

# **Recommendations of the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 23 January 2020: West Suffolk Parking Review Group**

<b>Report No:</b>	<b>CAB/WS/20/020</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	11 February 2020
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<b>Decisions Plan:</b>	The decisions made as a result of this report will usually be published within 48 hours and cannot be actioned until five clear working days of the publication of the decision have elapsed. This item is included in the Decisions Plan.	
<b>Wards impacted:</b>	All wards	

**Recommendations:** It is RECOMMENDED that the recommendations as set out in Section 10 and Tables 1 and 2, being the West Suffolk Parking Review Group's Report, attached as Report No: OAS/WS/20/003, be approved (Appendix A), subject to the following amendments/referrals being made:

- 1) **Table 1: Brandon** – no parking charges should be introduced in Brandon. Instead, a maximum stay of 3 hours is allowed in the Bury Road car park, with users required to obtain a free ticket. A review should be undertaken after 12 months to evaluate how this is operating.
- 2) **Table 1: Brandon** – No recommendation be made to Suffolk County Council regarding parking on Brandon High Street.
- 3) **Table 1: Bury St Edmunds** – That all aspects relating to Bury St Edmunds be referred to Cabinet for determination, subject to recommendation 4, 5, 6 and 9 below:
- 4) **Bury St Edmunds**: Cabinet to be asked to consider the implications of retaining the "free from 3" scheme on Tuesdays and also consider the implications of extending it to include 8am to 12 midday on Wednesdays.
- 5) **Bury St Edmunds**: Cabinet to be asked to consider the implications of removing the nightly charge from 6pm.
- 6) **Bury St Edmunds**: Cabinet to be asked to consider the implications of retaining the tariff period to 6pm (from the 8pm proposal).
- 7) **Haverhill**: Cabinet to be asked to consider retaining the "free from 3" on Fridays (subject to 9 below).
- 8) Cabinet to be asked to determine its own proposals for Newmarket.
- 9) Cabinet to be asked to look at the implication of "free from" parking options in all market towns across West Suffolk on market days (Fridays in Haverhill and Tuesdays in Newmarket).
- 10) Cabinet to be asked to examine the electric vehicle bay charging structure across West

**Suffolk, with the potential to introduce charging for electric bays at a concessionary rate rather than the full rate.**

## **1. Background / Context to the Parking Review**

- 1.1 On 11 July 2019, a West Suffolk Parking Review Group was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review parking in West Suffolk. Report No: OAS/WS/20/003 (attached to this report as Appendix A) sets out the conclusions and recommendations from the Parking Review Group, which were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 January 2020.
- 1.2 In 2012 the St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook an extensive review of car parking provision and charging across the Borough. A significant number of recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet on 12 December 2012 (Cabinet Report No: D223). This included the need for a full periodic review of car parking across the Borough every 3-4 years.
- 1.3 Forest Heath District Council agreed to undertake a similar periodic review at its Cabinet meeting on 22 December 2015. Both authorities completed the last of these reviews in 2015, with the next review timetabled for completion by the end of 2019.
- 1.4 At the request of the Cabinet Member for Operations, a West Suffolk Parking Review Group (Review Group) was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 July 2019, to undertake this review.
- 1.5 The Terms of Reference for the Review Group were as follows:
- 1) To review national/local trends and policy and evaluate the current performance of the parking service across all locations including usage, condition of the car parks, the quality of service delivery, enforcement, parking incentives and customer feedback.
  - 2) To develop strategic aims and objectives for parking in West Suffolk with local parking plans aligned with on-street provision.
  - 3) To consider the imminent service changes arising from the implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement and the impact on parking behaviour.
  - 4) To consider current levels of occupancy, future capacity projections and any interventions that may be needed now and over the long term.
  - 5) To assess park and walk and the flexible payment system currently being trialled in Bury St Edmunds.
  - 6) To review car park tariffs for the period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, backed by consultation.
  - 7) To identify service improvement and efficiencies.

- 1.6 As part of the review, extensive consultation was undertaken with over 20 key stakeholders across all the towns in West Suffolk, including Town Councils, BID teams, Town Centre Managers, facilities providing alternative parking and businesses. Those that were unable to meet were provided the opportunity to feedback into the review.
- 1.7 The report provided a summary of the issues and comments raised at stakeholder events; user research; benchmarking data; usage and financial profiles; capacity; on-street parking; aims and objectives for the parking service; key principles and recommendations as set out in Section 10 of the report.
- 1.8 Attached to the report were a number of appendices, namely:
  - Appendix 1 – List of car parks
  - Appendix 2 – User research
  - Appendix 3 – Tariff comparisons
  - Appendix 4 – Car parking cost by town
  - Table 1 – Draft Town Plans and recommendations
  - Table 2 – Proposed tariff charges to leisure and community car parks

The recommendations of the Review Group were contained in Section 10 of report and tables 1 and 2.

## **2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 2.1 On 23 January 2020, the Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee received Report No: OAS/WS/20/003 and Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4, Tables 1 and 2 (attached to this report as Appendix A), which sets out the conclusions and the recommendations from the Parking Review Group on parking across West Suffolk.
- 2.2 The Committee listened to public speakers from Brandon and Bury St Edmunds about concerns they had about the proposals being put to the Committee.
- 2.3 Councillor David Palmer Ward Member for Brandon West addressed the Committee and raised concerns with regards to one of the options being proposed in the report, to introduce charging in Brandon. He set the concerns he, and local residents held, as to how this would affect footfall, local shops and shop workers.
- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the concerns raised under public participation and by Ward Members. It also discussed the recommendations in detail by town, and made the following comments / suggested amendments, as follows:

### **Brandon**

The Committee considered all the proposed recommendations, the two options as set out in Table 1 and the rationale for each option being put forward. The first option would introduce charging in Brandon; the second

option would introduce a 3-hour time limit into the Bury Road car park, enforced through users being required to obtain a free ticket.

The Committee recognised the capacity issues currently being experienced in the town. However, acknowledging the concerns that had been raised about the potential impact on the Town, felt it would not be appropriate to introduce charging at this stage. As a result, the Committee preferred option 2 in the report, which would enable officers to monitor capacity and usage of the car park over the next year, and then review the impact that the 3-hour time limit on Bury Road has had.

The Committee considered the remaining proposed recommendations. In line with their view that it was not appropriate to introduce charging at this stage, they have suggested to remove the proposed recommendation that would have requested Suffolk County Council introduce parking charges on the high street.

#### Mildenhall

The Committee agreed with all the proposed recommendations as set out in Table 1. It was further agreed that discussions with Mildenhall Town Council should be initiated as soon as possible to reach an agreement with regards to investigating opportunities to realise a cost neutral budget position on the operation of the Recreation Way car park, currently leased to West Suffolk Council by Mildenhall Town Council.

#### Haverhill

The Committee agreed with the proposed recommendations and tariffs as set out in Table 1. Members raised whether the current "free from 3" parking should be retained on Fridays when the market was held. However, the Committee recognised that the financial implications of this would need to be tested and the Committee did not have this information to hand to do so. As a consequence, the Committee decided to refer this proposal to Cabinet, who would have opportunity to review the associated evidence and make a decision accordingly.

#### Bury St Edmunds

The Committee considered the proposed recommendation set out in Table 1 and concluded that all aspects relating to Bury St Edmunds should be referred to Cabinet to determine, subject to the following matters:

Taking into account the feedback from the public speakers and local members, the Committee debated the proposal to remove the current "free from 3" on Tuesdays. The Committee wished to explore options which could include retaining the "free from 3" on Tuesday, and potentially extending this period to midday on Wednesday. As with Haverhill, the Committee did not have the information to hand to enable the implications of such proposals to be fully considered and therefore referred these proposals to Cabinet.

The Committee considered retaining the tariff period to 6pm alongside the proposals to remove the night tariff of £1. The Committee were supportive

of the proposal to remove the night tariff, but considered that again, further financial information would be required to assess the implications of retaining the tariff period to 6pm and referred these matters to Cabinet.

### Clare

The Committee agreed with the proposed recommendation to explore options for off-street car parking. Concerns were raised that the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) could result in difficulties due to the lack of on and off-street parking options in the Town. As such, the implementation of CPE needed to be carefully managed.

### Newmarket

The Review group has decided not to provide a view on parking options in respect of Newmarket. This was accepted by the Committee. Therefore, Cabinet would need to determine its own proposals for the town.

### West Suffolk (General)

The Committee considered the proposals to charge for electric vehicle bays. The Committee recognised the Council has declared a climate emergency, and strongly encouraged the proposals to introduce more electric vehicle charging points. The Committee also referred a proposal for Cabinet to consider the option of charging for electric vehicle bays at a concessionary rate, rather than the full rate.

Having considered the proposals in respect of Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds, the Committee had a wider debate on "free from" parking options. The Committee recognised there is a careful balance to be achieved between obtaining income from car parking to support the delivery of essential services in West Suffolk towns, whilst also achieving the Council's ambitions to support growth and local businesses. With this in mind, the Committee requested further work to be undertaken to explore "free from" options across West Suffolk towns, including the potential for all market towns to have a free parking incentive on market days. The Committee have referred this matter to Cabinet to determine.

### Table 2 – (Proposed tariff charges, to leisure and community car parks)

The Committee agreed with the proposed tariffs as set out in Table 2.

- 2.5 The Cabinet Member for Operations wished to thank the Review Group and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the work involved producing the report and the subsequent scrutiny of this piece of work.

## **3. Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Please refer to Report No: OAS/WS/20/003

## **4. Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 Please refer to Report No: OAS/WS/20/003

**5. Risks**

5.1 Please refer to Report No: OAS/WS/20/003

**6. Implications arising from the proposal**

6.1 Financial

Please refer to Report No: OAS/WS/20/003

6.2 Equalities

Please refer to Report No: OAS/WS/20/003

**7. Appendices**

7.1 **Appendix A** – Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:  
[OAS/WS/20/003](#), [Appendix 1](#), [Appendix 2](#), [Appendix 3](#), [Appendix 4](#), [Table 1](#),  
[Table 2](#)

**8. Background documents**

8.1 N/A