

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Title of Report:	Car Parking Update	
Report No:	OAS/SE/16/029	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9 November 2016
Portfolio holder:	Cllr Peter Stevens Portfolio Holder for Operations Tel: 07775 877000 Email: peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Mark Walsh Head of Operations Tel: 01284 757300 Email: mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	To update Members on the implementation of the Car Parking Review and future car park related priorities.	
Recommendation:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 1) Members are asked to <u>note</u> the report; and 2) Recommend that the Head of Operations, under his delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Operations, vary the Traffic Road Orders as needed to implement the priority work streams as set out in Paragraph 1.9.2 of the report.	
Key Decision: (Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <u>do not</u> apply.)	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Consultation:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant consultation was undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that established the outcome identified in this report. 	
Alternative option(s):		N/A	
Implications:			
Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking fees and charges provide revenue and costs to the Council. Any surplus income after operation, investment, maintenance and staffing costs have been deducted, is directed towards the delivery of other highways and transport-related services within the borough. No recommendations contained in this report will result in a significant budgetary variation to the car parking account 	
Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
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 and town centres	Medium	Consultation has been carried out resulting in a clear rationale being provided by the O&S review for the proposed charges	Low
Town centres adversely affected by any increase	Low	Feedback from customers and other stakeholders along with benchmarking information demonstrates that the charges are not excessive in comparison to other comparable towns	Low

Ward(s) affected:	All Wards
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	Report CAB/SE/15/078 dated 8 December 2015 – Report of Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on Car Parking.
Documents attached:	None

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation

1.1 Review from 1 April 2016 to 1 October 2016

1.1.1 In 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a Task and Finish Group to undertake an extensive review of car parking provision and charges in St Edmundsbury. The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group were endorsed by Cabinet (see background papers) and were implemented on the 1 April 2016. This report sets out the progress to date and the impact of these changes.

1.2 Usage

1.2.1 A total of 2,453,629 car parking events were recorded in 2015 across all car parks in the Borough (including the Country Parks) representing an increase of 96,313 (4%) on the previous year. These figures are based on all transactions made from a ticket machine, the pay by phone option (Ringo) and the purchase of permits.

1.2.2 The number of transactions made specifically in Bury St Edmunds town centre was 2,014,671 in 2015 compared to 1,942,719 in 2014 – an increase of 3.7%. Haverhill recorded a total of 438,958 parking events compared with 414,597 in 2014 – an increase of 5.9%.

1.2.3 Since the change to the tariffs and car parking restrictions implemented on 1 April 2016, the number of recorded car parking events has continued to increase. Between 1 April and 30 September 2016, an additional 68,137 transactions were made across the Borough compared to the same period last year. We should be minded that this figure includes two car parks that recorded no transaction data previously - the Shire Hall Car Park in Bury St Edmunds (1,782 transactions) and Corn Exchange Car Park in Haverhill (4,557 transactions).

1.2.4 Over the period 1 April to 30 September 2016, the Parkway multi storey has recorded on average 110 more transactions on a Saturday. This has been increasing month on month, with September accommodating a combined Saturday total of 3,865 parking events which is on average 200 more transactions per Saturday than September 2015. The profile for Sunday has not changed. The data suggests that more vehicles are parking in the car park due to placing the mid stay restriction and a greater level of turnover is providing more capacity.

1.2.5 Ram Meadow Car Park has seen a significant increase in usage with 16,000 more transactions recorded since the 1 April 2016 than in previous years. The lower tariff and long stay parking supply in the town centre has encouraged more parking events by local workers. This is supported by more the 4,000 weekly tickets sales and a third more season tickets purchased for the car park over the six month period.

1.2.6 Capacity testing in Bury St Edmunds has been undertaken across September and early October. The following observations have been made:

- Parkway MSCP did not exceed 90% capacity before the Saturday 1 October.

- Ram Meadow has increased to 85% capacity on weekdays and Saturday.
- St Andrews Long Stay car park averages at 90% capacity with the exception of a Saturday when it is full at peak times.
- Weekday short stay car parking is approximately 60-65% full on Parkway Surface, St Andrews and Cattle Market. Robert Boby and Lower Baxter Street exceed 85% capacity.
- The Cattle Market car park continues to operate at a stress level over the weekend whilst all other short stay car parks have marginal spare capacity of between 5-10%.
- Anecdotally, car parking attendants report that less traffic management has been required due to the availability of spaces on Parkway since the TRO variation was implemented in April.

1.2.7 Haverhill has seen a continued growth in parking activity. In the first six months of this financial year the number of transactions has risen by 24,000 compared to the same period last year. Whilst the inclusion of the Corn Exchange accounts for some of this increase, the re-designation of the Leisure Centre as a short stay car park has seen 14,400 more parking events recorded whilst the adjacent long stay car park at the Meadow has seen an increase of 1,460 parking events.

1.3 Issue of Fines

A total of 2,721 parking fines have been issued since the start of the current financial year, an increase of 529 over the same period in 2015. Whilst the car parking service continues to develop an ambassadorial, customer focused approach to service delivery, inevitably as occupancy increases in our car parks and more staff employed to enforce and manage the car parks, the number of fines issued is likely to increase. Members will be minded that the number of fines issued over the course of this period equates to only 0.1% of our total transactions, reinforcing that almost 99.9% of our customers understand and comply with our car parking regulations.

1.4 Car Park Improvements

1.4.1 Upgrade of Ticket Machines

A total of 25 machines have been upgraded to accommodate contactless card payments and Apple Pay in addition to coins and the chip and pin facility. The machines across Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill now complement the pay by phone cashless payment system, RingGo.

Since the upgrade of the machines in April, approximately 60,000 payment transactions have been made on the 25 machines using this contactless payment method.

The pay by phone cashless payment system, RingGo, remains popular. In 2014 a total of 76,000 transactions were made on the system and increased to 120,000 in 2015. It is estimated that in excess of 150,000 transactions will be

made in 2016.

This highlights the shift in customers embracing new technology and the convenience and trust in cashless payment.

1.4.2 Electric Charging Points

Six Electric Charging Points have been ordered – four to be located in Bury St Edmunds (Parkway Multi Storey and Ram Meadow car parks) and two for Haverhill in Ehringhausen Way Car Park. They are due for installation in January 2017. The electric charging point's, manufactured and operated by Charge Master, will provide a source of electric to enable a vehicle to be fully charged within 3-4hrs. Given the authority's commitment to the promotion of green energy, vehicles will not be charged for parking but will be required to pay a charge for the electricity.

1.4.3 New Information Boards

All car park information and tariffs boards have been revamped and standardised arising from the restriction and tariff changes made earlier in the year.

1.4.4 New Directional Signs in Haverhill

An audit of highway signage in Haverhill has been completed and new signs to car parks identified. Suffolk County Council is currently working up a scheme of works with a view to completion in the new year.

1.5 Park Mark

As in previous years, the Council's pay and display car parks have been independently inspected by the police and parking specialists. The inspection considers the level of safety, cleanliness, quality of signage, frequency of patrols and uniformed attendants, and maintenance within our car parks. The Borough's car parks have again been recognised for their high quality of management with a Park Mark award.

1.6 Planning for Future Car Parking Provision

Cabinet instructed officers at its meeting on 8 December 2015 to undertake a review to identify additional car parking provision across Bury St Edmunds no later than the end of 2017. This was based on capacity issues arising from peak time parking and the need to provide infrastructure to service growth in the local economy.

The timetable for the delivery of a Bury St Edmunds Masterplan has now been established which will commence with public consultation next spring and a final draft for approval by December 2017.

The Masterplan will not only consider town centre retail and leisure uses but also traffic management and car parking which will form an important part of the study outcome. Rather than undertaking a review of car parking in isolation, an approach that is fully integrated with the Masterplan is

recommended on grounds of efficient use of resources and stakeholder engagement. Furthermore the Masterplan will become Supplementary Planning Guidance and the inclusion of additional car parking capacity will support the planning process.

Potential sites for additional parking will be included for comment as part of the Masterplan Issue and Options Consultation in Spring 2017 with a preferred option identified in Draft Masterplan in the Autumn. It is intended that a business plan for additional car parking capacity will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council following approval of the Masterplan in December 2017. This will include detailed costings, options to fund the car park and expected return on investment. Pay on Exit car park management systems will be included as part of the business case.

1.7 Civil Parking Enforcement

The police, Suffolk County Council and District/Borough Councils in Suffolk are working up a business model for the potential transition of on-street parking enforcement in Suffolk from the Police to Local Authorities. Such a change is known as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE). The aim of the business case will be to ensure that an effective system is created, allowing all parking enforcement to be fully coordinated across the west and east of the county in addition to the current operation that exists in Ipswich.

If agreed by all partners, the aim will be for transfer of powers to be fully operational across Suffolk by April 2019. This would be subject to the approval of business case by SEBC Cabinet and a successful application to the Secretary of State for Transport.

1.8 Financial

In the first 6 months of the current financial year, income from fees and charges amounted to £2,156,726 - an increase of £200,000 compared to the previous year. This is the result of greater turnover greater turnover of vehicles in our car park, targeted tariff changes agreed in the Car Parking Review and the inclusion of two additional car parks. The car parking budget is predicted to meet the budgeted efficiency target. The improvements identified in this report will be funded from in year car parking receipts and as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The funding of additional car parking provision will be considered in the review of the Council's Investment Plan.

1.9 Conclusion and Future Work Streams

- 1.9.1 Members will note the continued increase in parking events. Whilst high levels of spare capacity continue in Haverhill, the management of car parking provision in Bury St Edmunds remains a challenge. Initial data set out in this report would suggest that since the TRO changes made in April, more car parking events have been accommodated in the town centre at peak times and capacity levels have exceeded 95% less often.

Nevertheless, this sample period has traditionally less parking events than the busier period leading up to Christmas when we anticipate a deficit in peak time parking provision in Bury St Edmunds. This year we have secured an additional

700 weekend long stay car parking spaces at the Greene King Staff Car Park, the Manor House Car Park and West Suffolk College Car Parks over December illustrating the partnership approach taken by private and public sector bodies. Greater promotion of free weekend parking at the Olding Road Car Park will be undertaken along with the free town centre parking incentives for Tuesday and Thursday evenings from mid-November. The provision of free daily parking after 3pm in Haverhill will commence on 16 December along with the provision of an additional Christmas Market to encourage greater footfall in the town centre.

1.9.2 Priority work streams for the remaining six months of the financial year and into 2017-2018:

- Sampling and modelling of car park events in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill
- Development of business cases for the implementation of (i) Civil Parking Enforcement and (ii) new car parking provision in Bury St Edmunds
- Investment in existing car park provision including (i) the provision of more contactless payment machines, (ii) resurfacing of Vinery Road Car Park and (iii) highway directional signage.
- To develop a management plan for Moreton Hall Car Parks in consultation with local members, including the introduction of machines that issue tickets with an expiry time to ensure vehicles to not exceed the maximum stay restrictions.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report, and recommend the Head of Operations under his delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Operations, to vary the Traffic Road Orders as needed to implement the priority work streams as set in 1.9.2 of the report.