is mainly at the weekend. For the teams that use the facility regularly we issue free permits for the season.

It is suggested that the 20p rate is retained, although this may attract some short stay from the Hospital. Increasing this rate sufficiently to deter this use would mean such a significant increase it might become a barrier to users of the Heath. The other tariff changes are intended to continue to provide some deterrence to Hospital visitors, whilst not inhibiting use of the Heath. It is also proposed to apply the same charges 7 days a week.

3.5.11 School Yard (West)

This car park is planned as a premium car park only available to weekly ticket buyers Monday to Saturday, it will operate as a short stay car park on Sundays. The weekly price is intended to apply from the opening of the car park until the next annual review of charges.

3.6.12 School Yard (East)

This car park is planned for use by low emission vehicles only and offers good value parking to qualifying vehicles only. The proposed charge applies 7 days a week and is intended to apply from the opening of the car park until the next annual review of charges.

4. Season Tickets

- 4.1 Currently season tickets are available for three car parks in Bury St Edmunds as either 5 day or 6 day options. The price is based on the all day price in the relevant car park discounted by 30%. The shortest length season ticket available is 8 weeks.
- 4.2 Currently season tickets have to be purchased in person. It is proposed to make these available on line. To reflect the greater administration involved in over the counter sales it is suggested the on line discount remains at 30%, but the over the counter discount is reduced to 25%. See Appendix C for the impact this proposal has on the prices.

5. Excess Charges

- 5.1 The current excess charge, which applies to all offences in the car parks enforced by the Borough Council, is £50 discounted to £20 if paid within 7 days, except for the recently agreed change for the Parkway disabled drop off bay where the charge is £100, discounted to £40 if paid within 7 days.
- 5.2 This charge was last reviewed in 2005. It is proposed that the charge is increased to £70 discounted to £30 if paid within 14 days. This brings the discount percentage and payment period more into line with national legislation governing decriminalised parking enforcement.
- 5.3 A further provision under decriminalised parking enforcement is that anyone who appeals loses the option to pay a discounted charge. Currently the Council will normally allow payment of the discounted amount for seven days after an appeal has been rejected. It is suggested this is discontinued to bring the Council's enforcement policy more into line with national guidance, which will also deter appeals from those who have nothing to lose by appealing even though there are clearly no grounds for their appeal.

6. Other Car Park initiatives

Bury St Edmunds

- 6.1 Creation of new car parks at School Yard West to offer a premium weekly ticket facility. At School Yard East concessionary facility for low emission vehicles is planned.
- 6.2 A drop off facility is being created in the Cattle Market/arc car park in response to public demand.
- 6.3 Two electric car charging bays will be available in the Parkway Multi-Storey Car Park.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The views of Bury St Edmunds Town Councils, Town Centre Managements and Chamber of Commerce are being sought along with those of the Parish Councils in the Borough. These views, together with the views of the relevant Working Parties will help to inform Cabinet in making a recommendation for car park charges for 2011/2012.

8. Community impact

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 In setting any revision to car parking charges, regard needs to be given to the current economic climate and likely impact on town centre users. The car park charges impact directly on those who choose to use the car parks.
- 8.1.2 The off-street car parks represent a significant public investment and the council has always recognised the need to make a return on this investment with the principle that the user pays, rather than the car parks being funded by the council tax payer, some of whom are not car users. In view of this principle it is appropriate that a suitable return continues to be made on this use of public funds.

8.2 Diversity and Equality Impact

- 8.2.1 A group for whom parking is extremely important is those with a disability. In recognition that for many of this group the car is their main source of mobility, suitable designated disabled parking bays are provided in all car parks.

9. Sustainability Impact

- 9.1 Charging for car parking is an important element in demand management of travel behaviour. The fees encourage use of other modes of transport where there is a choice available to the traveller.
- 9.2 The changes to the differential charges within each car park reflects the need to manage parking to maximise the use of the available spaces, 'share the load' and ensure the drivers uses the most appropriate car park for their needs.

10. Resource Implications

- 10.1 Increasing the revenue received from the off-street car parks the Council recognises the need to make a suitable return on investment in these facilities. In setting charges, regard has to be given to the wider economic implications. The recommendation maintains a suitable level of return and it is not anticipated it will adversely affect the economic viability of the town centre as a whole.

11. Risk Assessment

Risk Area	Inherent level of Risk (before control)	Controls	Residual Risk
Income stream from the car park is potentially under pressure owing to external factors including market forces and current economic conditions.	Medium	Reviewing charges at this stage, keeping increases to those judged not to adversely affect users and the viability of the town centre.	Low

12. Recommendations

12.1 The Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party is asked to:-

- (a) note the contents of the report;
- (b) the views of the Working Party on the options outlined at Sections 3.4, 4 and 5 above are sought in order to forward a recommendation to Cabinet when car parking charges for 2011/12 are considered.

For further information, please contact:-

Steve Boor, The Engineer, Planning and Engineering Services

Telephone: (01284) 757323, or email: steve.boor@stedsbc.gov.uk

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Bury St Edmunds**Cattle market/arc**

08.00 – 18.00 (10.00 – 16.00 Sun)	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours
Existing Charge	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£3.00
Proposed Charge	£1.80	£2.50	£3.00	£3.50

Midnight – 8 am and 6 pm – Midnight (Midnight – 10 am and 4 pm – Midnight Sun)	Single Rate
Proposed Charge	£1.00

Parkway Surface

	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Existing Charge	£1.50	£1.90
Proposed Charge	£1.50	£2.00

Saturday only	Up to 1 hour	Up 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours
Proposed Charge	£1.00	£1.30	£1.60	£2.00

Parkway Multi Storey

	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Existing Charge	£1.50	£1.90
Proposed Charge	£1.50	£2.00

Robert Bobby

	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours
Existing Charge	20p	£1.90	£2.40	£3.00
Proposed Charge	50p*	£2.00	£2.50	£3.00

*This price is not set by the Borough Council – see paragraph 3.5.4

St Andrews

	Up to 30 minutes	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Existing Charge	N/A	90p	£1.20	£1.50	£1.90	£2.70
Proposed Charge	50p	£1.00	£1.30	£1.60	£2.00	£2.70

Appendix A (cont.)

Lower Baxter

	Up to 30 minutes	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours
Existing Charge	N/A	£1.40	£1.90
Proposed Charge	50p	£1.50	£2.00

Midnight – 8 am and 6 pm – Midnight (Midnight – 10 am and 4 pm – Midnight Sun)	Single Rate
Proposed Charge	£1.00

Manor House

	Up to 3 hours	Over 3 hours
Existing Charge	£1.40	£3.90
Proposed Charge	£1.50	£4.00

Ram Meadow

	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Existing Charge	£1.50	£1.90
Proposed Charge	£1.50	£2.00

Leisure Centre (Mon – Fri)

	Up to 3 hours
Existing Charge	£2.00
Proposed Charge	£2.00

Hardwick Heath (Mon – Fri)

	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Over 3 hours
Existing Charge	20p	£1.00	£3.00	£6.00
Proposed Charge	20p	£2.00	£4.00	£10.00

Hardwick Heath (Sat & Sun)

	Up to 1 hour	Up to 2 hours	Up to 3 hours	Over 3 hours
Existing Charge	20p	N/A	£1.00	£6.00
Proposed Charge	20p	£2.00	£4.00	£10.00

School Yard (West) (6 am – 9 pm Mon – Sat)

	Weekly Charge
Proposed Charge	£22

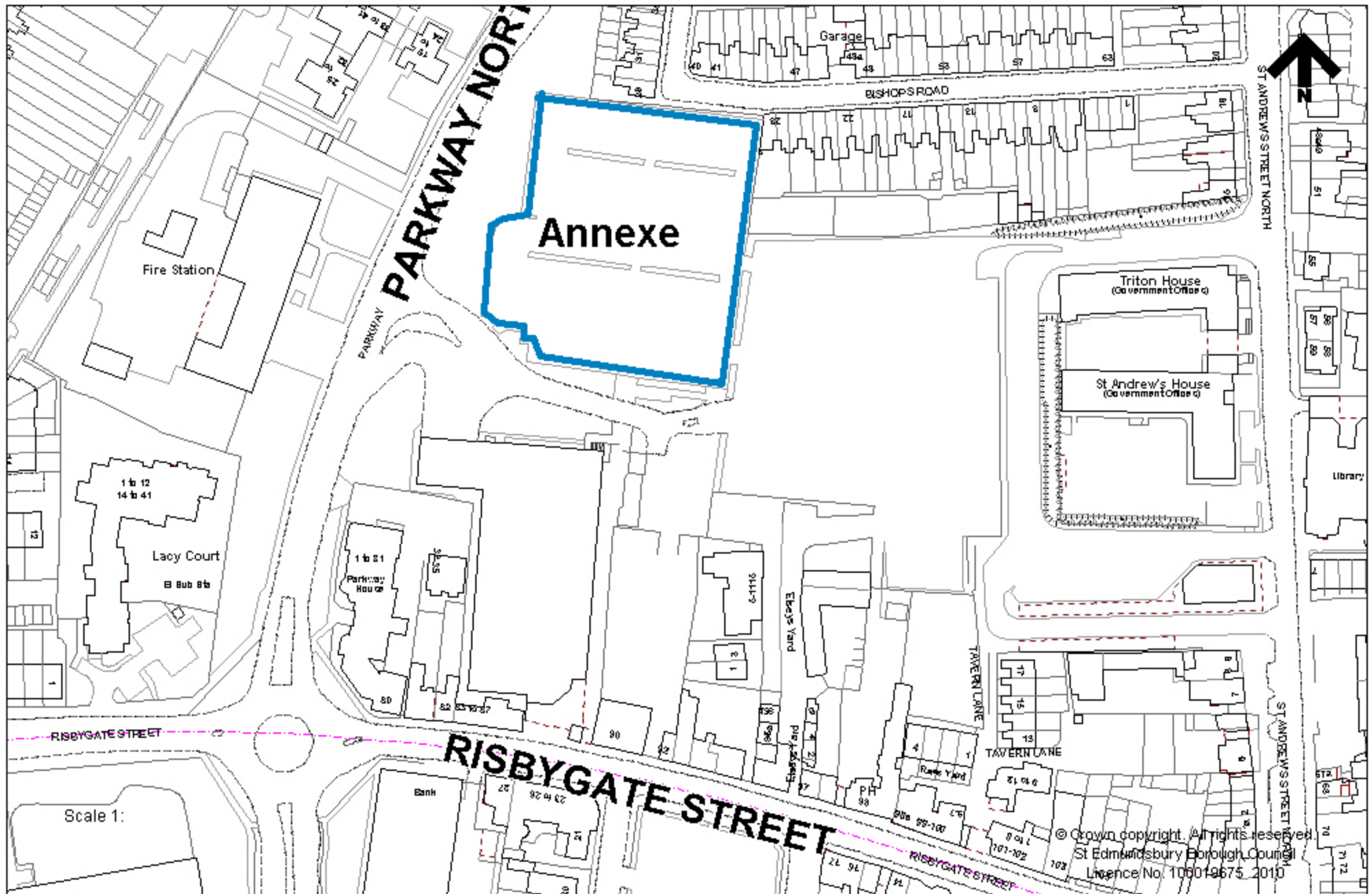
Sunday charge as Cattle Market/arc

School Yard (East)

	Daily Charge
Proposed Charge	£1.50

Car park is reserved for low emission vehicles only, charges apply 8 am to 6 pm Mon – Sat, 10 am to 4 pm Sun

Appendix B



APPENDIX B

St Andrew's Car Park showing Annexe area where all day parking will be permitted

Appendix C

Comparative Season Ticket Prices

		Current	Proposed	
		30% discount	On line (30% discount)	Over the Counter (25% discount)
Ram Meadow and Parkway	5 day	£53.20	£56.00	£60.00
	6 day	£63.80	£67.20	£72.00

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Regional Parking Charge Comparisons Sept 2010									
	Cheapest/most expensive Short Stay				Sunday Charging				
	1 Hr	2 Hrs	3 Hrs	4 Hrs	1 Hr	2 Hrs	3 Hrs	4 Hrs	
St Eds Proposed	£1.00 - £1.80	£1.30 - £2.50	£1.60 - £3.00	£2.00 - £3.50	£1.00 - £1.80	£1.30 - £2.50	£1.60 - £3.00	£2.00 - £3.50	
St Eds Current	90p - £1.50	£1.20 - £2.00	£1.50 - £2.50	£1.90 - £3.00	90p - £1.50	£1.20 - £2.00	£1.50 - £2.50	£1.90 - £3.00	
Bury St Edmunds Waitrose	£1.00	£3.00	£5.00	N/A	£1.00	£3.00	£5.00	N/A	
Bury St Edmunds M&S	£0.50	£1.00	£2.00	N/A	£0.50	£1.00	£2.00	N/A	
West Suffolk Hospital	£2.90	£4.20	£4.20	£6.70	£2.90	£4.20	£4.20	£6.70	
LA Norwich	£1.20-£1.40	£2.40-£2.80	£3.60-£4.20	£4.80-£5.60	£1.20-£1.40	£2.40-£2.80	£3.60-£4.20	£4.80-£5.60	
NCP Norwich	£2.30	£3.20	£3.20	£6.20	£2.30	£3.20	£3.20	£6.20	
LA Ipswich*	£1.60	£2.90	£4.40		£1.60	£2.90	£4.40		
NCP Ipswich	£3.10	£5.10	£7.10	£20.00	£3.10	£5.10	£7.10	£20.00	
LA Cambridge	£1.10-£1.70	£2.20-£3.40	£3.30-£5.10	£4.40-£8.40	£1.10-£1.70	£2.20-£3.40	£3.30-£5.10	£4.40-£8.40	
NCP Cambridge	£1.00/£2.50	£2.00/£4.50	£3.00	£7.00	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	£7.00	
LA Kings Lynn*	£1.40	£2.10	£2.60	£4.10	£1.40	£2.10	£2.60	£4.10	
NCP Kings Lynn	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00	£3.00	
LA Colchester	£1.50-£1.90	£2.70-£2.90	£3.60-£3.90	£6.10-£6.90	£1.50-£1.90	£2.70-£2.90	£3.60-£3.90	£6.10-£6.90	
NCP Colchester	£3.00	£3.00	£6.20	£6.20	£3.00	£3.00	£6.20	£6.20	
LA Peterborough*	£1.10	£2.10	£3.50		£1.10	£2.10	£3.50		
NCP Peterborough	£1.80	£2.60	£4.00	£6.00	£1.80	£2.60	£4.00	£6.00	

*The same prices apply in all LA car parks. No firm information is available on possible increases in other centres next year.

	Cheapest/most expensive Long Stay		Sunday Charging	
	8 Hours stay	Park/Ride day	8 Hours stay	Park/Ride day
St Eds Proposed	£2.00 - £4.00		£2.00 - £4.00	
St Eds Current	£1.90 - £3.90		£1.90 - £3.90	
West Suffolk Hospital	£13.30		£13.30	
LA Norwich	£4.00-£15.00	£3.50 for 5 persons	£4.00-£15.00	£3.30 for 5 persons
NCP Norwich	£8.70		£8.70	
LA Ipswich*	£4.40	£3.00 for 5 persons	£4.40	£3.00 for 5 persons
NCP Ipswich	£6.40		£6.40	
LA Cambridge	£6.80-£21.00	£2.00 per adult	£1.50 per hour	£2.00 per adult
NCP Cambridge	£7.20		£7.20	
LA Kings Lynn*	£2.10		£2.10	
NCP Kings Lynn	£3.00		£3.00	
LA Colchester	£4.90-£6.90		£2.00	
NCP Colchester	£9.50		£9.50	
LA Peterborough*	£5.00		£5.00	
NCP Colchester	£6.00		£6.00	

*The same prices apply in all LA car parks. No firm information is available on possible increases in other centres next year.