

REPORT BY THE CAR PARKING TASK AND FINISH
REVIEW GROUP

November 2015

Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group

1. The Review Group

At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd July 2015, the following Councillors were appointed to the Car Parking Task and Finish Group

CLlr Jim Thorndyke (Chairman) Cllr Angela Rushen Cllr John Burns
Cllr Susan Glossop Cllr Paul Hopfensperger

The Terms of Reference was agreed as:

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

2. Background and Performance

2.1 Car Parking Charges Review 2012

A Review Group was set up in 2012 by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at car parking tariffs across the Borough. This review recommended that a full review of car parking be undertaken every three to four years and in accordance with that policy decision, this current review has been instigated.

The review in 2012 concluded that all tariffs should be capable of being paid for by using no more than three coins; that an independent study be commissioned to investigate Pay on Exit for one or more of the car parks; expansion of the low emission car parks; and wider promotion of season tickets, RingGo (the payment by phone service) and competitive long stay parking tariffs.

It is noted that all the agreed proposals arising from this previous review were implemented and members of the current Review Group are keen to continue many of the key principles stated above, including the use of three coins for tariff payments and the retention of competitively priced long stay parking.

Investigations into the viability of Pay on Exit and Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology has been carried and are summarised in the studies set out paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3.

2.2 Pay on Exit Feasibility Study

A car parking consultancy, 'Mr Parking' Consultancy Services, was jointly commissioned with Our Bury St Edmunds early in 2014 to undertake a study on the technical feasibility of providing Pay on Exit using barrier and/or Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) control mechanisms within our car parks.

The study recommended that Pay on Exit using barriers and tickets / tokens or Pay by Plate ANPR could be extensively used in all the larger car parks across the Borough, subject to some minor reconfiguration. The capital costs of each type of operation are broadly comparable; both would reduce the level of enforcement needed compared to traditional pay and display and potentially provide users with greater flexibility.

Whilst the report suggests each mechanism can potentially generate additional income from longer staying customers, no detailed costing has been undertaken on the likely expenses of operation, nor the impact of potentially longer staying customers on current occupancy and capacity levels within our car parks. However, it is understood that the costs can be substantial, particularly where exit barriers are employed as it is necessary to have 24/7 rapid response in case of malfunction, damage or driver error causing the blocking of exit routes.

2.3 Car Parking Capacity and Management Study

St Edmundsbury Borough Council commissioned Alpha Parking Ltd to undertake a review of car parking capacity and the operational management of the car parks earlier in the year. The Report is attached in Appendix A.

(i) Bury St Edmunds

The consultancy report concluded that car parking capacity in Bury St Edmunds at weekends has a current shortfall of 100 car parking spaces. Over the short term, this weekend capacity deficiency could be managed by (i) the transfer of town centre long stay provision in the central car parks to Ram Meadow car park; (ii) higher tariffs on short stay parking; and (iii) changes to the maximum length of stay at given car parks.

The report concludes that if the above mitigation measures are adopted, the town will have sufficient capacity to service car parking need for up ten years. Over this period, the report recommends that the Borough Council should address the need for an additional 500 car parking spaces by 2025.

Aside from the central retail core of the town, the consultants recommend that the Council seek land purchase/ rental agreement opportunities to relieve pressure on car parking in the vicinity of the Cathedral and Westgate Street area.

With regard to Pay on Exit/ ANPR operating systems, the report recommends that due to technical and legal compliance issues, ANPR should not be considered. Pay on Exit could be provided but

will require the successful implementation of mitigation measures to address weekend capacity in the first instance. It is suggested that a minimum operation of three Pay on Exit car parks would break even on the basis of the resources needed to operate a 24/7 service.

(ii) Haverhill

The report recommends no interventions are required on capacity or management of car parks in Haverhill over the short to medium term.

2.4 Car Parking Performance

(i) Bury St Edmunds

Bury St Edmunds has 1,703 short stay car parking spaces and 1,578 long stay spaces in the town centre.

Town Centre Car Parks – Bury St Edmunds

Car Park	Spaces	Total Parking Events in 2014
Cattlemarket	862 SS	701,492
St Andrews	369 SS/ 184 LS	327,722
Robert Boby	110 SS	252,677
Ram Meadow	794	223,908
Parkway Multi	600	217,337
Parkway Surface	265	122,930
Lower Baxter	36	47,036
School Yard East	23	24,851
School Yard West	38	24,766
Total	3,218	1,942,719

In addition, public car parks are provided at Bury Leisure Centre, Hardwick Heath, Nowton Country Park and West Stow (tariffs apply) and free car parking at Olding Road (Weekends), Morteon Hall Community Centre, Lawson Place, Heldhaw Road, Southgate Community Centre and Holywater Meadow. This provides an additional 900 spaces in the area around the town.

The table above set out the number of parking event in 2014 with a total of 1,942,719 parking events were recorded across the town centre car parks. This represents growth of 4% on 2013. The most popular car parks were the Cattlemarket (which received just over 700,000 visits), St Andrews Car Park (327,722 users) and Robert Boby (252,677 users).

These figures include car parking events where a ticket was purchased from a pay and display machine and through our pay by phone option, known as 'RingGo'.

The number of RingGo transactions in Bury St Edmunds in 2014 was 76,360 (compared to 37,782 in the previous year) and it is anticipated that pay by phone transactions will be reach 100,000 in 2015 based on current demand.

The Borough has 5,500 users registered to RingGo on the system and approximately 100 new customers each week.

Weekly tickets sales (offering up to 50% off daily charges), has increased by 66% over the course of the past 12 months and approximately 220 are currently sold each week. It is also interesting to note that 50% of all weekly tickets are purchased by phone (RingGo) in Parkway MSCP.

Whilst weekly tickets sales for long stay car parking have steadily increased, the number of Season Permits sold has declined by almost a quarter. As of 1st July 2015 a total of 354 permits had been sold this year compared to 439 in 2013.

The car parks are regulated by a Parking Order created under the Road Traffic Act 1984. Where an offence is observed in a car park in contravention of an order, our parking attendants are authorised to issue fines call Excess Charge Notices (ECN's).

Failure to pay an excess charge is a civil offence and individual cases are taken to a Magistrates' Court where further costs and an additional fine may become payable. During the financial year 2014/15, a total of 3,268 Off Street Excess Charge Notices were issued in Bury St Edmunds. It should be noted that almost 99.9% of all customers understand and comply with car parking regulations.

A number of special conditions exist on some of the Bury St Edmunds car parks. Cattlemarket must be retained as a short stay car park (maximum stay 4hrs) under the development agreement. The first hour of charging on Robert Boby car park is set by the developer whilst Parkway Multi Storey is managed by an external estates company between 6pm and 1am daily , all day on Sunday and Bank Holidays. Lower Baxter Street car park income is shared with the National Trust under a land covenant, and all tariffs collected on the leisure centre car parks in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill are refunded to leisure centre users.

(ii) Haverhill

The town has 1,008 car parking spaces across the town, with the exception of Lower Downs Slade car park, they all provide a mix of short and long stay car parking. In 2014, a total of 414,597 parking events were recorded across the town centre car parks set out below.

Car Park	Spaces	Total Parking Events in 2014
Ethringshausen	202	176,850
Lower Downs Slade	96	106,900
Town Hall	279	62,781
Leisure Centre	138	55,285
Meadow	250	12781
Rose and Crown (Corn Exchange)	43	Not recorded
Total	1,008	414,597

The most popular car parks are Ehringshausen Way (Jubilee Walk) which received just over 176,850 visitors, Lower Downs Slade Car Park (106,900 users) and Town Hall (67,781 users). In contrast, the Meadows Car Park recorded only 12,781 parking events.

Total parking events in 2014 represented an increase of just over 5,000 parking events on the previous year.

The above usage data includes ticket purchased through RingGo. The town recorded 2,653 pay by phone RingGo transactions in 2014 compared to 1,936 in 2013.

With regard enforcement, a total of 248 penalty notices were issued across the off street car parks in Haverhill.

(iii) Comparison of charges with other locations

Tariffs across competing towns and cities in the region, and those of a similar demographic and profile are set out in Appendix D.

3. Consultation

3.1 User Consultation

Consultation was undertaken by way of a survey of car park users by the car parking services team in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill at point of use. A copy of the survey and summary of results can be found in Appendix C

(i) Bury St Edmunds (sample - 345 users across all town centre car parks)

The survey clearly demonstrates a high level of satisfaction on the location, condition, cleanliness and safety. This does support the ongoing external award of 'Park Mark' endorsement to all our pay and display car parks across the Borough.

Satisfaction levels were slightly lower on the issue of a finding a car parking space (more of an issue at weekends evidenced by survey results) and visibility of car parking enforcement patrols.

The most recurring themes were the availability of car parking spaces, the quality of car parking machines and litter.

The consultation exercise sought the views of car park users on the pricing of tariffs. The majority of users (57%) felt the current tariff structure was about right and 32% of respondents saying they are too high, and 11% stating they were cheap (from the data this was largely attributed to long stay car park users and visitors).

User opinion on Pay on Exit was also sought. Of all those asked whether their stay would be enhanced or extended by Pay on Exit, 58% said it would not.

- (ii) Haverhill (sample – 40 users in Ehringhausen Way/ Lower Down Slade car parks)

Compared with Bury St Edmunds, satisfaction in car parks was significantly lower with 50% of users feeling the car parks were busy, 30% said the car parks were in a poor condition and 70% of respondents seeing no sign of car parks being patrolled.

The general view of car park users in Haverhill was that charging was too high and that only 10% felt that their stay would be enhanced or extended by Pay on Exit.

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement

- (i) Bury St Edmunds

Two focus groups were held in the town to consider car parking provision, capacity and operations. A total of 18 organisations/businesses were invited to these sessions with the following organisations participating: Our Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk County Council, the Chamber of Commerce, Bury St Edmunds Town Council, West Suffolk College, ARC Centre Management, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, The Apex and Abbeycroft Leisure.

These meetings identified access to the destination and ease of finding a space as the most important issue in the delivery of car parking. Intensity of use was viewed as high, with no spare capacity in the south of the town. Tariffs were seen as important but not the key priority; flexibility on how to pay was seen as more important.

Key issues arising from these meetings were:

- Affordability of tariffs, particularly for workers in the town
- Shortage of car parking provision in the south of the town
- Most important factor for users is finding a car parking space and not queuing
- Retailers strongly support pay on exit
- Improved Signage in some locations
- Free/ low tariff car parks – we need to promote the ‘park and walk’ initiatives as well
- Support for easy to use and flexible payment systems (e.g. cashless payments/contactless and apple-pay)
- Tariff incentives work but most users do not base choices on where to park on tariffs alone.
- Concern that Pay on Exit would lead to higher tariffs given the cost of infrastructure
- Congestion on highway
- Suggestion that workers, residents and nearby visitors should be encouraged towards non-car modes.

- (ii) Haverhill

Ten organisations/businesses in the town were invited to a focus group with participations from Haverhill Town Council, Abbeycroft Leisure and the Voluntary Sector. The key issues

arising from this meeting were parking on the High Street, poor access from the Town Hall car park into the High Street, no long stay car parking in the south of the town, very low levels of enforcement of the car parks, and capacity constraints on the Leisure Centre car park with a need for greater long stay displacement to the Meadows Car Park. The focus group also supported regulation of the car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange building (known locally as the Rose and Crown car park).

The group felt that more promotion was needed as to the location of the car parks and disabled bay parking, with new signage to the car parks to encourage users to car parks other than Ehringhausen Way and Lower Downs Slade.

Recognition was given to the Haverhill Town Centre Masterplan and the proposals for development in the north-west and north-east of the town and enhancements to the local economy. This may impact twofold on car parks via (i) expansion of the town centre onto car park land and (ii) increasing usage. It was acknowledged therefore, that whilst the capacity of the car parks could accommodate growth, car parking provision would need to be reviewed periodically as the plan progresses.

In addition to the focus group, 55 questionnaires were distributed to town centre retail businesses of which 34 were returned, representing a response rate of 62%. The results of the consultation are summarised in Appendix D. The majority of respondents felt car parking provision in the town was average, with businesses responding more good than poor. It was the view of the businesses that the core purpose of the car park was to support firstly the shopper, then the worker and resident. The most important factors for any car park are its location close to the destination, that it's easy to find and that it offered low tariffs.

When businesses were asked how parking in the town could be most improved, the clear response was a review of the High Street parking restrictions which are the responsibility of Suffolk County Council and enforced by the Police Authority. Free periods of parking were also considered a positive measure, and would be welcomed between 12-1pm and after 3pm (in line with the current Friday incentive).

On the issue of tariffs, approximately 50% viewed the tariffs as too high; 40% about right and 10% low. If a rise in tariffs was to be initiated, preference was given to an increase in long stay tariffs and the introduction of an evening charge.

4. Bury St Edmunds – Key Issues

4.1 Capacity and the ability to easily find a car parking space has been highlighted as the most important issue by consultants, users and stakeholders. The industry standard for an effective and efficient car park is 95% occupancy; any car park operating above this level is known as 'stressed' and results in low turnover over of parking events, less availability of spaces, queuing and congestion. From the evidence supplied from the consultancy report with one exception, we are

generally meeting customer need for week day car parking in Bury St Edmunds. Car parks have capacity and users have no waiting time to find a car parking space.

- 4.2 The exception is Parkway Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP). This car park is shown to marginally exceed the 95% guideline for occupancy levels during midday on weekdays. The Review Group identifies the popularity of this car park for all day users being its close location to the retail area, West Suffolk College and businesses, whilst a nearby long stay alternative at St Andrews is considerably higher priced and not an alternative for the price inflexible user. Ram Meadow has on average 40% available capacity during the week on the other hand. The high level of occupancy on Parkway MSCP will mean it not being able to accommodate increasing demand and can only be mitigated by transfer of vehicles to St Andrews and Ram Meadow. Assuming this can be achieved it is concluded no additional car parking capacity is needed by weekday users until 2025.
- 4.3 Weekend parking: This is clearly a matter of concern in Bury St Edmunds. The study reports that the central car parks have occupancy levels well in excess of the 95% guideline for 3-4 hours on a Saturday with Cattlemarket, Parkway MSCP and St Andrews reaching 100% occupancy. The Review Group notes that it is predicted the issue will continue to grow, with Parkway Surface car park reaching full occupancy by 2018 and by 2020 these car parks will have no capacity for up to 4hrs.
- 4.4 Conversely, whilst the central town is working at a 'stressed' level at times throughout the weekend, Ram Meadow on average has approximately 300 spaces available. The Review Group have considered the low usage of this car park in comparison to the other car parks particularly as it offers the lowest car parking tariffs. Improving the highway signage has been identified as a key issue along with its link into the town centre, with more maps and pedestrian signage required. The rebranding of the car park is recommended as a 'visitor and business workers' car park.
- 4.5 The Review Group are mindful of the car parking capacity challenge as set out by the consultants in Car Parking Capacity and Management Study (Appendix A, Paragraph 7.8). As we stand, the town has deficiency of 100 spaces at peak times over the weekend. Should the Council wish to achieve all our car parks at not more than 95% occupancy level at weekends, interventions are needed to transfer users to Ram Meadow. This will manage capacity until 2025 at which time a minimum of a 500 additional spaces will be required.
- 4.6 If car park users were directed and incentivised to Ram Meadow, overall capacity in the town centre may be sufficient at weekends until 2025. The Council is committed to the promotion of sustainable transport and to encourage visits into the town centre by public transport, through cycling and the use of low emission and electric cars (a bid has been submitted for an additional two electric car charging points in the town). Nevertheless, we are mindful of the year on year growth in car parking events and popularity of the town as a shopping/tourist destination and to reflect this, the Review Group has resolved to address the short term capacity issues.
- 4.7 At weekends, Parkway MSCP provides 600 spaces in the heart of the town centre of which 37% are long stay users (staying 4 hrs or more) occupying almost 400 spaces. Given the significant capacity at Ram Meadow, it is the view of the consultants and Review Group, that a weekend

reduction in the maximum length of stay restriction to 4hrs at Parkway MSCP would allow more car parking acts in each parking bay, potentially allowing an extra 250 cars to park on a Saturday and Sunday and would equate to around 80 spaces at peak times.

4.8 Tariffs have also been identified as another mechanism to manage the car parking capacity. The tariff comparison in Appendix D suggests that the cost of long stay car parking is extremely low in comparison to Cambridge, Ipswich, Norwich and towns of a similar size such as Kings Lynn, Winchester and Chichester. This is particularly the case when you consider that the cost of a £7.50 weekly ticket is equivalent to £1.07 per day if you park every day on Parkway MSCP and Ram Meadow car parks. Mindful that we need to incentivise as many users to Ram Meadow to relieve town centre capacity, the Review Group recommends an increase in all long stay tariffs on Parkway MSCP, including the weekly ticket and season ticket price, whilst no changes will need be applied to either St Andrews Long Stay or Ram Meadow.

4.9 Short Stay tariffs are viewed as competitive with other destinations providing they are capped no higher than current charges on Cattlemarket and School Yard West Car Parks. Based on the capacity issues at weekends and finite availability of spaces, it is the view of the Review Group that the cost per space should be higher at weekends than weekdays, when there is ample availability. The success of the 'Free from Three' offer on Tuesday demonstrates how tariffs can change car parking behaviour and higher charges at weekend will provide the car park user with a choice on when to use the car park particular if they are incentivised by price. Therefore it is proposed to increase weekend short stay fees on St Andrews and Parkway given their close proximity to the town and bring them more into line with neighbouring central car parks at Cattlemarket and School Yard West. Again, Ram Meadow will remain unchanged and offer a significantly cheaper tariff.

4.10 Weekday tariffs across the board are viewed as highly competitive and user feedback suggests they are about right. No proposals are made to increase the tariffs with only two exceptions:

- (i) The low emission tariffs are considerably cheaper than neighbouring car park tariffs and have not been changed since introduction, and should be increased.
- (ii) Parkway Surface car park tariffs should be in line with short stay charges on Parkway MSCP and not significantly less than those on the adjacent Cattlemarket Car Park.

4.11 Outside of the central car parks in Bury St Edmunds, is Hardwick Heath Car Park. Whilst serving the country park, the car park also serves as overflow parking for the adjacent West Suffolk Hospital. At hospital visiting times the car park is full and it is proposed to extend the car park to provide 30 additional bays.

4.12 Park and Ride has been considered as a mechanism to manage car parking capacity in the town which would offer flexible long stay parking, and a tool to reduce traffic and congestion on the town centre roads. In deliberation, a number of issues caused concern for the Review Group. Neighbouring towns and cities in the region are ceasing or reducing park and ride services due to high operational costs (e.g. Ipswich is ceasing it's services, Cambridge is reducing services and Norwich is increasing fees). The park and ride service provided for the Christmas Fayre requires subsidy, despite charging £8 per day to visitors using the service. It is the view of the Review

Group that neither Bury St Edmunds nor Haverhill would be able to offer a competitively priced, non-subsidised scheme. Furthermore, the land purchase of sites around the periphery of the towns for a park and ride facility, construction costs and accommodating bus lanes (where possible) in the town centres would require significant investment with a long pay back on investment.

4.13 Whilst much of this section of the report has focussed on capacity and tariffs, the Review Group felt it was important to note the free weekend car park at Olding Road. It was recognised that unlike most other major retail destinations, the town does have free car parking within a 10 minute walk of the town centre. This does offer an alternative to the loss of all day car parking at Parkway MSCP at weekends. It was agreed that more promotion of the car park was needed, that the car park should be signed from the highway and pedestrian signage to the town centre should be improved.

5. Haverhill

5.1 Evidence from occupancy testing in the town's car park would point to significant capacity both now and over the medium term. Town Hall Car park and Meadows have on average levels of 40% and 20% occupancy. Conversely Ehringhausen Way (known locally as Jubilee Walk Car Park) and Lower Downs Slade have much higher levels with an average 70%. Ehringhausen can be full at times on a Saturday whilst other car parks generally see decline at weekends in comparison to weekdays.

5.2 To mitigate the higher capacity in Ehringhausen Way and Lower Downs Slade car parks, it is recommended that more investment in highway signage around the town to the car parks is needed. In addition, better connectivity between the High Street and the Car Parks has been noted as an aspiration. The Haverhill Masterplan has identified this as part of its core improvement plan for the town centre, but the Review Group has also identified access from the Town Hall Car Park as an area for improvement.

5.3 The Meadows Car Park is the least performing car park considered as part of the review of the Borough's car parks. It is located slightly out of the High Street but close enough for town centre workers to walk to work. It neighbours the Haverhill Leisure Centre which has a capacity problem on its own car park, with occupancy approaching 90% at peak times. It is clearly not in the interest of the businesses to see this car park full and therefore the Review Group recommends the maximum stay restriction should be lowered from all day parking to 3hrs. This would provide users of the Leisure Centre enough time to participate in their chosen pastime. Anyone wishing to stay longer and mindful of the higher levels of occupancy at Ehringhausen Way, it is recommended to encourage users to the Meadows Car Park where a reduced tariff structure is proposed.

5.4 Long stay capacity in Haverhill is located to the north east of the High Street with no provision in the south. Mindful that the car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange building (known as the Rose and Crown Car Park in the current Traffic Road Order) is owned by the Council, it is proposed to formalise the restriction in the Traffic Road Order and provide long stay parking in this area of town.

- 5.5 The Review Group has noted that Haverhill has no Electric Car Charging Points and would therefore propose the installation of two bays in a car park.
- 5.6 In the two weeks leading up to Christmas 2014, the Borough Council provided a free from 3pm car parking incentive in the town. To monitor usage, anyone parking in a car park had to visit the car parking machine and request a free ticket. This allowed the Council to compare the number of parking events in 2014 after 3pm with 2013 (which was chargeable). The data that was produced was inconclusive as it showed that the free parking did not generate a significant change in use. Feedback has been that the initiative was not widely promoted and that the car park users were not aware that they still needed a parking ticket. This year, we will offer the same scheme and undertake more promotion and car parking attendant presence. This will allow the Council to reconsider the economic benefit of incentives.
- 5.7 The Review Group has noted the issue of parking on the High Street and would encourage ongoing discussions between Suffolk County Council (the Highway Authority), St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Suffolk Police to find a sustainable solution to the problems.

6. Pay on Exit/ ANPR

- 6.1 Considerable investigation has been given to the both Pay on Exit and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) control mechanisms. Each system could be accommodated in our larger car parks and would provide users with a more flexible method of payment.
- 6.2 The ANPR mechanism is new and not as reliable as pay on foot or pay and display. If the County moved towards Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) and devolution powers, the system would not be compliant with the Traffic Management Act 2004 legislation. The Review Group would defer any decision on implementation of this system until a time when a decision of CPE is made to avoid the risk of significant outlay.
- 6.3 Pay on Exit is recognised as popular with retailers and would provide a flexible payment option with users. Surveys suggest however that finding a space without queuing is more important with users than method of payment.
- 6.4 The cost of implementing Pay on Exit is considerable as the system would need to be activated for 24hrs per day. Whilst no enforcement of the car parks would be needed a parking attendant would need to be on hand at all times of the day. It is recommended that a minimum of three Pay on Exit car parks would need to be installed on the basis of economies of scale. The cost of installing the equipment and back of house system is in excess of £270,000 whilst the on-going revenue and loss of Excess Charge Notice income would be £65,800. Clearly a significant investment for the authority and whilst desirable, the question for the Review Group is would it help resolve the issue of capacity in Bury St Edmunds?
- 6.5 The principal of Pay on Exit is that it provides the user with the flexibility of extending their stay and is supported by Town Centre Managers as it suggests that by extending the stay, the user

spends more in the shops. The Review Group has received mixed evidence to support or disprove that claim. However all parties are agreed that the system encourages the user to stay longer. The capacity data on St Andrews, Cattlemarket and Parkway MSCP (car parks which could accommodate Pay on Exit) all suggest that at weekends they reach 100% occupancy. The Review Group's conclusion would be that to implement Pay on Exit before it addressed the capacity issue would exacerbate the current problems and lead to further congestion in and around the town from queuing traffic.

6.6 The Review Group were mindful that being able to extend the users stay already existed by using RingGo. Those parking in a car park which had a maximum time restriction of 4hrs yet had only paid for three hours by RingGo, could use their telephone to extend the stay by a further hour without the need to go back to the car.

6.7 It is also noted that whilst in consultation with users there was a mixed view on Pay on Exit, many customers would support the introduction of debit/credit card and contactless payment machines (i.e. machines that did not rely on coins only). These machines are customer friendly and would reduce the number and cost of cash collections.

7. Future Capacity

7.1 The Review Group considered the implications for car parking capacity across the Borough.

7.2 In Haverhill, the occupancy rate across the total car parking spaces is on average 80% and therefore no intervention is required over the short to medium term.

7.3 In Bury St Edmunds, the immediate deficiency in car parking provision over the course of weekend can be mitigated with a mix of long stay transfer, maximum stay restriction and tariff changes. The aim is to reduce occupancy rates down to 95% in all car parks at peak times for the short term. The Review Group is mindful that as a result of housing growth, car ownership increases, increase in parking events arising from the expansion of West Suffolk College and the vibrancy of town centre, the growth in car parking events will continue. The consultancy report suggests that by 2025 a further 400 spaces will be required in the town centre.

7.4 Therefore the Review Group are very clear that whilst they are taking actions to solve the short term capacity issues, an action must be recommended for Cabinet to set up a formal review to identify additional car parking provision across Bury St Edmunds. This review should consider future growth proposals and opportunities and urge that this process is completed no later than by 2017. This would enable time for the procurement and construction of the new car parking spaces, as appropriate, by 2025.

7.5 A more immediate action for intervention is the area in the south of the town which has limited public off street car parking. Whilst the Review Group are mindful of the limited land availability in this area and tight narrow street configuration, they would like further dialogue with all key land owners in the area to explore car parking opportunities.

8. Conclusions

The Review Group have considered the views of businesses, car parking users and independent specialist. A balance is clearly needed that addresses the issues of capacity and service delivery, investment, cost in providing the service and the cost to the user.

8.1 Bury St Edmunds

- 8.1.1 This review can only manage the current shortfall in capacity of 100 car parking spaces at weekends through tariff setting, restrictions to the length of stay and marketing. This can only be a short term as reliance on increasing tariffs and imposing further length of stay restrictions could deter people from visiting the town. A solution to additional capacity is needed within the next 2-3 years, specifically with a view for a minimum of 500 additional car parking spaces.
- 8.1.2 In the short term and acknowledging the evidence supplied in the Car Parking Capacity and Management Report 2015, Ram Meadow retains significant capacity at weekends with 40% spare capacity and approximately 300 unoccupied car parking spaces. Therefore the transfer of long stay park events to this car is needed to make available more short stay parking in the central car parks.
- 8.1.3 Car parking spaces are at a premium at weekends in the central car parks and for the car parks to work at its most efficient, the churn of car must be regular. This can be encouraged by higher levels of charges in comparison to weekdays. The Review Group recommends the implementation of higher charges in St Andrews and Parkway Surface Car Parks that are comparable to the level of tariffs on Cattlemarket.
- 8.1.4 The only car park that is operating around 'stress level' during the week is the Parkway Multi Storey Car Park. Benchmarking data and independent review suggests this car parking as being significantly under-priced due to its proximity to the town centre and West Suffolk College, and its proximity to the higher priced long stay car park in St Andrews. It is recommended to increase both the daily tariff, Weekly and Season Ticket in the Parkway Multi Storey to manage demand and promote Ram Meadow. Despite an increase in tariff, the car parks would still be less than St Andrews and remain significantly cheaper than the other destinations benchmarked in this report.
- 8.1.5 Weekday car parking tariffs are viewed as highly competitive and important to the town centre economy. The Review Group proposes no increases to short stay car park tariffs with the exception of Parkway Surface (to bring in line with the Parkway Multi Storey Tariffs) and School Yard East (slight increase to the heavily discounted low emission scheme).
- 8.1.6 Overall, the Review Group proposes tariff increases on just the car parks which are working at the highest levels of occupancy. The vast majority of car parks have no changes applied which reflect the ambition of the Review Group to support the vitality of the town centre and people working in the town centre
- 8.1.7 Further addressing the concerns of capacity in the town at weekends, the Review Group are keen for further discussions with businesses and developers in the south of the town with a view to finding additional public car parking. In assessing car parking provision in the vicinity of

West Suffolk Hospital, it is recommended that additional capacity can be found on Hardwick Heath Car Park.

- 8.1.8 With regard to car parking operations, an ANPR car parking management system is not felt appropriate given the reliability of this new system and compliance with the Traffic Management Act 2004. Pay on Exit is recognised as popular with retailers and would provide a flexible payment option with users. Surveys suggest however that finding a space without queuing is more important with users. Mindful of the negative 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 can (i) accommodate users extending the length of the car parking stay; and (ii) avoid significant congestion on the highway.
- 8.1.9 The possible future implementation of a Pay on Exit system should not delay the phased upgrade of the Car Parking Machines with a view to replacing all machines with debit and credit card readers and contactless payments features over the next two to three years. Not only will the machines be more 'customer' friendly, it will reduce the cost of cash collections and the banking of money.
- 8.1.10 A permanent Park and Ride facility is viewed as not cost effective and sustainable given the current levels of car parking activity. Furthermore the road network would not be able to accommodate dedicated bus lanes in the town.
- 8.1.11 Whilst the 'Free from Three' parking initiative in Bury St Edmunds proved popular with users and reportedly boosted mid-week trade for the town centre, it does require a heavy subsidy. It is the view of the Review Group that any further extension of the scheme would need to be cost neutral and that no increase to mid-week tariffs should be applied to off-set the loss of income. On that basis, not expansion of the existing scheme is proposed.

8.2 Haverhill

- 8.2.1 Given the high levels of spare car parking capacity that exists within the town centre, the Review Group recommends no significant changes. Nevertheless, the proposed development opportunities for the town arising from the recently endorsed Haverhill Masterplan means capacity should be monitored by the parking services team as development proposals are planned and implemented.
- 8.2.2 The highest levels of occupancy are found at two car parks – Ehringhausen Way and Leisure Centre car parks, which can become stressed on a Saturday and at evenings respectively. A number of mitigation actions can be implemented including more direction highway signs to the car parks, incentivising long stay users to use the Meadows Car Park and the withdrawal of long stay car parking at the Leisure Centre.
- 8.2.3 The deficiency of long stay car parking in the south of the town can be addressed by regulated provision in the Council owned car park at the rear of the Corn Exchange (Rose and Crown Car Park).

8.2.4 Whilst no changes to car parking tariffs are proposed (with the exception of lower tariffs at the Meadows Car Park), the Review Group recommends that car parking enforcement should be stepped up with a more visible, daily presence.

9. Recommendations

The Review Group make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That the Council promotes:

- (i) that all tariffs remain highly competitive in comparison to similar towns
- (ii) the location of the car parks through directional signage
- (iii) the flexible cashless, pay by phone option – RingGo
- (iv) on line permits/season tickets

Recommendation 2

The purchase and installation of two further Electric Car Charging Points in Bury St Edmunds and two new Electric Car Charging Points in Haverhill.

Recommendation 3

The Council reviews all signage in the car parks with a view to making information easy to understand and more visible, including tariff boards and disability parking bays.

Recommendation 4

Changes to car parking and season ticket charges across the Borough are detailed in Appendix E.

Bury St Edmunds

Recommendation 4 5

To transfer long stay car parking at weekends from Parkway MSCP to Ram Meadow by:

- (i) Improve signage to Ram Meadow Car Park from the highway
- (ii) Investigate improvements to the pedestrian route into the town centre from Ram Meadow and quality of infrastructure/signage in the car park
- (iii) Rebranding of Ram Meadow Car Park as the Visitor and Long Stay Car Park
- (iv) No change to Ram Meadow charges
- (v) Parking at Parkway Multi Storey should be limited to a 4 hour maximum at the weekend, with the exemption of weekly and season ticket holders.

- Recommendation 5 6 **The Car Parking Task and Finish Review Group feel that it is imperative that Cabinet set up a formal review to identify additional car parking provision across Bury St Edmunds. This review should consider future growth proposals and opportunities and urge that this process is completed no later than 2017.**
- Recommendation 6 7 **As a matter of priority, the Borough Council seeks discussions with businesses and developers in the south of Bury St Edmunds with a view to finding additional public car parking in the area.**
- Recommendation 7 8 **It is recommended that additional capacity of 30 spaces can be found on Hardwick Heath Car Park.**
- Recommendation 8 9 **The Council promotes the availability of free parking at weekends at Olding Road.**
- Recommendation 9 10 **To instigate a phased upgrade of car parking machines with a view to replacing all machines with car readers and contactless payments features over the next two to three years.**
- Recommendation 10 11 **It is recommended that occupancy levels across the town centre car parks must decrease to below 95% occupancy before Pay on Exit can (i) accommodate users extending the length of the car parking stay; and (ii) avoid significant congestion on the highway.**
- Recommendation 11 12 **That the Borough Council works with Suffolk County Council and key stakeholders in the development of a Transport Strategy for Bury St Edmunds which promotes sustainable transports and help addresses the capacity challenges for off street car parks.**

Haverhill

- Recommendation 12 13 **It is recommended that Haverhill Leisure Centre car park be limited to a maximum stay of 3hrs.**
- Recommendation 13 14 **To implement up to 4hrs and All Day parking restrictions on the Rose and Crown Car Park in Haverhill.**
- Recommendation 14 15 **To provide an additional 15 hours off-street car parks enforcement each week by the parking services team in Haverhill.**

Appendices

Appendix A –Car Parking Capacity and Management Study 2015

Appendix B – Tariff Comparison with other Towns

Appendix C – Consultation responses from User Questionnaires.

Appendix D – Summary of Business Survey respondents in Haverhill

Appendix E - Proposed changes to car parking and season ticket charges across the Borough from 1st April 2016

Appendix B – Tariff Comparisons

Place	Up to 1hr	Up to 3hrs	Up to 4hrs	All Day
Cambridge	£2	£5.70	£8	£20
Ipswich	£1	£3.00	£4	£4
Norwich	£1.50	£3.90	£6	£10
Winchester	£1.30	£3.50	£4.50	£6
Chichester	£1.20	£2.20	£3.10	£4.90
Kings Lynn	£1.40	£2.10	£3.40	£2.20
Newmarket	£0.60p	£1.00	£1.60	£2.00
Saffron Walden	£0.40p	£2.00	£3.00	£3.50
Bury St Edmunds	£1.10	£1.80	£2.20	£2.30
Haverhill	£0.40p	£1.00	n/a	£2.00

Appendix C – Questionnaire Consultation Results – Bury St Edmunds

No. of surveys completed: 345

April/ May 2015

1. Where have you arrived from?

Place	No. of responses	%
Bury St Edmunds	88	25%
Within 10 miles of BSE	47	14%
Mildenhall, Lakenheath, Brandon	45	13%
Newmarket	28	8%
Cambridge	20	6%
Haverhill	19	6%
Ipswich	17	5%
Sudbury	16	5%
Ely/Soham	14	4%
Stowmarket	11	3%
Diss	8	2%
Thetford	7	2%
Norwich	4	1%
S Walden	3	1%
Colchester	3	1%
Other	15	4%

2. What is the reason for the visit?

	No. of responses	%
Work	56	16%
Tourist	23	7%
Shopping	232	67%
Appointment (services)	7	2%

Family/friends	11	3%
Cinema	16	5%

3. What is the duration of your visit?

	No of responses	%
All day	43	12%
4 hrs.	42	12%
3 hrs.	108	31%
2 hrs.	120	38%
1 hr.	30	7%

4. How often do you use the car parks?

	No. of responses	%
Daily	42	12%
Once per week	92	27%
More than once per week	45	13%
Couple of times per week	25	7%
Monthly	80	23%
Rarely	61	18%

5. How do you rate:

	Yes	No
Are the car parks well located	99.4%	0.6%
Are the car parks in good condition	97.7%	2.3%
Are they clean?	96.3%	3.7%
Are they safe?	98.9%	1.1%
Are they patrolled?	81.8%	18.2%
Did you find a space easily?	80.6%	19.4%

6. How do you rate the level of tariffs?

	No. of responses	%
Cheap	38	11%
About right	197	57%
High	110	32%

7. Would you stay longer with Pay on Exit?

	No. of responses	%
Yes	145	42%
No	200	58%

Comments

Weekly ticket would still be cheap at £10

Tariffs confusing x 2

Multi storey car park charges low, cattle market charges too high

Ipswich pay on exit always failing - waste of money

Less than 1 hr would be good

Poor car parking machines x 5

Cattle market charges too high

Problem of finding car parking space x 8

Why can't all car parks have a cheap 1hr rate

Compared to Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich the charges are very low

Instead of free from 3 on Tuesday, can't all car parks have a lower rate after 3pm

Low emissions rate isn't fair

Litter x 5

Free parking needed in late afternoon

More low emission spaces

More long stay spaces

Pay on exit not needed for size of town

Spaces to small

More disabled parking x 2

Low emission fantastic

Never seen an attendant

Pay on exit doesn't work in Cambridge

Free parking on Sunday

Appendix D - Summary of Business Survey respondents in Haverhill

	Question 1	“Do you have any comments/observations on the general parking situation in the town?”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
1	Restaurant	Too much blue badge parking on the High Street where plenty is available in the car parks.
7	Bookmakers	You can park behind Ladbrokes if you arrive early. There is often broken glass in the road.
8	Street Trader	In the modern era car use, with time pressure, it is important for consumers to be able to drive up to businesses and park then pop in and buy before driving off.
9	Retail	After 3 p.m. free parking is too for free parking.
20	Clothing Retailer	Should have parent and child spaces in car parks as spaces just wide enough to open door. Hard to get to children out of car.
21	Shoe Retailer	Observations: the High Street is an absolute nightmare with cars parking both sides all day causing obstruction!
25	Ladies Clothing Retailer	No free car park. Free from 3 PM on Fridays is not encouraging enough for shoppers.
26	Shoe Retailer	High Street should only be for disabled and deliveries.
31	Retail	The parking on Queen’s Street, when the road is open, is terrible and needs to be monitored as people just park anywhere!
32	Shoe Repairs	Adequate spaces in car parks but no one uses them, instead preferring to park in High Street/Queen’s Street/Tesco’s.
33	Electrical retailer	Too expensive! Good rates to workers in town! Make Lower Downs Slade car park long stay as it used to be!
35	Kitchen & Bathrooms	Most people take option of free parking in Tesco’s for short stay shopping. Long stay for workers in the town gets penalised.
36	Photographers	I would like to see free parking in Haverhill.
39	Bookmakers	
41	Bakers	Plenty of spaces reasonably priced.
42	Motor Spares	Need more spaces and need to be free.
45	Housing Association	Expensive. Business should be given parking permits.
49	Bank	People don’t like to pay for their parking so use our car park a lot customers and non-customers.
50	Retail Clothing	No problems experienced. Good value compared to Cambridge.
52	Video Library	Yes. The High Street should have designated parking areas including parking bays for blue badge holders. The High Street should be open 24/7 providing convenient access to shops and services.
53	Estate Agent	No convenience parking for a one stop purchase.
55	Sweet Shop	It should be free. We are not a busy town!!

	Question 2	“The most important users of the car parks are...”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
10	Jewellers	We should have 10p a day parking. Do a trial for three months. See if the footfall increases in the High Street.
20	Clothing Retailer	A car park for workers would be beneficial to make space for visitors and shoppers.
25	Ladies Clothing Retailer	We need to encourage shoppers into our town with the offer of free parking to keep our High Street alive.
33	Electrical retailer	When do we get tourists?
35	Kitchen & Bathrooms	Priority should be given to shoppers.
39	Bookmakers	These are all important users as if there weren't any of these people the town would be a waste of time.
41	Bakers	It's important we have enough spaces to draw customers into the town.
42	Motor Spares	
45	Housing Association	We have many clients and visitors to our offices that refuse to pay car parking prices for short 5 minute dealing.
49	Bank	Shoppers tend to use High Street mostly to avoid paying for parking charges and more convenient.
52	Video Library	Concessions for shop and office workers to use the white elephant car park (Meadows) might be a good idea?
55	Sweet Shop	Shop workers could apply for a weekly parking permit at a small cost.

	Question 3	“The most important factor all for the car park is...”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
11	Coffee Shop	More people are likely to visit the town and use local parking facilities if it caters for everybody's needs.
33	Electrical retailer	Would be great if the machines took £2 coins!
35	Kitchen & Bathrooms	Make it easy.
36	Photographers	Free parking will help our town.
39	Bookmakers	Too many disabled spaces in car parks seeing as they all park on High Street and not in car park.

	Question 4	“The change that would most improved car parking in Haverhill is...”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
8	Street Trader	Open the High Street (revert to road/pavement style). Place short stay car parking along one side of the road. Safety aspect. Children know where they stand ‘used to a road surface being risky’.
9	Retail	More car parking in High Street. Restricted hours reduced or removed.
10	Jewellers	Free parking from 3 p.m. every day would be good, free all day Saturday. The parking bays outside Boots and the post office should be used for one hour parking on an all-day basis.
21	Shoe Retailer	Give people change.
32	Shoe Repairs	As a business owner in Queen’s Street, I would forget ‘pedestrianisation’ and go back to parking outside shops in designated bays/spaces. Shoppers don’t want to park in car parks and walk to shops. That’s why there is so many cars still using the High Street.
33	Electrical retailer	Free two-hour parking to encourage shoppers into town as Tesco’s free 3 hour parking hasn’t improved footfall in town.
35	Kitchen & Bathrooms	Free parking and easy access is <u>essential</u> if we are serious about encouraging people using behavioural retail in High Street and Queen’s Street.
39	Bookmakers	Help the workers that are being forced to pay to park.
41	Bakers	More free parking periods would increase customer footfall in shops.
52	Video Library	Car parks aren’t the problem. The High Street is the issue. Proper access to shops and services is what is needed.
53	Estate Agent	Free any time first hour parking.
55	Sweet Shop	Enforcement could be higher if it was free for two hours. That would stop all day parking.

	Question 6	“If the cost of parking were to increase, please indicate which proposals you would support...”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
9	Retail	Free car parking required to level the playing field against the out of town retailers Sainsbury’s, Halfords etc.
10	Jewellers	We need more people to come into the high Street to shop. Increasing parking charges would drive people away.
21	Shoe Retailer	If prices were to increase (even though I think they are reasonable) people would park anywhere they could without paying i.e. High Street
30	Retail	No increase supported.
33	Electrical retailer	Any increase in car park fee will really kill the town!
34	Computer Repairs	Drivers pay enough to be on the road so parking should be free.
35	Kitchen & Bathrooms	We need to encourage people, not send them elsewhere.
36	Photographers	Really need to do something to bring people into town.
41	Bakers	We need to be finding ways to get people to shop here not giving them

	Question 6	“If the cost of parking were to increase, please indicate which proposals you would support...”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
		more reasons not to by increasing parking costs.
42	Motor Spares	No increase.
52	Video Library	Free parking permits the shops and office workers in the town centre?
55	Sweet Shop	All short stay should be free for 1 to 2 hours. No long stay close to town centre.

		“Any other comments?”
Survey Ref	Type Of Business	Comments Made
8	Street Trader	We want the High Street to thrive and vehicle access is vital for this to happen.
9	Retail	The number of charity shops in Haverhill town centre has probably doubled in the last 2 years. This is a strong indication that things are not good. We need to encourage people into the town centre. Free car parking would increase footfall in the town centre.
10	Jewellers	We need parking bays up the high Street. One hour parking is that people can drop in and move on. Similar to our dear friends embarrassing Edmunds in the butter market. People won't pay. We are all lazy in shorter time. Let's make the High Street a buzzing centre again otherwise 2031 really won't matter. We won't have a High Street.
21	Shoe Retailer	Personally I don't think the curb should ever have been dropped. Daily I see so many near accidents out the front of the shops, some actual, involving cars and people. The High Street gets block regular with cars and vans parking both sides to do their weekly shopping in Iceland or just popping into Greggs or Card Factory.
22	Jewellers	Bring in a system of parking like Sudbury. Free but with ticket.
25	Ladies Clothing Retailer	Haverhill as a town should offer a bike park to encourage cyclists to bike and not drive. Bike parking is very limited in town and needs to be monitored with CCTV and under cover which is not a lot to ask
35	Kitchen & Bathrooms	I know free parking across the town's car park is a dream only, but cheap easy access to High Street and Queen's Street is the only way forward. Free short stay parking in the High Street works in other towns. Please think long-term about the town, the businesses and not the <u>revenue</u> .
39	Bookmakers	The parking issue is awful. On 23 September 20 parking tickets were issued in the town centre and that was from the PCSO's mouth. Parking in Haverhill is outrageous and is killing the town centre.
52	Video Library	If Haverhill 'market' town is to survive the High Street must be fit for purpose providing convenient 'pop & shop' access to shops and services. Current restrictions should be lifted and parking bays installed.
55	Sweet Shop	If people could park for free for 1 to 2 hours they would shop at any shop with time to shop at other shops. Don't need any long stay unless shops apply for long stay staff at a small price perhaps.

Appendix E – Recommended Tariffs from 1st April 2016

Tariffs in red indicates change

Car Park	30 mins	1 hr	2 hr	3hr	4 hr	All Day	Night Charge
Cattle Market (Mon- Sun)		£2.00	£3.00	£3.50	£4.00		£1.00
St Andrews long stay (Mon-Sun)						£3.00	
St Andrews short stay (Mon –Fri)	60p	£1.10	£2.00	£2.70			£1.00
St Andrews short stay (Sat – Sun)	60p	£1.10 £1.80	£2.00 £2.50	£2.70 £3.00			
Ram Meadow (Mon- Sun)			£1.50	£1.80		£2.30	
Parkway Multi (Mon-Fri)			£1.50 £1.80	£1.80 £2.00		£2.30 £2.70	
Parkway Multi (Sat-Sun)			£1.50 £2.00	£1.80 £2.50	£3.00 New Tariff	£2.70 Deleted	
Parkway surface (Mon-Fri)			£1.60	£2.00	£2.20		
Parkway surface (Sat-Sun)			£1.60 £2.00	£2.00 £2.50	£2.20 £3.00		
Robert Boby		20p	£2.20	£3.00			£1.00
Lower Baxter	60p	£1.50	£2.20				£1.00
School Yard East				£1.80 £2.00			£1.00
School Yard West		£2.00	£3.00	£3.50	£4.00		£1.00
Bury LC				£2.30			
Hardwick Heath		40p	£2.20	£4.50		£10.50	
Ehringshausen Way		40p		£1.00		£2.20	
Lower Downs Slade		40p		£1.00			

Car Park	30 mins	1 hr	2 hr	3hr	4 hr	All Day	Night Charge
Town Hall		40p		£1.00		£2.00	
Leisure Centre				£1.00 New Tariff		£2.20 Delete	
Meadows		40p		£1.00 Delete	£1.00 New Tariff	£2.20 £1.50	
Rose and Crown					£1.00 New Tariff	£2.00 New Tariff	

Weekly Ticket Prices from 1st April 2016

Car Park	Current Price	Price from April 1 st 2016
Parkway MSCP	£7.50	£9.50
St Andrews CP	£10.50	£11.50
St Andrews CP (low emission rate)	£9.00	£10.00
Ram Meadow	£7.50	£7.50
Meadow Car Parks	New Tariff	£7.00

Season Ticket Prices from 1st April 2016

Car Park	Duration	Current Price	Price from April 1 st 2016
Parkway MSCP	8 Weeks	£60	£76
	12 Weeks	£90	£114
	26 Weeks	£195	£245
	40 Weeks	£300	£380
	52 Weeks	£390	£490
St Andrews	8 Weeks	£84	£92
	8 Weeks (low emission)	£72	£80
	12 Weeks	£126	£138
	12 Weeks (low emission)	£108	£120
	26 Weeks	£273	£299
	26 Weeks (low emission)	£234	£260
	40 Weeks	£420	£460
	40 Weeks (low emission)	£380	£400
	52 Weeks	£546	£598
52 Weeks (low emission)	£468	£520	
Ram Meadow	No Changes to be applied.		