

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group – Final Report</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/15/017</b>	
<b>Report to and date/s:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	11 November 2015
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<p>Cabinet Report CAB/SE/15/002 (Amended) recommended Overview and Scrutiny Committee to undertake a full review of the car parking, including the setting of Tariffs and the consideration of Pay on Exit/ANPR operating systems in July 2015.</p> <p>A Task and Finish Review Group was established by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 July 2015 and this report sets out the conclusions and recommendations of the Review Group on car parking across the Borough.</p>	

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Note and comment on the report by the Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group, as set out in Appendix 1.</b></p> <p><b>(2) Agree the recommendations (as set out in Section 9 of the Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group report in Appendix 1) for consideration by Cabinet on the 8 December 2015.</b></p>	
<p><b>Key Decision:</b></p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) A key decision means an executive decision which, pending any further guidance from the Secretary of State, is likely to:</p> <p>(i) result in any new expenditure, income or savings of more than £50,000 in relation to the Council's revenue budget or capital programme;</p>	
<p><b>Consultation:</b></p>	<p>Consultation has been undertaken with car park users, key stakeholders and local businesses by way of surveys, questionnaires and meetings.</p>	
<p><b>Alternative option(s):</b></p>	<p>Other options open to the Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group but not supported by consultation, were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To make no changes to tariffs or improvements to car parking capacity and flexibility of payment</li> <li>• To recommend a 'blanket' percentage increase rise across all car parks in future years.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Implications:</b></p>		
<p><i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group has considered car parking tariffs and any investment required in the delivery and operation of the car parks</li> </ul>	

Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay on Exit/ANPR operations will have an impact on staff work practices and this has been considered within the report.</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New technologies for payment has been considered as part of the review</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any recommendations must be compliant with the Road Traffic Act</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Car parking Tariffs are set incorrectly resulting in a suboptimal performance	Medium	Regular consultation should be carried to provide clear rationale for proposed changes	Low
Town centres adversely affected by tariff changes	Low	Feedback from customers/ stakeholder and benchmarking information	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>			
<b>Documents attached:</b>		Appendix 1 – Report by the Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group.	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations.**

### **1.1 Background**

1.1.1 In 2012 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an extensive review of car parking provision and charging in St Edmundsbury. A significant number of recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet on 12 December 2012 (reference Cabinet Report D223). This included the need for a full periodic review of car parking across the Borough every 3-4 years. A Task and Finish Review Group was therefore established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 22 July 2015 to undertake this review.

1.1.2 The Terms of Reference for Task and Finish Review Group were:

1. To evaluate the current performance of the service including usage, the location and condition of the car parks, quality of service delivery, the issue of Fines, car park incentive schemes, and customer feedback.
2. To consider current levels of occupancy, future capacity projections and any interventions as required
3. To assess the conclusions of the study on the merits and business case for the implantation of Pay on Exit/ Automated Number Plate Recognition operation systems
4. To review car park tariffs for the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, backed by consultation.
5. To identify changes and amendments needed to Traffic Road Order

## **2. Report Summary and Recommendations**

2.1 In commencing the review, the Task and Finish Group undertook extensive consultation with car parks users, key stakeholders and local business. In addition, specialist advice was sought from an independent consultant, Alpha Parking, on existing and future capacity of the car parks across Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill.

### **2.2 Bury St Edmunds**

2.2.1 The key issue for car parking in Bury St Edmunds identified by the consultant was capacity and Review Group, with a current shortfall of 100 spaces at peak times and a requirement for an additional 500 spaces by 2025.

2.2.2 Transaction and survey data confirm that weekend capacity in the central parks does reach 100% capacity at peak times. Conversely Ram Meadow Car Park is only operating at 60% capacity and approximately 300 unoccupied spaces at the same time. To address the current deficit in car parking spaces at weekends, the Review Group has concluded that long staying parking events must be transferred out of the central car parks, specifically Parkway Multi Storey Car Park, to Ram Meadow and Olding Road car parks. This will make available more short stay car parking spaces in the centre of the town, and thereby reduce queuing and congestion in the car parks & on the highway.

- 2.2.3 Whilst the above measures will help relieve pressures now, the Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group feel that it is imperative that Cabinet set up a formal review to identify new car parking provision across Bury St Edmunds. This review should consider future growth proposals and opportunities, and it is recommended that this process is completed no later than 2017.
- 2.2.4 Pay on Exit is recognised as popular with retailers and would provide a flexible payment option with users. Consultation would however suggest that finding a space without queuing is more important with users. Mindful of the impact that congestion is already having in the car parks and on the highway, it is recommended that occupancy levels across the town centre car parks must decrease to below 95% occupancy before Pay on Exit be accommodated within the car parks.
- 2.2.5 The Review Group nevertheless recognises the need to provide car park users with more flexible options to pay for parking. It is therefore recommend that a phased replacement of car parking machines to provide debit and credit card readers and contactless payments is needed over the next three years.
- 2.2.6 Overall, the Working Group proposes that tariff increases should only be applied on car parks which are working at the highest levels of capacity. The vast majority of car parks have no increases applied which reflect the priority of the Review Group to support the vitality of the local economy and people working in the town centre.

## 2.3 Haverhill

- 2.3.1 The Review Group recommends no significant changes in car parking provision in the town as capacity at most times is well below 'stress levels'. Nevertheless, the proposed development opportunities arising from the recently endorsed Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan means capacity should be monitored by the parking services team as development proposals are implemented.
- 2.3.2 The highest levels of occupancy are found at two car parks – Ehringhausen Way and Leisure Centre car parks, which can become stressed at times during the week. A number of mitigation actions can be implemented including improved direction highway signs to the car parks, incentivising long stay users to use the Meadows Car Park, the withdrawal of long stay car parking at the Leisure Centre and regulated restrictions of the car park owned by the Borough Council at the rear of the Corn Exchange.
- 2.3.3 Whilst no changes to car parking tariffs are proposed (with the exception of lower tariffs at the Meadows Car Park), the Working Group recommends that car parking enforcement should be stepped up with a more visible, daily presence.

## 2.4 Recommendations

- 2.4.1 The full report of the Task and Finish Review Group for Car Parks is set out in **Appendix 1**. This includes fourteen recommendations in **Section 9** of the report that addresses the issue of capacity, service delivery, and proposed investment in the delivery of the car parking service.