

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

|                            |   |                 |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------|
| <b>Title of Report:</b>    | <b>St Andrews Car Park</b>  |                 |
| <b>Report No:</b>          | <b>OAS/SE/17/001</b>  |                 |
| <b>Report to and date:</b> | <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>  | 11 January 2017 |
| <b>Portfolio holder:</b>   | Cllr Peter Stevens<br>Portfolio Holder for Operations<br><b>Tel:</b> 07775 877000<br><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk">peter.stevens@stedsbc.gov.uk</a>   |                 |
| <b>Lead officer:</b>       | Mark Walsh<br>Head of Operations<br><b>Tel:</b> 01284 757300<br><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk">mark.walsh@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>  |                 |
| <b>Purpose of report:</b>  | To respond to a Motion on notice submitted by Cllr Nettleton to SEBCs Council meeting on Tuesday 20 December 2016.<br><br>This has been referred to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.  |                 |
| <b>Recommendation:</b>     | Members are recommended:<br><br><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To note the motion and the contents of this report;</li><li>2. To consider the existing tariff structure and specifically, the all-day tariff for long stay parking;</li><li>3. To consider whether the previous alignment of the footpath in the car park should be reinstated (with a requisite loss of car parking spaces).</li></ol> |                 |

|   |   |  |                                       |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Key Decision:</b><br><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>   |   | <i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i><br>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/><br>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |                                       |
| <b>Consultation:</b>  |   | Significant consultation was undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that established the outcome identified in this report.   |                                       |
| <b>Alternative option(s):</b>   |   | N/A  |                                       |
| <b>Implications:</b>  |   |  |                                       |
| <i>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>   |   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul> |                                       |
| <i>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>  |   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |                                       |
| <i>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>   |   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |                                       |
| <i>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>   |   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |                                       |
| <i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>  |   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  |                                       |
| <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 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 |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b>   |     | All Wards  |     |
| <b>Background papers:</b><br><i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i> |     | Report <a href="#">CAB/SE/15/078</a> dated 8 December 2015 – Report of Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group report on Car Parking.                                  |     |
| <b>Documents attached:</b>   |     | None   |     |

## 1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation.

- 1.1 A motion tabled by Cllr Nettleton and supported at SEBCs Council meeting on Tuesday 20 December 2016, was referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

### The motion stated:

*The St Andrews short-stay car park is half-empty Monday to Friday, whereas the long-stay section is often close to capacity. The reason is that the current pricing policy encourages shoppers to occupy spaces in the long-stay section intended for town centre workers. By making minor adjustments to the tariffs in both sections of this car park, a more even spread of parking can be achieved for the benefit of our customers and without compromising income streams designed to meet revenue budget targets previously agreed by the Council. The anticipated date of implementation is Monday 3 April 2017.*

*I therefore propose that the tariffs are revised to the following: (changes highlighted in bold):-*

*Short-stay section: 30 minutes 60p: 1 hour £1.10 (no change to either): **3 hours £2**. At present, there is a 2 hour option at £2 and a 3 hour option at £2.70. Our customers clearly don't like paying more than £2 for a short-stay of up to 3 hours in this car park, as the number of events per tariff band indicates.*

*Long-stay section: **Daily £4** (up from £3). The current difference between 3 hours in the short-stay section and the daily tariff is 30p. The proposed difference would be £2. A few shoppers will pay but the majority will migrate to the short-stay section. **Weekly Tickets £10** (down from £11.50) **Low Emissions £8** (down from £10). Many shop and office workers are not highly paid but they are key to the continued success of the town centre economy. Weekly tickets are 24/7. There are no changes planned for tariffs in either section at weekends.*

*In addition, I propose restoring the pedestrian path between the residential streets of Bishops Road/Blomfield Street and the Springfield/Tayfen area beyond, which was arbitrarily truncated last summer without consultation with either local ward members or the community which it served as a link to Wilko and the arc shopping centre. Most importantly, open discussions with West Suffolk College and Suffolk County Council to accommodate students Monday to Friday during term time in the long-stay section. Here also, the implementation date would be Monday 3 April 2017*

This paper responds to this motion for consideration by members.

- 1.2 St Andrews Car Park Profile

### Short Stay

The St Andrews Car Park usage profile is consistent with other car parks on week days in Bury St Edmunds. Short stay occupancy averages 50-60% at peak times and this is verified by our Car Parking Attendants who visit the car park several times per day.

Occupancy testing of the St Andrews Car Park by consultants in 2015 suggested that weekday peak occupancy was 60% in comparison to 50% on the Cattlemarket and 55% of Parkway Surface.

### Long Stay

Based on recent counts, the long stay section is 65-70% full by 9.00am on a week day. This is when most town centre workers have arrived. The car park reaches on average 85-90% capacity by midday for no more than 1 hour. This is also verified by the 2015 occupancy testing.

In keeping with other car parks, the long and short stay areas have increased levels of occupancy between October to December and Easter School Holidays. From data on the long stay car park, an average of 3,450 all-day tariff tickets were purchased each month between 1 April 2016 and 30 September 2016. This increased to an average of 5,850 tickets purchased each month between the 1 October 2016 and mid December 2016. Weekly and Season Ticket sales remain consistent at around 330 per month. This demonstrates that the car park has capacity to accommodate 2,400 more car each month during the busy period and therefore operates with spare capacity for most of the year.

### 1.3 Tariffs

Long stay tariffs on the St Andrews Car Park are already the most expensive in the town and alternative, cheaper long stay car parking is available nearby at the Parkway Multi Storey Car Park. The single long stay tariff of £3 per day is priced slightly higher than Parkway MSCP (£2.70), and significantly more than Ram Meadow (£2.30) – the latter to encourage long stay users to park out of the town centre. The suggested increase to the tariff is likely to further encourage long stay displacement to Ram Meadow and may encourage more users to purchase a 3 hour maximum stay ticket in the short stay section. Nevertheless, a significant increase in tariff would adversely impact on part time workers for whom a weekly ticket is not a viable option.

The Weekly Ticket costs £11.50 and the Low Emission Weekly Ticket is priced at £10. They are highest tariffs across all of the town centre car parks. A decrease in either tariff would encourage displacement from Ram Meadow Car Park, which deviates from the recent Car Parking Review recommendations supported by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Furthermore, should the single long stay tariff increase and the weekly ticket price reduce, the level of discount would be around 50% which is disproportionate when compared with our other car parks.

In comparison to other town centre car parks, St Andrew's provides the most varied choice of short stay tariffs. Nevertheless, the occupancy of the car park is broadly in line with the other car park – Cattlemarket (which is slightly more expensive to park) and Parkway Surface (less expensive). This suggests that users are less 'price' sensitive and place a higher priority on location and convenience mid-week. It therefore may be viewed that a decrease in charges would not necessarily mean more car parking events although a lower 3 Hour tariff would encourage some displacement from the long stay area.

Overall, the proposals set out in the motion may not have a significant impact on income for the St Andrews car park. This assumes that the proposed 25% increase in the long stay daily tariff will not impact on the number of tickets purchased and this will offset the decrease in weekday short stay tariffs.

Given the recent experience of increasing the long stay tariff on Parkway MSCP however, it is likely that a higher daily tariff of £4 on St Andrews will displace vehicles to other car parks – for example, users may choose to park on Ram or Parkway MSCP given the daily tariff would be significantly cheaper. This would lead to an overall negative budgetary impact. This also highlights that a tariff change in one car park if considered in isolation, may have major implications on other car parks in terms of capacity and income.

#### 1.4 Car Parking Infrastructure

A total of 17 spaces have been made available from the relining works on the St Andrews car park which includes the relocation of the test centre bays. The additional spaces were found in response to concerns by businesses and Our Bury St Edmunds to lack of parking spaces at peak times during weekends. Following consultation with a specialist car park lining company, the path across the St Andrews long stay car park has been re-routed to accommodate some of these new spaces. The former walkway had no permitted right of way designation and we are not obliged to retain it other than to maintain clear entrances into and out of the car park. The revised arrangements have undergone a health and safety risk assessment and are consistent with other car parks which don't have marked-out walkways through them.

#### 1.5 Student Parking

The issue of student parking, particularly on street, is an on-going issue for local residents and traffic safety. Discussions between all parties, including schools and the Highways Authority, should address this matter. Members should be minded that these issues go beyond just the St Andrews car park and West Suffolk College. Any solution is likely to require a more holistic approach and an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that the solution is consistent with support provided to other groups. The current Town Centre Masterplan process and future car parking reviews will engage with local stakeholders on these matters.

## **2. Recommendations**

Members are recommended:

- To note the motion and the contents of this report;
- To consider the existing tariff structure and specifically, the all-day tariff for long stay parking;
- To consider whether the previous alignment of the footpath in the car park should be reinstated (with a requisite loss of car parking spaces)