

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Car Parking Update</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>OAS/SE/18/006</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	7 March 2018
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<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To update Members on Off Street Parking outcomes and work priorities.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <p>1) Members are asked to <b>note</b> the contents of the report.</p>	
<b>Key Decision:</b> <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<b>Consultation:</b>	Feedback from customers, independent assessors have contributed to this report.	
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	N/A	

<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <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>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? If yes, please give details		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details		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>		None	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		None	

## **1. Key issues**

1.1 This report provides an update of the car parking service across 2017, identifying use by customers and projects undertaken across the year.

1.1.1 We measure the number of transactions. i.e. when a person buys a ticket rather than the number of times they park. This can mean that a weekly ticket counts the same as a ticket used for just one day even though that person will be parking more times.

## **1.2 Usage**

1.2.1 The number of transactions and income derived from car parking has been higher than forecast and budgeted for in 2016/17 financial year and is likely to meet the budgeted target in 2017/18 of £4,500,000. We have also seen a significant rise in the popularity of longer stay tickets, such as weekly parking and the use of alternative ways to pay.

1.2.2 We have seen our second most successful year to date in number of tickets bought. A total of 2,736,616 car parking transactions were recorded in 2017 across all car parks in the Borough (including the Country Parks and Leisure Centres). While this figure is slightly down (3%) over the same period in 2016 were a total of 2,827,547 transactions were recorded it was still significantly higher (10.3%) than 2015.

1.2.3 The significant increase in the number of discounted weekly tickets being sold may explain the change and mean that the car parks are being used more than the transaction figure suggests. In Bury St Edmunds the discounted weekly ticket offer at St Andrews, Ram Meadow and Parkway MSCP has seen significant growth with a 52% rise in overall sales (20,770 in 2017 against 13,656 in 2016). St Andrews long stay facility was up 216%, Ram Meadow was up 56% and Parkway MSCP was up 20%. The purchase of a weekly ticket represents one transaction within our dataset used to denote usage. Part of the change in the overall transactions could be that users who had previously been purchasing a daily ticket are now purchasing a weekly ticket – therefore they are being counted once rather than multiple times in our data.

1.2.4 The number of transactions made specifically in Bury St Edmunds town centre was 2,159,438 in 2017 compared to 2,209,828 in 2016 and Haverhill recorded a total of 467,027 parking events in 2017 compared with 506,878 in 2016.

1.2.5 The fall in parking transactions has been evident across the short stay car parks in both Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill and of particular note, over the period November and December. This follows local and national trends this year around Christmas. It is also worth noting that there has been disruption in and around Bury St Edmunds last year due to roadworks which may have had a knock-on effect.

1.2.6 Ram Meadow Car Park remains a popular site with 'worker' users during the week and visitors at weekends. Whilst machine payments by coin are slightly down in 2017 by 2.6% this was offset by increased use of RingGo

(up 26.9%) and increased weekly ticket sales (up 56.4%).

- 1.2.7 Whilst this report identifies a fall in transactions the data does suggest that this may be a more confused picture as people are buying weekly tickets, users are staying longer and paying a higher tariff.

### **1.3 Issue of Fines**

- 1.3.1 A total of 3,119 parking fines were issued in the car parks in 2017 with 3,335 being issued in 2016. The car parking service continues to develop an ambassadorial, customer focused approach to service delivery and these figures indicate that the majority of our customers understand and comply with our car parking regulations. Members will be minded that the number of fines issued over the course of both 2016 and 2017 equates to only 0.1% of our total transactions, reinforcing that 99.9% of our customers comply with the regulations.

### **1.4 Car Park Improvements**

#### **1.4.1 Credit Card Enabled Pay Machines & RingGo cashless payment**

A total of 25 machines now offer 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.

- 1.4.2 In 2016 there were 106,918 transactions by credit card and in 2017 a very significant rise with 200,989 transactions recorded representing an 88% rise.

- 1.4.3 The pay by phone cashless payment system, RingGo, also continues to grow. In 2016 a total of 160,709 transactions were made on the system and increased to 208,267 in 2017 – an increase of 29.5%

- 1.4.4 This highlights the shift in customers embracing new technology and the convenience and trust in cashless payment – it should be noted that payments by credit card and payments by RingGo are not competing but offer the customer their preferred payment platform.

#### **1.4.5 Electric Charging Points**

There are now six Electric Charging Points available to electric/hybrid car users – four in Bury St Edmunds (Parkway Multi Storey and Ram Meadow car parks) and two in Haverhill in Ehringhausen Way Car Park. The electric charging points provide a source of electricity to enable a vehicle to be fully charged within 3-4hrs. Given the authority's commitment to the promotion of green energy, vehicles are not charged for parking but are required to pay a charge for the electricity.

#### **1.4.6 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.

#### 1.4.7 Disabled Parking Accreditation

This accreditation is a new initiative by the charity Disabled Motoring UK (DMUK) and is managed by the British Parking Association (BPA). Car parks that achieve the DPA demonstrate to their customers that they are committed to creating high quality parking facilities for disabled people. All SEBC car parks were assessed in 2017 and passed with only Ram Meadow requiring some upgrading to create 2 new BB bays which is being remedied.

#### 1.4.8 Vinery Road car park

Vinery Road car park was resurfaced with new bay markings in 2017. This complements recent work to upgrade the Spread Eagle junction and plans to enhance landscaping in the area.

### **1.5 Planning for Future Car Parking Provision**

1.5.1 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.

1.5.2 The timeline for identifying additional parking provision was slightly extended to complete the Bury St Edmunds Masterplan and a final draft was approved by Council in December 2017. Car parking was identified as key issue within the plan and proposals are now being developed for consideration by Cabinet and Council in the Autumn. This will include detailed costings, options to fund additional parking and expected return on investment. Pay on Exit car park management systems will be included as part of the business case.

### **1.6 Civil Parking Enforcement**

1.6.1 In February 2017, Cabinet agreed 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). An outline application has been submitted by Suffolk County Council to Department of Transport with a view to implementing the new enforcement regime from the 1 April 2019. We await confirmation from the Department of Transport that the processing and legislative timeline is acceptable given the heavy commitment of Parliamentary resources to other priorities. Work continues across all authorities in Suffolk to ensure that the formal application is submitted this April and that the resources needed to implement the scheme are in place.

## **2. Conclusion and future work streams**

2.1 Despite the slight fall in car parking transactions over 2017, it should be noted that it was significantly higher than 2015 and our second most successful year to date. Indeed the significant rise in weekly tickets means that the car parks were used more than the transaction data suggests. This picture will become clearer in the future as we look at the number of times people park. The change in usage at the end of 2017 does mirror a national trend and does accord with footfall data in Bury St Edmunds and may include factors such as roadworks. Economic indicators on lower consumer spend and more on-line transactions may possibly be leading to less visits into the town centres. Cashless ways of paying is proving increasingly popular and our parking offer and service remains of a high quality.

2.2 Priority work streams for the next 12 months include:

- a) Sampling and modelling of car park events in Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill in light of recent trends and in preparation for a detailed car parking review in 2019. In addition, this sampling should include on-street parking (including illegal parking) with a view to assessing the impact of enhanced enforcement under CPE and the level of displacement into the off street car parks.
- b) Preparation for the implementation of CPE including consolidation of the Car Parking Order, procurement of resources and recruitment of additional employees, and the development of a communications plan.
- c) A review of parking provision at Moreton Hall is underway and a business plan will be submitted which looks at providing additional capacity.
- d) Development of a proposal for additional car parking in Bury St Edmunds

### **3. Recommendation**

3.1 Members are asked to note the report.