



Cabinet 20 January 2010

Annual Review of Car Parking Charges (Feb10/11)

1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.1 This report will consider the outcome of the consultation on parking charges for 2010/2011 and the recommendations of the Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill Area Working Parties. The majority view of the stakeholder and public consultees was that they did not wish to see any increase in parking charges, with particular concern about any move to introduce charges on Sundays in Haverhill. However, it is important that the Council continues to generate a reasonable return on its considerable investment in parking and to use the charges to manage the appropriate use of the car parks.
- 1.2 The current charges and impact of the above proposals are shown at Appendix A.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To implement the following changes to the parking charges with effect from 29 March 2010:-
- (a) **Bury St Edmunds**
- (1) **Sunday Harmonisation:** The same charges apply 7 days a week, except on Sunday when they will only apply from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm;
- (2) **Cattle Market/arc Car Park (including lower level car park):** Increase charges in this car park by 20p per tariff band except for only 10p on highest band; and
- (3) **Increase all short stay charges by 10p:** This will apply to all charges up to and including 4 hours in length.
- (b) **Haverhill**
- (1) **Increase all charges by 10p**

3. Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-
- (a) Corporate Priority: *'1. raise standards and corporate efficiency';*
- (b) Cabinet Commitments: *'1. improving efficiency and value for money, 4. Bury St Edmunds Town Centre, ' and*
- (c) Vision 2025: *St Edmundsbury will be a place which: 'with an integrated transport system that allows everyone quick and easy access to their chosen destination'.*

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4. Key Issues

- 4.1 In order to maintain a good quality service, keep pace with rising costs and ensure car parks operate effectively in accordance with the Council's policy on the provision of off street car parks, charges are reviewed on an annual basis. In carrying out this review regard was given particularly to the management of the car parks, especially the impact in Bury St Edmunds of the opening of the arc. The pressure on the Council Tax is also a consideration in the current economic climate.

5. The Options Considered and Rationale

- 5.1 Options to vary the charges were developed and consulted upon as follows:-

5.2 Bury St Edmunds

- 5.2.1 Consultation was undertaken on the following changes as endorsed by the Bury St Edmunds Area Working Party:-

(a) Sunday Harmonisation

The same charges apply 7 days a week, except on Sunday they will only apply from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

(b) Cattle Market/arc Car Park (including lower level car park)

Increase charges in this car park by 20p per tariff band except for only 10p on highest band.

(c) Increase all short stay charges by 10p

This will apply to all charges up to and including 4 hours in length.

- 5.2.2 The rationale and possible impact of the proposals are set out below:-

(a) Sunday Harmonisation: Week day charges will also apply on Sundays

- (i) Sunday charges were introduced in 2006. The hourly charge was originally set at a low rate to reflect the transition from a non charged environment. Users are now used to this regime.
- (ii) There is increasing use of the car parks on Sundays and as a result the need to manage the location and duration of parking in the same way as other days of the week. For example there is direct evidence of long stay parking on the cattle market/arc car park on Sundays which reduces the availability for short stay shoppers.
- (iii) Compared to other regional centres (Ipswich, Cambridge, Norwich) which have the same charges every day Bury St Edmunds is unique in having different Sunday charges. This can cause confusion for users.

(b) 20p on all tariffs on cattle market/arc

- (i) the increased price differential will encourage some migration from this car park to other less popular locations.
- (ii) Spreads the parking pressure concentrated on this one site across wider area and reduces congestion at the entry point.

(c) 10p on all short stay

- (i) Short stay prices were held in the 2009/2010 budget year to support the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- (ii) The increased retail offer has significantly improved the trading performance of the town.
- (iii) The proposals to not increase the long stay prices is in acknowledgement of the increase applied to these last year in view of the potential impact on workers.

5.3 Haverhill

5.3.1 Consultation was undertaken on the following changes, however the Haverhill Area Working Party did not endorse (b) below:-

(a) Increase all charges by 10p

(b) Introduce charging on Sundays

5.3.2 The rationale and possible impact of the proposals are set out below:-

(a) Increase Charges by 10p

- (i) There have been no changes to the short stay charges since 2008.
- (ii) The increased retail and leisure offer in the town has impacted on demand and an increase in charge will help to manage this demand and influence parking so it occurs at the most appropriate car park.
- (iii) Even with the proposed increases the charges will remain low by regional comparison.

(b) Introduce charging on Sundays

- (i) On weekdays drivers are influenced to park in the most appropriate car park through the charges levied. The increasing growth of Sunday trading and popularity of the town as a leisure destination has resulted in significant growth in parking demand. As a result there is the same need as on weekdays to manage where parking occurs.

<p>6. Community impact</p> <p>6.1 <u>General</u></p> <p>6.1.1 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 potential impacts are considered through the rationale for the charges set out above. It is acknowledged that the opening of the arc in Bury St Edmunds had altered the pattern of parking in the town and the proposals reflect the need to manage the demand and redistribute the parking. In Haverhill the recent opening of the Tesco development will also have an impact and it is too early to draw definitive conclusions on this. Unlike Bury St Edmunds the current town centre offer is limited on Sundays as relatively few of the retail premises open. For these reasons it is recommended that the proposal to introduce charges on Sundays in Haverhill is not pursued at this time.</p> <p>6.1.2 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, many 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.</p> <p>6.2 <u>Diversity</u></p> <p>6.2.1 The main group for whom parking is important are those with a disability. In recognition that for many of this group the car is their main source of mobility no charges are levied on blue badge holders in the off street car parks whether or not these vehicles are parked in a designated disabled bay. It should be noted that this concession is becoming the exception rather than the norm in the larger towns throughout the region.</p>
<p>7. Consultation</p> <p>7.1 In both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill consultation was undertaken with local stakeholders such as the Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce and Town Centre Managers on the options outlined in section 5 above. In addition the views of the Parish Councils within the Borough were also sought. The responses received are detailed at Appendices B and C.</p> <p>7.2 Perhaps not surprisingly the stakeholders were reluctant to see any increase in charges. The most consistent area of concern is the proposal to harmonise Sunday charges. Although this does suggest a very large percentage increase in some individual charges, this is only in the short stay car parks, in the long stay car parks the percentage increase is more modest. The evidence of confusion is in the number of appeals against Excess Charge Notices received where the differential charge is cited as the mitigation.</p> <p>7.3 The options on parking charges for 2010/2011 have already been considered by the Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds Area Working Parties. The recommendations emanating from these two groups are included elsewhere on this agenda (Reports A458 and A459 refer). The recommendations contained within this report mirror the recommendations of the two Working Parties.</p>
<p>8. Resource implications</p> <p>8.1 The proposed changes to the car parking charges are mainly driven by the need to ensure parking is distributed appropriately to the facilities available.</p> <p>8.2 The proposals will also increase the revenue received from the off street car parks, recognising the need to make a suitable return on investment in these facilities.</p>

8.3 In setting charges regard has to be given to the wider economic implications. However, it is not anticipated that implementing these proposals will have an adverse impact on the vitality of either town centre.

9. Risk Assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

9.1 Included as Item 19 in January 2009 Corporate Risk register.

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
Income streams, in particular, Car Parks, Industrial land/Property land charges and waste management, under pressure due to external factors including market forces and current economic downturn.	High	Reviewing charges at this stage, keeping increases to the minimum appropriate to the pressures on the car parks. Most of the long term users of the car parks in Bury are not affected by these proposals.	Medium

10. Legal or policy implications

10.1 Any variation to the car parking charges requires public notification before they can be introduced and enforced.

Wards affected	All	Portfolio Holders	Transport and Planning
Background Papers		Subject Area	Highways and Transport

Existing and Proposed Charges

Bury St Edmunds

Cattle Market/arc	Current	Proposal
Mon-Sat		
Up to 1 hour	1.30	1.50
Up to 2 hours	1.80	2.00
Up to 3 hours	2.30	2.50
Up to 4 hours	2.90	3.00
Sunday		
Up to 1 hour	.30	1.50
Up to 2 hours	.60	2.00
Up to 3 hours	.90	2.50
Up to 4 hours	1.20	3.00
Up to 5 hours	1.50	N/A
Up to 6 hours	1.80	N/A

St Andrews	Current	Proposal
Mon-Sat		
Up to 1 hour	.80	0.90
Up to 2 hours	1.10	1.20
Up to 3 hours	1.40	1.50
Up to 4 hours	1.80	1.90
Over 4 hours	2.70	2.70
Sunday		
Up to 1 hour	.30	0.90
Up to 2 hours	.60	1.20
Up to 3 hours	.90	1.50
Up to 4 hours	1.20	1.90
Up to 5 hours	1.50	2.70
Up to 6 hours	1.80	2.70

Manor House	Current	Proposal
Mon-Sat		
Up to 3 hours	1.30	1.40
Over 3 hours	3.90	3.90
Sunday		
Up to 1 hour	.30	1.40
Up to 2 hours	.60	1.40
Up to 3 hours	.90	1.40
Up to 4 hours	1.20	3.90
Up to 5 hours	1.50	3.90
Up to 6 hours	1.80	3.90

Bury St Edmunds (cont.)

Parkway Surface/Decked/Ram Meadow	Current	Proposal
Mon-Sat		
Up to 4 hours	1.40	1.50
Over 4 hours	1.90	1.90
Sunday		
Up to 1 hour	.30	1.50
Up to 2 hours	.60	1.50
Up to 3 hours	.90	1.50
Up to 4 hours	1.20	1.50
Up to 5 hours	1.50	1.90
Up to 6 hours	1.80	1.90

Note: Sunday charges above do not apply to Decked car park, flat rate charged by cinema operators

Lower Baxter	Current	Proposal
Mon - Sat		
Up to 1 hours	1.30	1.40
Up to 2 hours	1.80	1.90
Sunday		
Up to 1 hour	.30	1.40
Up to 2 hours	.60	1.90
Up to 3 hours	.90	N/A
Up to 4 hours	1.20	N/A
Up to 5 hours	1.50	N/A
Up to 6 hours	1.80	N/A

Robert Boby	Current	Proposal
Mon-Sat		
Up to 1 hours	0.20	0.20
Up to 2 hours	1.80	1.90
Up to 3 hours	2.30	2.40
Up to 4 hours	2.90	3.00

Note: Sunday Charges do not apply at Robert Boby Way – management agreement with owners

Haverhill

Ehringshausen Way	Current Charge	Proposed Charge
Up to 4 hours	80p	90p
Over 4 hours	£1.60	£1.70

Lower Downs Slade	Current Charge	Proposed Charge
Up to 1 hour	20p	30p
Up to 3 hours	70p	80p

Town Hall	Current Charge	Proposed Charge
Up to 1 hour	20p	30p
Over 1 hour	£1.10	£1.20

Leisure Centre/Meadows	Current Charge	Proposed Charge
Up to 4 hours	80p	90p
Over 4 hours	£1.60	£1.70

Responses from Parish Councils and Other Consultees

Barrow cum Denham Parish Council

Councillors are concerned that you are again putting up car parking charges in Bury St Edmunds especially during the economic climate. They wonder whether you actually want people to come and shop in Bury St Edmunds?

Little Thurlow Parish Council

Under the Haverhill rationale it states that there have been no changes since 2008 which was only last year - it might be said that it is premature to raise charges again.

If by attracting more people to our towns we are having more cars to park, the revenue must be greater than before - why charge more? As for Sunday parking fees - all well and good but why the same as weekday fees?

Increased parking fees make more people look for unsuitable side streets, causing more problems.

Denston Parish Council

Sunday Harmonisation.

I find it difficult to understand that management of parking on Sunday's is the same as weekdays. Surely the number of people wishing to park in the town are less on Sunday's. In any event if people wish to remain parked in the cattle market car park on a Sunday then short stay shoppers presumably would be able to park in the Waitrose car park, at the cost of a small amount of shopping in that store.

The idea that other regional centres have the same charges throughout the whole week, whilst Bury St Edmunds is unique in having a different tariff does not mean that we should necessarily follow their example. They might actually try reducing their charges to our level. The idea that these different charges may cause confusion for users is risible. What happens in Ipswich, Cambridge or Norwich is of very little concern to me. Were I to visit one of these places on a Sunday I may well avail myself of the park and ride facilities so that I would be unaware of the parking charges.

Haverhill.

You make no mention of the additional parking now available at the new Tesco's store. This may well encourage shoppers to avoid the chargeable parking facilities and complete their purchases in that one supermarket. The statement that the "increased retail and leisure offer in the town has impacted on demand and an increase in charge will help to manage this demand and influence parking so it occurs at the most appropriate car park." (?) How will an increase in parking charges help to manage this demand?

I have difficulty accepting your view that people will be influenced to change which parking facility they use because it will cost them more. It seems to me that they get used to parking on one site and will continue to do so, especially if they are elderly and unable, or unwilling, to complete the journey on foot from say Ram Meadow to the town centre.

Until very recently inflation was virtually nil, or negative, and here we have your proposal that parking charges be increased by substantially more than that. I therefore consider that these increases cannot be justified.

Haverhill Chamber of Commerce

Would like to see a period of free car parking – up to one hour, this would seem to compliment the pedestrianisation scheme and allow for people to drop in briefly. Often the availability of small change means that even if 10p public end up putting in 50p or £1,

If adopted would not have a problem if other charges were increased accordingly provided appropriate.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF CAR PARKING CHARGES: CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- (1) Letter from Bury St Edmunds Chamber of Commerce and Industry dated 7 December 2009.
- (2) Letter from Depden Parish Council dated 28 December 2009.



BURY ST EDMUNDS...
**Chamber of
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

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Mr Ivan Sams
Head of Property and Engineering Services
St Edmundsbury Borough Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
IP33 3YU

7th December 2009

Dear Mr Sams

Car Parking Charges 2010/11

Firstly, I would like to thank you for giving the Chamber the opportunity to comment on these proposals.

General

We appreciate that most of the proposed increases are relatively modest. However, the Chamber is opposed in principle to any increases in car parking charges, especially at this time. The recent increase in visitor numbers is desperately needed by local traders and does, in itself, bring additional revenue to the Borough without needing to increase rates. Also, increased visitor numbers does not necessarily translate into increased revenue for individual businesses and with the sudden increase in retail space and the alarming number of currently empty properties we cannot run the risk of discouraging visitors in any way.

Whilst the "Bury offering" has improved with the opening of the arc the local economy remains very fragile. The cost of parking is an emotive issue and any increase will have a disproportionate detrimental affect on visitor numbers. It is considered vital that parking charges in Bury St Edmunds remain competitive, and preferably *lower* than in similar towns in order to maintain visitor numbers and therefore maintain the general prosperity of the town.

Cattle Market

We consider the format of the proposed increases at the Cattle Market car park to be incorrect. Given its central position, charges at this car park should encourage short stay and discourage long stay. This is the most appropriate car park for visitors wanting to "pop into town" to make a quick purchase. Using car parking charges to ease traffic congestion is like the tail wagging the dog. Therefore short stay prices should remain low and, if any increase is to be made, it should be to discourage long stay at this location.



Sunday Charges

However, by far our strongest objection is to the proposed increases on Sundays. We find these wholly unacceptable and inappropriate. (i) The proposed increases are huge in percentage terms, up to fivefold, in a town where until relatively recently Sunday parking was free. (ii) The majority of traders are not open on Sunday and so the town's offering is clearly not the same as on the other six days of the week. (iii) One major reason why we receive a healthy number of visitors on Sundays is because parking is considerably less expensive. We should not throw the baby out with the bath water. (iv) The proposed increases would put incredible pressure on the Multi-storey and Robert Boby car parks. (v) There is no credibility in the argument that the public is confused by having different charges applying on a Sunday. The signage is very adequate and the general public is intelligent enough to realise that Sunday is not a normal day. In any case, since some car parks will remain free on a Sunday it is simply not possible to introduce uniform charges.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to comment. I earnestly hope that our views, particularly those relating to Sunday Charges, are given full consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew H Denny
Vice Chairman

Depden Parish Council

Clerk: Miss Susan Boor

Tel: 01284 850536

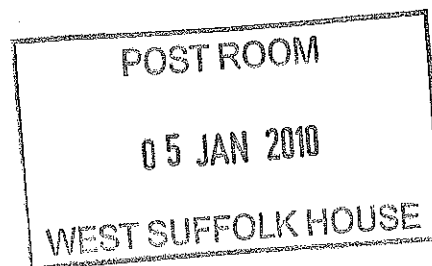
email: s.boor.123@btinternet.com

- 5 JAN 2010

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28th December 2009

Ivan Sams
Head of Property and Engineering Service
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Dear Mr Sams

In response to your letter dated 3 December 2009 concerning the Sunday Harmonisation of Parking Charges, Depden Parish Councillors wish to object to this increase.

The Councillors feel that people travel for different reasons on a Sunday, going to Church, family outings, etc. not just shopping. Therefore, the charge should reflect this by being less than the rest of the week.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan M. Boor".

Susan M. Boor (Miss)
Clerk to Depden Parish Council