



Haverhill Area Working Party 11 November 2010

Review of Car Parking in Haverhill

1. Purpose of the Report

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

2. Background

- 2.1 The past year has seen many management initiatives being introduced in Haverhill, these include:-

- (a) a new web-linked pay machine was installed in Haverhill Leisure Centre car park to meet customer demand;
- (b) a co-ordinated series of partnership uses of the car parks including six weeks of providing sites for the mobile breast screening unit, a very successful Police multi-agency traffic safety day, Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) vehicle check operations and Haverhill Town Council events; and
- (c) in Ehringshausen Way, Environment Agency works on Stour Brook were accessed through the car park, as well as making arrangements for contractor parking for the refurbishment works at the bus station and Queen Street, the Queen Street Gates launch day, and special bays installed for the Dial-a-Ride service.

- 2.2 A new gritting contract for Haverhill car parks was entered into after identifying an inconsistent historic service. This resulted in the most extensive gritting service ever seen in Haverhill which coincided 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 A number of proposals have been prepared for consultation with local stakeholders. The proposals being considered are set out below:-
- (a) to assist brief drop-ins and offer more customer choice, introduce a 30p short stay option at the Ehringshausen Way car park;
 - (b) increase a limited number of charges by between 10p and 30p;
 - (c) make season tickets available online; and
 - (d) amend rate of excess charges.
- 3.3 A table of the current and proposed charges is set out at Appendix A, attached to this report.
- 3.4 Taken together, the drop in income from proposal (a) above and the increase in VAT, these are balanced by the increased income from proposal (b). It is not anticipated that there will be any extra revenue overall from Haverhill's car parks in 2011/2012.
- 3.5 The rationale and possible impact of the proposals is set out below:-

3.5.1 **Introduction of 30p up to one hour parking**

The opening of Tesco has had an impact on the patterns of parking in St Edmundsbury car parks with a decrease in the number of long stay parking events. This impact has been particularly noticeable at the east end of the High Street. To attract people to this end of the town and redress the balance it is proposed to introduce a 30p up to 1 hour 'pop in' tariff in the Ehringshausen Way car park, and includes The Meadows car park. This follows customer feedback asking for the capability to park conveniently in a town centre car park in order to 'pop in' to the bank or shops without committing to a longer parking period.

This offer does not need to extend to the Leisure Centre car park where the majority of use relates to the Leisure Centre and the average parking durations are in excess of 1 hour.

3.5.2 **Increase in charges**

VAT is currently applied to the parking charges in the Borough and the change in the VAT rate from 17.5% to 20% will need to be reflected in the changes.

3.5.3 **Season tickets**

Currently season tickets are available for the Town Hall and Ehringshausen Way car parks in Haverhill, as either five day or six day options. The price is based on the all day price in the relevant car park, discounted by 25%. The shortest length season ticket available is eight weeks.

Currently season tickets have to be purchased in person. It is proposed to make these available online. To reflect the greater administration involved in over-the-counter sales it is suggested the online discount remains at 25% for online applications, but the over-the-counter discount is reduced to 20%.

3.5.4 Excess Charges

The current excess charge, which applies to all offences in the car parks, is £50 discounted to £20 if paid within seven days.

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.

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 even though there are clearly there are no grounds for appeal.

4. Future initiatives

4.1 The car park immediately in front of the leisure centre/restaurants is being remodelled to create a piazza and these works will coincide with a new signing design for the Eringshausen Way car park.

4.2 Lower Downs Slade car park is to be resurfaced and re-lined.

5. Consultation

5.1 The views of Haverhill Town Council, Haverhill Town Centre Management and Chamber of Commerce are being sought. These views, together with the views of this Working Party, will help to inform Cabinet in making a recommendation for car park charges for 2011/2012.

6. Community impact

6.1 General

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 car park charges impact directly on those who choose to use the car parks.

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, 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.

6.2 Diversity and Equality Impact

- 6.2.1 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.

7. Sustainability Impact

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

8. Resource Implications

- 8.1 Increasing the revenue received from the off-street car parks 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.
- 8.2 The introduction of a 'pop in' charge will support local business by encouraging short stay parking at the east end of the High Street.

9. 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

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Haverhill Area Working Party is asked to:-

- (a) note the contents of the report; and
- (b) submit the views of the Working Party on the options outlined at paragraph 3.2 of Report B285 in order to forward a recommendation to Cabinet when car parking charges for 2011/2012 are considered.

For further information, please contact:-

Steve Boor, The Engineer, Property Services and Engineering

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

APPENDIX A

Ehringshausen Way and The Meadows	Up to 1 hour	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Existing Charge	N/A(min90p)	90p	£1.70
Proposed Charge	30p	£1.00	£2.00

Leisure Centre	Up to 1 hour	Up to 4 hours	Over 4 hours
Existing Charge	N/A(min90p)	90p	£1.70
Proposed Charge	N/A(min90p)	£1.00	£2.00

Lower Downs Slade	Up to 1 hour	Up to 3 hours
Existing Charge	30p	80p
Proposed Charge	30p	80p

Town Hall	Up to 1 hour	Over 1 hour
Existing Charge	30p	£1.20
Proposed Charge	30p	£1.50

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