

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 10 December 2015

16

Title: Car Parking Review

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Barker

Key decision: No

Summary

1. The District Council owns and manages a number of car parks across the settlements of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet. The car parks are managed to provide a service and to support the town and village centres in which they lie. This report brings together a number of work streams surrounding parking and draws together the recommendations and implications. This covers the Scrutiny Review of car parking of October 2013, the report to Cabinet on parking in March 2014, the recent review of parking charges and the externally commissioned report into car parking across the district.
2. The report sets out a number of recommendations and a work programme for the coming year.

Recommendations

3. That the new parking charges (including season ticket prices) and timings as set out in Appendix 2 and paragraph 25 be adopted following formal advertising.
4. That parking charges are levied on all users of the car parks including Blue Badge holders.
5. Discuss with Saffron Walden Town Council (the owners) the future of the Catons Lane car park with the option of either levying a parking charge in line with others in the town or passing the maintenance and running back to the Town Council.
6. Allow season ticket parking spaces to be open to all users from 10am in the morning and all day at the weekend.
7. Refresh all car park signage to prominently advertise Mipermit.
8. In principle agreement to purchase an additional area of land (Appendix 4) adjacent to Lower Street car park, Stansted Mountfitchet to create an extended car park. This would be subject to independent valuation and a future Cabinet report.
9. To carry out a review of Lower Street car park, Stansted Mountfitchet post opening of the new Medical Centre to consider any change of usage patterns.

This will include a review of the season ticket pricing levels in comparison with the station car park.

10. Arrange annually meetings with Chairs of the Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Teams, Chair of the Stansted Economic Development Forum and Chairs of the relevant committees from Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Councils and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council to discuss the effectiveness of the car parking provision. These meetings to include discussion on the best way of using car park pricing to support the economic vitality of the centres.
11. That a “dashboard” of indicators be created and published quarterly to enable monitoring and management of the effectiveness of car parking provision.

Financial Implications

12. Cost of the purchase of land Lower Street car park to be agreed through independent valuation and subject to future Cabinet report.
13. Other costs will be met from within the Car Park allocation from the Strategic Initiatives Fund.

Background Papers

14. None

Impact

- 15.

Communication /Consultation	Formal advertising of the changes to parking charges and timings is required.
Community Safety	Not affected.
Equalities	Affects all equally.
Finance	Advertising costs for any change in charges or hours can be met from existing budgets. Costs of physical works to car parks can be met from existing budgets. The general changes to car park prices are expected to be cost neutral.
Health and Safety	Not affected.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Not affected.

Sustainability	The report focuses maintaining sustainable town centres.
Ward-specific impacts	All wards in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted.
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Current Situation

16. The Council owns and manages a number of car parks throughout the District. In addition it manages a number of car parks on behalf of other organisations. The day to day running of the car parks is contracted (via a Partnership Agreement) to the NEPP although pricing and hours of operation are set by the District Council. Any changes to the contract with NEPP could have an impact on the other Councils in the Partnership and therefore general agreement to operational changes is required.
17. Car parking in any area creates considerable concern and comment and any change proposed is usually objected to by one sector of the community. The Councils role, both as land owner/manager and as steward for the community, is to consider all these issues and create a balanced proposal in the best interests of the community as a whole.
18. The car parks are held and managed to provide suitable off-street parking places for vehicles to relieve and prevent congestion of traffic and to support the viability and vitality of the various town centres within the district. Charges can be levied to cover the costs of running and maintaining the car parks and also set at a rate to take into account wider parking policy such as encouraging long stay parking in certain areas and encouraging short stay, quick turn over in others. Any alteration in the charges for the car parks or their layout or operation should be taken with the view to these issues.
19. Cabinet at its meeting in March 2014 received a report regarding parking across the district. The report noted that a number of actions had already been carried out:
- Facilitated shoppers parking rebate in Great Dunmow (part of recommendation ii) and will work with Stansted Business if this is requested.
 - Additional signage directing visitors to the car parks has been erected/ordered (recommendation vii)
 - Reviewed with NEPP the reliability of the data (recommendation viii)
 - Implemented pay by phone (recommendation x) (NOTE: This was already in hand following a Cabinet Decision).
 - Additional promotion of the airport parking hotline has occurred (recommendation xiii)

20. The report recommended further work on the following issues:

21.

- Review and consideration of Scrutiny Committee report (October 2013)(Appendix 3);
- Review of parking charges, to include a statement regarding the Council rational of charging;
- Review of current capacity of car parks and whether they meet demand;
- Appraisal of existing car parks as to whether additional spaces can be provided if needed;
- Appraisal of other Council owned land to consider whether additional car parking provision can be provided if needed;
- Appraisal of non-Council owned land to consider whether additional car parking provision can be provided if needed; and
- Clear recommendations and conclusions.

22. To aid this work the Council commissioned People and Places to carry out a review of the existing car parks and make recommendations. This report was produced in draft and subject to a number of meetings with stakeholders in the three settlements. The report has now been received in its final form. The report makes clear recommendations for the Council which reinforce the findings of the Scrutiny report.

Car park charges and hours

23. The People and Places report reveals that the factor that most affects town centre users choice of parking is convenience.

24. The People and Places report makes clear recommendations for alterations to charges and hours within the car parks to better manage parking availability through increased turnover of spaces and changes in usage. The existing tariffs are set out in Appendix 1 of this report with the proposal set out in Appendix 2. In summary the changes are:

- Introduction of an intermediate 4 hour charge in White Street;
- Making The Common a short stay car park with a maximum of 2 hours stay to ensure frequent turnover of spaces;
- Removing the availability of a 30 minute tariff in Swan Meadow due to its location and use as a long stay car park;
- Make on-street parking in Saffron Walden £0.70 for 1 hour correcting disparity between the current £0.40 rate for 1 hour on-street parking compared to £0.70 for off-street parking so that car park users are not penalised (this decision will need to be taken by NEPP).
- Introducing a 4 hour tariff in Lower Street; and making the 10 hour tariff in Lower Street the same as the Station car park. NOTE: Discussions regarding the future of Crafton Green car park need to occur.

25. As part of the wider review the issue of charging for Blue Badge holders has been considered. Our partner Councils of Braintree and Colchester, as well as all commercial operators. The main consideration is not one of affordability, but of how we ensure that our car parks meet the needs of this group of users

in terms of easy access to local shops/amenities. In considering this issue, it seems only right that all car park users – including blue badge holders – should pay for parking to ensure that our charging structure is applied in a fair and consistent way. Blue badge holders will be required to pay for parking when the new charges are affected.

26. There are a number of physical changes to the payment machines which will need to occur to ensure ease of use for all. This will ensure the facilities meet the requirements of all users.

27. As well as hourly and daily charges the Council has a range of season tickets available as set out in the table below. There are some anomalies within the current charges which are proposed to be amended to ensure parity across the district.

Current season ticket pricing

	3 month	6 month	12 month	Businesses
Saffron Walden	£90	£175	£300	Reduction for multiple buy
Great Dunmow	£90	£175	£300	
Stansted Mountfitchet (employed locally)	–	£130	£250	
Stansted Mountfitchet (employed elsewhere)	–	£200	£420	

Proposed season ticket pricing

	6 month	12 month
Saffron Walden	£175	£300
Great Dunmow	£175	£300
Stansted Mountfitchet (employed locally)	£130	£250
Stansted Mountfitchet (employed elsewhere)	£200	£420

Cambridge Road Stansted Mountfitchet

28. On street parking capacity on Cambridge Road in Stansted Mountfitchet regularly reaches critical levels. The People and Places report proposes a number of measures to alleviate this pressure so that there is good availability of ‘pop-and-shop’ parking to include:

i. Restricting parking on Cambridge Road to 30 minutes, free-of-charge to allow for increased availability for ‘pop-and-shop’ use. More radically

consideration should be given to the creation of a simple £0.50 for 30 minutes tariff to help increase the turn-over of spaces, ease enforcement and not penalise users of the near-by Crafton Green Car Park. This could be introduced on a trial basis and 30 minutes free parking could initially be offered in the Crafton Green Car Park to encourage new parking patterns.

ii. The use of on-street parking for loading heavy goods and picking-up chiropractor patients etc. can be consistently accommodated by enforcement that enables such legitimate use.

iii. The introduction of restricted delivery periods by lorries on Cambridge Road.

29. These proposals are not in the gift of the District Council and changes can only be made by NEPP. Further discussion with the relevant stakeholders are necessary and included within the proposed stakeholder engagement meetings – refer to section below “Stakeholder engagement and “investing in partnership”.

Future proofing car parking technology and Mi-permit

30. It is highly probable that cashless payment methods that can be topped up off-site and reimbursed seamlessly following spend in local businesses will be widely used within the next few years. Such developments do not require significant capital investment by the local authority and will evolve with technology to meet customer needs.

31. The pay by phone service Mi-permit is now in operation across the district for residents permits, on-street parking and off-street parking. The People and Places report concludes that the “development of the MiPermit pay by phone system offers the most flexible and cost-effective development opportunity.” The Council has launched a further marketing campaign to encourage people to use this method of payment using Uttlesford Life, local newspapers as well as providing leaflets to shops to distribute to customers.

32. The People and Places report identifies that the only car park in the District where pay-on-exit could be considered is Swan Meadow. However, there is neither a high turnover of spaces nor need for payment with notes to justify the high capital and operational cost of a payment on exist system.

Review of Council owned land

33. Following a review no areas of Council owned land have been identified where additional town centre parking could be provided.

Review of non-Council owned land

34. Following a review an area of land (Appendix 4) adjacent to Lower Street car park in Stansted has been identified as a potential extension to the car park. Given the pressures that the existing car park is facing and the new medical

centre, retail and residential development additional capacity in this area is likely to be needed. The redevelopment itself and relaying out the car park will provide additional spaces in this area. It is difficult at this stage to fully understand what impact the operational medical centre and other uses will have on the car park use. Given that the land is available now it seems prudent to purchase the land to safeguard it for this future use. The Council has sought a valuation from its retained valuers and also costs for the clearance and construction of a car park.

Appraisal of existing car parks

35. The People and Places report has appraised all car parks for their capacity to expand and for any other improvements which could be made. The report concludes that whilst in some of the Council's car parks and off-street car parking are under pressure at peak times that overall there is sufficient capacity. The report also states that "the indication from retail studies is that footfall in town centres will continue to steadily decline at a rate that is greater than housing growth." It will be important to regularly measure car park usage and this is referred later in this report in the section headed "car parking indicators."
36. The council has invested in some new signage to direct people to car parks and around the town in Saffron Walden. The recent report highlights further work as being necessary in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted. It is expected that the cost of additional or replacement signage will be met from the car park allocation from the Strategic Initiative Fund.
37. Over the last year the Council has provided additional car parking spaces at Swan Meadow and The Common and overseen a revamped car park at Faircroft/Waitrose all in Saffron Walden. The car park at Lower Street Stansted will be revamped as part of the adjacent development providing additional spaces. It is considered that additional space at Lower Street car park could be required due to the additional draw of the medical centre. A piece of land for an extension has been identified and the owner is in principle willing to sell this to the Council.

Stakeholder engagement and "investing in partnership"

38. The People and Places report was commissioned to help objectively understand the issues concerning the role of car parking in our town and village centres as a basis for developing local consensus between key stakeholders.
39. The process would be focussed on an annual meetings with each of the town and village centres to discuss the effectiveness of the car parking provision, test analysis, develop a consensus on issues and building up a joined-up approach to future delivery.
40. Those attending these meetings would include the District Council's representatives on the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP), Chairs of the

Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Teams, Chair of the Stansted Economic Development Forum and Chairs of the relevant committees from Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Town Councils and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council.

- 41. The People and Places report recommends the on-going monitoring of car park usage and stakeholder views in ensuring that car park provision continues to respond to needs and that any changes are successfully implemented.
- 42. A “dashboard” of indicators to include business perception survey, car park usage audit, town centre user perceptions and footfall counts in the town and village centres.

Conclusion

- 43. This report and recommendations form part of an evolving customer-led approach to car parking in the District. This approach focuses on car parking performance relative to customer needs and stakeholder opinions and considers car parking as part of the whole town and village centre experience.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Car parking adversely affects footfall within the town and village centres 1	Unlikely with ongoing monitoring 1	Little impact 1	Review of tariffs, capacity, signage, etc and any action required taken 1
Lack of consensus achieved with key stakeholders 2	Stakeholders can hold strong and conflicting views on car parking 2	Low impact 1	Annual review meetings, ongoing dialogue with Town Teams, Town and Parish Councils 2

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.

Appendix 1 - Current prices and hours

Car park name	No. spaces	Charging times	Charges Up to 30 mins	Charges Up to 1 hr	Charges Up to 2 hrs	Charges Up to 3 hrs	Charges Up to 4 hrs	Charges Up to 5 hrs	Charges Up to 6 hrs	Charges up to 10 hrs	Notes
Great Dunmow											
Angel Lane	31	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20					Short stay
Chequers Lane	67	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20					Short stay
New Street	11	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20					Short stay
White Street	172	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20		£2.40		£3.50	Long stay
Saffron Walden											
Fairycroft		8am – 5pm	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20	£2.00					Short stay
Rose and Crown	27	8am – 5pm	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20						Short stay
The Common	109	8am – 5pm	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20	£2.00	£3.00				Short stay
Catons Lane	49	8am – 5pm	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free		Free	Long stay
Swan Meadow	394	8am – 5pm		£0.70	£1.20	£2.00			£2.50	£3.50	Long stay
Swan Meadow coaches	6	8am – 5pm						£3.00		£6.00	Long Stay
Stansted Mountfitchet		8am – 5pm									
Crafton Green	52	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20				£3.00	Long stay
Lower Street	109	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20			£2.40	£4.00	Long stay
Lower Street coaches	6	8am – 5pm								£6.00 per visit	Long stay
<i>Stansted Mountfitchet station car park (info</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>24 hrs</i>	<i>£4.70 daily</i>	<i>£2.90 off peak</i>	<i>£22.40 weekly</i>	<i>£80.50 monthly</i>	<i>£829.50 annual</i>				<i>Not Council car park</i>

Appendix 2 - Proposed prices and hours

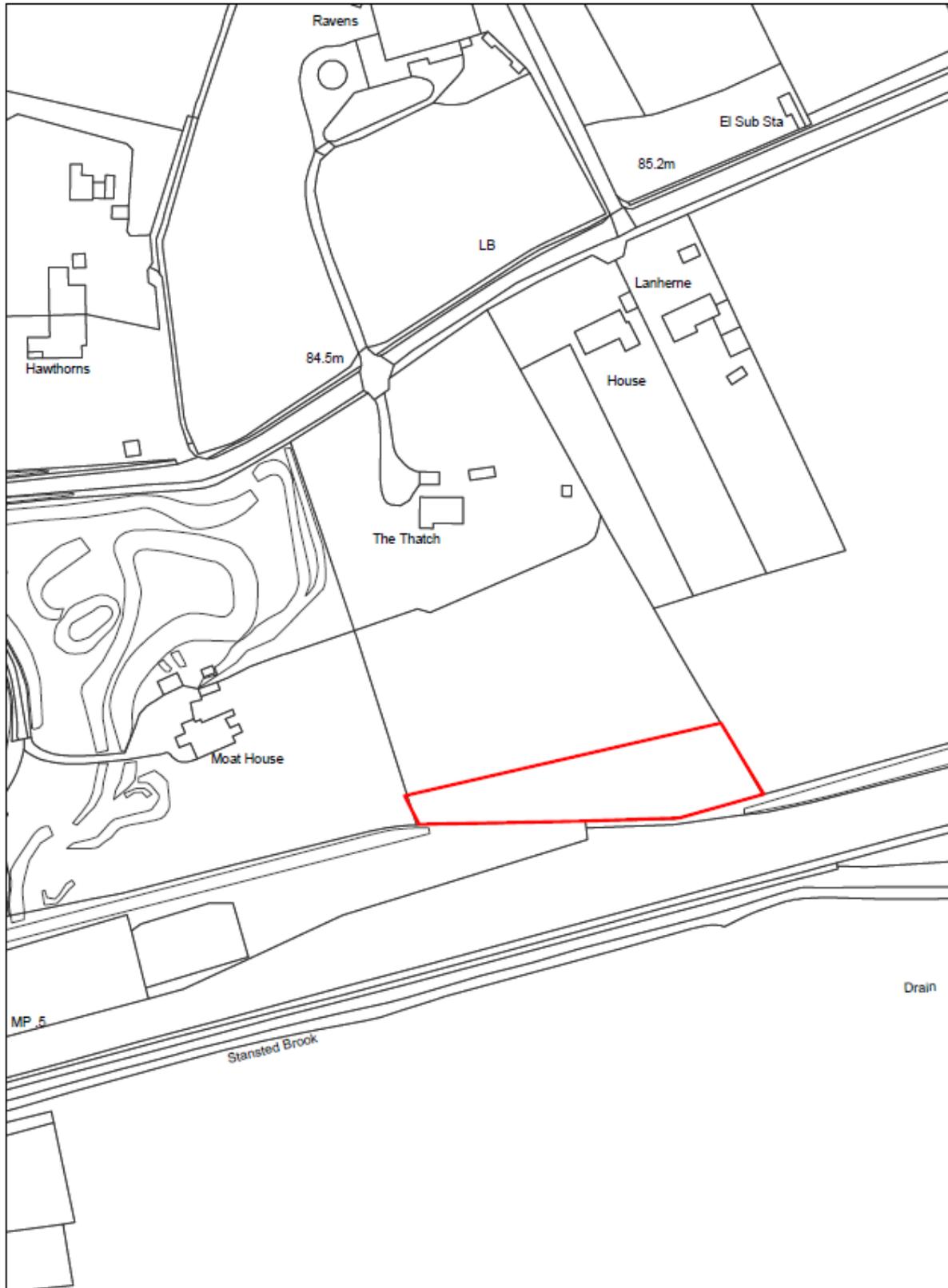
Note: These charges apply to all users.

Car park name	No. spaces	Charging times	Charges Up to 30 mins	Charges Up to 1 hr	Charges Up to 2 hrs	Charges Up to 3 hrs	Charges Up to 4 hrs	Charges Up to 5 hrs	Charges Up to 6 hrs	Charges up to 10 hrs	Notes
Great Dunmow											
Angel Lane	31	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20					Short stay
Chequers Lane	67	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20					Short stay
New Street	11	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20					Short stay
White Street	172	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20	£2.00	£2.40		£3.50	Long stay
Saffron Walden											
Fairycroft		8am – 5pm	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20	£2.00					Short stay
Rose and Crown	27	8am – 5pm	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20						Short stay
The Common	109	8am – 5pm	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20						Short stay
Catons Lane	49	8am – 5pm									Long stay
Swan Meadow	394	8am – 5pm		£0.70	£1.20		£2.00		£2.50	£3.50	Long stay
Swan Meadow coaches	6	8am – 5pm						£3.00		£6.00	Long Stay
Stansted Mountfitchet											
Crafton Green	52	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20	–			£3.00	Long stay
Lower Street	109	8am – 5pm	£0.40	£0.60		£1.20	£2.00		£2.40	£4.70	Long stay
Lower Street coaches	6	8am – 5pm								£6.00 per visit	Long stay
<i>Stansted Mountfitchet station car park (info)</i>	66	24 hrs	£4.70 daily	£2.90 off peak	£22.40 weekly	£80.50 monthly	£829.50 annual				<i>Not Council car park</i>

Appendix 3 - Recommendations of October 2013 Scrutiny Report

- i) Investigate 30-minutes free parking at all car parks except Swan Meadow during the 2014 tariff review – do not pursue free parking after 3.00pm as it could cause over-capacity at some car parks which are already busy,
- ii) Facilitate any shoppers' parking charge rebate scheme for Stansted Mountfitchet that may be set up by local business forums and retailers,
- iii) Discontinue the 4-hour tariff at The Common, as there is adequate space in Swan Meadow, and The Common functions well as a short stay car park,
- iv) Delay any specific recommendations on Lower Street and Fairycroft until patterns of usage are known following redevelopment work,
- v) Allocate specific areas for season ticket holders at Swan Meadow, but allowing pay and display to have the nearest spaces to the town,
- vi) Monitor what happens to usage of Swan Meadow following the Waitrose extension, and investigate whether there any opportunities to build on any uplifted use,
- vii) Liaise with ECC Highways re display of “distance to/from and walking time to/from” information re Swan Meadow,
- viii) Review with NEPP the reliability and usability of tariff and sales data, ix) Better advertisement of free parking after 5.00pm, and encourage shops to open an hour later on at least one day per week,
- x) Implement “pay by phone” as soon as possible as an extra payment option,
- xi) Explore increased disabled space provision at The Rose and Crown in place of the less accessible disabled spaces at The Common,
- xii) The impact of proposed new developments on existing public car park capacity should be fully understood at the planning application stage. This impact should be quantified in transport assessments and traffic impact statements, with the proposed mitigation clearly set out if there would be a material impact,
- xiii) Better promotion by the District Council and Town/ Parish Councils of the airport parking hotline.

Appendix 4



Lower Street Stansted



UDC © Crown copyright and database rights 2014 Ordnance Survey 0100018688

1:1,500