



## Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee 26 September 2013

### Car Park Tariffs 2014/2015

#### 1. Summary and reasons for recommendations

1.1 Cabinet report D190 of 21 September 2012, section 5(b), recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a report each September outlining any recommendations from officers for changes to car park tariffs, including supporting evidence and justification for changes. The recommendations contained within this report, which form part of the budget setting process, were scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 September 2013.

1.2 Based on current use, the recommendations outlined below would yield:

Recommendation 4: £109,881

Recommendation 6: £4,046

and recommendation 5) and 7) would yield £47,091.

#### 2. Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet be asked to approve the following recommendations as part of the budget setting process for 2014/2015:

- (1) that the current 'Free from 3' offer trialled in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill on Tuesdays and Fridays respectively be extended for a further year;
- (2) that the free parking offer in Bury St Edmunds that is currently available to shoppers from 4pm for the late night shopping events in the run-up to Christmas continues and is adjusted to run from 3pm, in order to be consistent with the 'Free from 3' offer and help simplify publicity;
- (3) that there is no increase in the cost of the current season ticket and weekly ticket offer at Parkway multi-storey car park and Ram Meadow car park

- (4) that the three hour tariff at Cattle Market/Arc should rise by 20p to £3.50;
- (5) that the all day tariff at Parkway Multi Storey Car Park should rise by 10p to £2.30;
- (6) that the three hour tariff at School Yard West should rise by 20p to £3.50; and
- (7) that the all day tariff at Ram Meadow Car Park should rise by 10p to £2.30.

**Contact details**

Name

Title

Telephone

E-mail

**Portfolio Holders (PH)**

Cllr Peter Stevens

PH Waste and Property

01787 280284

[peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk)

**Lead officers**

Mark Walsh

Head of Waste Management and Property

01284 757300

[mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Name

Title

Telephone

E-mail

Cllr Alaric Pugh

PH Economic Growth

07930 460899

[alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk)

Christine Brain

Scrutiny Officer

01638 719729

[christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

T:\SEBC Democratic Services\Democratic WP Services\Committee\Reports\Performance & Audit Scrutiny Committee\2013\13.09.26\E124 - Car Parking Tariffs 2014-2015.doc

### **3. Corporate priorities**

- 3.1 The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:
- (a) Working together for strong, healthy and diverse communities; and
  - (b) Working together for an efficient council.

### **4. Key issues**

- 4.1 In 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an extensive review of St Edmundsbury car parking provision and charges, which resulted in 17 recommendations to Cabinet, the majority of which were recommended for approval as part of the budget setting process, and subsequently approved in February 2013.
- 4.2 The recommendations included new charges for each car park and season tickets which were introduced on 8 April 2013.
- 4.3 The detailed site by site recommendations included conditions both for specific rises in 2014 and for freezes of other charges for up to 3 years.
- 4.4 At the same time that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations were being considered by Cabinet, officers also made separate recommendations after extensive consultation with Bid4Bury, Bury St Edmunds Chamber of Commerce, Haverhill Town Council and Haverhill Chamber of Commerce which resulted in the introduction of discounted weekly tickets and a trial of free parking periods including 'Free from 3' in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

### **5. Review of April to July 2013**

- 5.1 Income in this period is meeting budget targets and is consistent with income in the same period last year.
- 5.2 The weekly season ticket available for long stay sites, which offers up to 50% off daily charges, was introduced in April 2013 and has been very positively received with sales to date of 1,221. This is reflected in longer term season ticket sales, standing at 283 in 2013 against 327 in 2012.
- 5.3 The recommendation to introduce night charges to other sites in Bury St Edmunds was implemented and 5,000 more tickets were sold compared with the previous year
- 5.4 The change in use at Parkway surface car park from long stay to short stay throughout the week has resulted in 5,000 fewer parking events. In comparison, the expected migration of long term parking from Parkway surface to Parkway Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) has increased use there by 2,490 events.
- 5.5 Increased options for low emissions parking included the change in use from long stay to short stay at School Yard East (low emissions) car park which has resulted in 1,420 more events recorded since April, showing that the move has created sufficient vacant spaces to allow more low emissions vehicles to park.

- 5.6 Further discounts on weekly long stay tickets for low emission all day customers have been sold for St Andrews (long stay) car park.
- 5.7 The introduction of the 'Free from 3' offer in short stay car parks on Tuesdays in Bury St Edmunds has been mainly monitored through the electronic loops which provide data for the Variable Message Signing (VMS) system. Where loops are not fitted we have estimated on average use data. The offer was introduced on Tuesday 2 April 2013 and use has steadily increased over the four month period from around 1,400 in the first week to 2,000 more recently.
- 5.8 In Haverhill, the 'Free from 3' offer on Fridays cannot be directly monitored as the car parks are not fitted with loops but it is estimated that around 300 customers per week use the free period.
- 5.9 After a very successful 18 month trial of pay by phone cashless parking, St Edmundsbury has optioned an on-going three year contract with suppliers RingGo. Since the trial began, over 40,000 transactions have been paid through this platform and its popularity is increasing each month with over 2,500 regular customers and an average of 50 new customers each week. The service is being promoted with banners in the Cattle Market/arc car park to raise awareness.
- 5.10 The long term partnership with RingGo allows additional services to be explored such as a pay on exit scheme, customer reward schemes, targeted advertising, permit parking and the ability to pay by phone for weekly and long term season tickets.
- 5.11 St Edmundsbury has responded to feedback from customers, Bid4Bury and high street retailers in progressing the review recommendation to investigate the feasibility of pay on exit parking in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. A working group with representation from Suffolk County Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Bury Chamber of Commerce, arc management and Bid4Bury is currently considering presentations from parking consultants prior to commissioning an independent study to take this initiative forward.
- 5.12 Since April 2013 around 500 'Parkies', (adhesive pay and display ticket wallets), have been given out to customers visiting both towns to help display their tickets securely.
- 5.13 Parking Services continue to develop an ambassadorial, customer-focused approach. All the front line team have received specific customer service training and are actively engaged in traffic management and meet-and-greet duties.
- 5.14 This strategy has resulted in a dramatic reduction in fines issued. Fines are issued as a last resort, in most cases where it is apparent that no payment for the service has been made or attempted.
- 5.15 Fines issued in 2012 saw a decline of 20% against the previous year and 37% against 2010. In 2012/2013 the number of fines issued equates to 0.2% of our transactions – in other words, 99.8% of customers who visit the town understand and comply with the parking charges and so do not risk being fined.
- 5.16 A guide to parking fines and appeals is issued with every fine which gives clear and transparent guidance about why the fine was issued and what grounds are considered if appealing. This clear explanation has had a significant effect on

the number of appeals being made with the number of appeals dropping by 58% in the last year.

- 5.17 The new weekly ticket offer introduced in May 2013 allows customers to buy a discounted weekly ticket using a credit or debit card at key pay machines. Feedback from customers suggested that the outlay required to buy a longer term season ticket was too great a disincentive and the weekly ticket can be bought from as little as £7.50 in a long stay car park. We are now selling an average of 165 tickets a week and this is increasing each month.
- 5.18 In January 2013, every pay and display car park in St Edmundsbury was independently evaluated by police and parking industry officers and all received the prestigious ParkMark award. This was largely achieved through investing car park income in providing safe, clean, well managed and maintained car parks often covered by CCTV, along with highly visible, frequent patrols by uniformed attendants.

## **6. Comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 September 2013**

- 6.1 At its meeting on 3 September 2013, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee broadly supported the recommendations contained in this report. During discussion at that meeting some of the Haverhill Councillors also asked for a reconsideration of the 'Free from 3' provisions in their town so that this could be considered by the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee. Specifically, they requested that information be provided on the implications of moving the 'Free from 3' to Saturday, as well as having completely free parking on Saturday and Christmas Eve. This information is therefore provided in paragraphs 6.2 to 6.5 to allow Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to form a view if it wishes. It should be noted that this was *not* a recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as there was a variety of views on this, and no majority view formed.
- 6.2 Friday was chosen as the day for 'Free from 3' in Haverhill as a result of consultation with Haverhill Town Council and Haverhill Chamber of Commerce Saturday is overwhelmingly the busiest parking day in Haverhill and in general, free parking periods are designed to stimulate *additional* parking and retail activity and therefore tend to be offered in periods other than peak. By offering free parking outside known peak periods, retailers can plan their staffing and special offers and build a new customer base.
- 6.3 In creating free periods at peak times there is a risk of over demand in the car parks which could lead to demand outstripping the supply of spaces and a perception of the town being 'closed for business'. The risk of wholesale migration to an all-day free period on Saturday could also create an imbalance, with weekday activity falling.
- 6.4 For parking income to remain neutral in making this concession, prices during the week would have to be raised leading to further imbalance of parking activity and over demand on Saturdays. As context, Haverhill offers 1 hour's parking at 40p and 3 hours at £1.
- 6.5 The cost impact of the proposal based on the last financial year is that all day free parking each Saturday in Haverhill would lose £80,820 in parking revenue per year. Free after 3 each Saturday would lose £8,206 per year. Free parking on Christmas Eve (or the last shopping day before Christmas) would lose £1,392 (although this was on a Monday in 2012) These estimates do *not* allow

for any rebalancing of existing parking habits which might result from changes (see 6.3 above)

## 7. Community impact

### 7.1 Crime and disorder impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

7.1.1 St Edmundsbury's car parks meet the standards of the ParkMark award in terms of public safety and security.

### 7.2 Diversity and equality impact *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

7.2.1 The recommendations are in line with the Council's fees and charges policy, which has been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment.

### 7.3 Sustainability impact *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

7.3.1 A sustainability impact appraisal was undertaken as part of the review last year and the findings continue to be taken into account in the development of these proposals.

### 7.4 Other impact *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

Charges can help traffic flow, customer safety and reduce traffic by encouraging appropriate use of long and short stay car parks.

## 8. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

8.1 Significant consultation was undertaken for the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group review which formed the basis of the recommendations contained within this report for charges in 2014/2015.

## 9. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

9.1 Parking offers and increased charges provide additional costs and revenue to the Council respectively which impact on Council budgets and need to be accounted for as part of the budget setting process. The income from our car parks, once the costs of running them are taken into account, are put into the council's general fund from which we pay for many services, including those related to the safe use of roads and transport.

## 10. Risk/opportunity assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Car park charges are set incorrectly, resulting in either charges being too high or too low. Both scenarios could result in suboptimal performance in the car parks.	Medium	Consultation has been carried out resulting in a clear rationale being provided by the O&S review for proposed charges.	Low
Town centres are adversely affected by any increase.	Low	Feedback from customers & other key stakeholders along with benchmarking information demonstrates that increases are not excessive.	Low

## **11. Legal and policy implications**

- 11.1 Car parking charges are a budget and policy decision which is ultimately the responsibility of full Council. Any recommendations from the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee will first need to be passed to Cabinet, and Cabinet will then decide whether to recommend the inclusion of any changes to charges in the Budget to be considered by full Council in February 2014.

## **12. Wards affected**

- 12.1 All

## **13. Background papers**

- 13.1 Report D190 – Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Final Report of the Task and Finish Group: Review of Car Parking Charges throughout the Borough.
- 13.2 Report D223 – Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Review of Car Parking Charges throughout the Borough.

## **14. Documents attached**

- 14.1 Appendix A - Season Ticket & Weekly Ticket Charges 2013/14.
- 14.2 Appendix B – Recommended Tariffs from 1 April 2014.

**Season Ticket & Weekly Ticket Charges 2013/2014**

Ram Meadow/Parkway MSCP	£60 every 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
St Andrews 2 long stay	£84 every 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
St Andrews 2 long stay Low Emissions	£72 every 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
Ehringshausen Way 5 day	£60 each 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
Ehringshausen Way 6 day	£72 each 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
Town Hall 5 day	£40 each 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
Town Hall 6 day	£52 each 8 weeks up to 52 weeks
West Stow/Nowton Park	£15 annual
Weekly ticket Ram Meadow/Parkway MSCP	£7.50
Weekly ticket St Andrews 2 long stay	£10.50
Weekly ticket St Andrews 2 long stay Low Emission	£9.00



**APPENDIX B**

**Recommended Tariffs from 1 April 2014**

*Prices in red are the recommended changes, black indicates no change*

	<b>30 mins</b>	<b>1 hour</b>	<b>2 hours</b>	<b>3 hours</b>		<b>4 hours</b>	<b>All day</b>		<b>Night charge</b>
<b>Cattle market/arc</b>	-	<b>£2.00</b>	<b>£3.00</b>	<b>£3.30</b>	<b>£3.50</b>	<b>£4.00</b>	-		<b>£1.00</b>
<b>St Andrews short stay</b>	<b>60p</b>	<b>£1.10</b>	<b>£2.00</b>	<b>£2.70</b>		-	-		<b>£1.00</b>
<b>St Andrews long stay</b>							<b>£3.00</b>		
<b>Ram Meadow</b>			<b>£1.50</b>	<b>£1.80</b>			<b>£2.20</b>	<b>£2.30</b>	
<b>Parkway MSCP</b>			<b>£1.50</b>	<b>£1.80</b>			<b>£2.20</b>	<b>£2.30</b>	
<b>Parkway Surface</b>			<b>£1.60</b>	<b>£2.00</b>		<b>£2.20</b>			
<b>Robert Boby</b>		<b>20p</b>	<b>£2.20</b>	<b>£3.00</b>					<b>£1.00</b>
<b>Lower Baxter</b>	<b>80p</b>	<b>£1.50</b>	<b>£2.20</b>						<b>£1.00</b>
<b>School Yard East</b>				<b>£1.80</b>					<b>£1.00</b>
<b>School Yard West</b>		<b>£2.00</b>	<b>£3.00</b>	<b>£3.30</b>	<b>£3.50</b>				<b>£1.00</b>
<b>Manor House</b>				<b>£1.80</b>			<b>£4.00</b>		<b>£1.00</b>
<b>Ehringshausen Way</b>		<b>40p</b>		<b>£1.00</b>			<b>£2.20</b>		
<b>Lower Downs Slade</b>		<b>40p</b>		<b>£1.00</b>					
<b>Town Hall</b>		<b>40p</b>		<b>£1.00</b>			<b>£2.00</b>		
<b>Leisure Centre</b>							<b>£2.20</b>		
<b>Meadows</b>		<b>40p</b>		<b>£1.00</b>			<b>£2.20</b>		
<b>Hardwick Heath</b>		<b>40p</b>	<b>£2.20</b>	<b>£4.50</b>			<b>£10.50</b>		
<b>Nowton Park</b>			<b>£1.00</b>				<b>£2.00</b>		
<b>West Stow</b>		<b>£1.00</b>					<b>£2.00</b>		