

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 15 October 2013

9

Title: Report of Car Parking Task Group

Author: Councillor Iris Evans, Chairman of the Task Group

Key decision: No

Summary

1. This task group was set up by the Scrutiny Committee on 4th December 2012. The terms of reference of the task group were agreed by the Scrutiny Committee on 18th April. They are:

i) To investigate the provision of car parking in Dunmow, Thaxted, Saffron Walden and Stansted using all existing available evidence, supplemented by other original survey material undertaken by / on behalf of the task group.

ii) To ensure that all interested parties are given the opportunity to offer their views as part of this process, including local residents.

iii) To prepare a report for the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15th October 2013 outlining the evidence gathered over the course of the investigation and any conclusions that were arrived at as a result of the evidence gathered.

2. This report is the task group's final report as required in the terms of reference.

Conclusions and Recommendations

3. The main conclusions are that the district's short stay car parks are, (excepting Chequers Lane) busy and fulfilling a local need for convenient parking near to town centres. This is reflected in the outcome of the residents / visitors survey, which had a very good response rate. Long-stay offers are not being particularly well taken up, although Stansted Mountfitchet's car parks perform better in this respect. There will be a period of uncertainty about patterns of usage of Lower Street and Swan Meadow whist development is carried out at the Lotus site and Waitrose respectively. It will be important to monitor what happens at these car parks in the longer term. The profile of Swan Meadow is likely to increase during the Waitrose development, and this could give an opportunity to capture some extra trade afterwards.
4. The specific recommendations are:

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.*

Financial Implications

5. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None.

Impact / Methodology

7.

<p>Communication/Consultation</p>	<p>The task group has spoken with NEPP officers, who have provided various data sets relating to ticket sales since April 2010. Data on net income and costs has been provided by Finance.</p> <p>Surveys of local residents and visitors and of businesses have been carried out. Questionnaires were completed and returned on-line via the Council's website, and in hard copy via a Freepost address. The results of the surveys have been analysed. Other feedback has been obtained by task group members via meetings, in writing and on the telephone.</p> <p>The main issues considered were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present parking arrangements - Capacity and usage patterns - Ticketing options - Usability - Opening times - Tariffs - Need for car parking - Impact on businesses - Resident's parking
<p>Community Safety</p>	<p>Any issues are raised in this report.</p>
<p>Equalities</p>	<p>Any issues are raised in this report.</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	<p>Any issues are raised in this report.</p>
<p>Human Rights/Legal Implications</p>	<p>Any issues are raised in this report.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The provision of adequate and convenient public car parking is considered to be important to the health of town centres. The task group is aware of recent guidance issued on this subject by a consortium including the Association of Town & City</p>

	Management and the British Parking Association entitled “ <i>Re-Think! Parking on the High Street</i> ”.
Ward-specific impacts	Specifically, Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet.
Workforce/Workplace	The task group members were Councillors Iris Evans (chair), David Watson and Paul Davies. Officer support has been provided by Jeremy Pine and Vicki Taylor.

Findings

Pay and Display Parking

8. The Council operates 10 pay and display car parks in the District, 4 in Saffron Walden, 4 in Great Dunmow and 2 in Stansted Mountfitchet. The public car park in Margaret Street, Thaxted is now owned and operated by the Parish Council. A 5th car park in Saffron Walden at Catons Lane is free of charge. This car park is owned by Saffron Walden Town Council. There is no readily available usage data for either of these car parks. The 12 car parks provide about 1,400 spaces, 800 of which are short stay and 600 are long stay. Day-to-day management and operation of the 10 pay and display car parks is carried out on the Council’s behalf by the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) based in Colchester.

9. On-street pay and display is only available in Saffron Walden in Abbey Lane, Castle Street, East Street, Gold Street and Museum Street. Stays are limited to 1 hour. Free parking for 30 minutes is available in the Market Square in Saffron Walden.

10. There are 2 coach parks, at Saffron Walden (Swan Meadow) and Stansted (Lower Street). There is no coach parking in Great Dunmow.

Data

11. The ticket sales information in this report has been compiled from data provided by NEPP. The data that the task group has used shows the number of tickets sold per tariff per car park. The data from April 2010, which has been tabulated, is included as Appendix A. In the Committee’s 4th December 2012 report, there was a reference to errors and incomplete data.

12. In the data that has been supplied to the task group for April 2010–October 2012, there are a number of occasions where ticket sales are shown for “phantom” tariffs that do not exist for that car park. For instance, from April – September 2010, 45 tickets in Chequers Lane were sold that generated £90 of

revenue, yet the top tariff for that car park is £1. The phantom tariff data is shown in italics in Appendix A. Also, there is concern about the accuracy of some of the data relating to the numbers of tickets sold per tariff. For instance, the supplied data shows that only 58 x £0.50 1-hour tickets were sold in April 11 – September 11 for Crafton Green, yet for other 6-month periods sales were shown to be between 1738 – 2808.

13. NEPP say that they noticed the phantom tariff discrepancies when generating the data, but are unable to explain them other than to say they might relate to overpayments, although separate overpayment details are actually given in the data for each tariff. The discrepancies are not significant enough to affect the high level analysis in this report. Some can be accounted for as being linked to the tariff increases in April 2012.

14. NEPP have informed the Council that there have been problems with the Cale Web Office System, which is the office system supplied by the pay and display machine manufacturer. The explanation given by the manufacturer is:

“As you are aware, Cale is migrating the CWO system to new hardware to improve the performance of the service.

During this work, Cale have faced problems with the historical database which effects(sic) the tariff band analysis. There is a huge amount of data stored in this database and this has caused long delays as one of the steps in the migration process includes moving and reloading the database.

Cale have tried various ways to do this, but because of the huge amount of data in combination with old hardware (that is being replaced), all the different efforts have proved too slow.

The decision is now to rebuild a new database from scratch. This is a process that will take 1-2 weeks, and is the fastest way to restore the database”.

15. The most recent data set is for ticket sales from November 2012 – March 2013. Apart from some small summing discrepancies there is only one instance of a phantom tariff. The task group hopes that a successful migration of data will now resolve the discrepancy issues. If discrepancies persist, the matter should be raised with NEPP. Officers will have access to the CWO system, but this is still to be set up by NEPP.

16. The NEPP data includes details of gross pay and display income per tariff per car park. This is the money paid into the ticket machines by customers and not that received by the Council. Finance has provided the Council's share of net pay and display income per car park for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 (draft). The figures are in Appendix B. Finance's income data is used in this report.

Pay and Display Tariffs

17. Details of tariffs are available on both the Council and NEPP websites. The information on both websites appears comprehensive, but the NEPP website still displays tariff charges for Catons Lane.
18. Car park tariffs are set for traffic management reasons and not for income generation. Tariffs were increased on 16th April 2012 following Cabinet approval. The Cabinet also resolved that a review of tariffs should be carried out in 2014. This report is not that review, but could contribute to it.
19. On 6th December 2011, the Committee was advised that a pay by phone facility was being put forward as an option to pay and display. This facility has still to be implemented.
20. On 4th December 2012, the Committee was advised that there had been a slight reduction in the number of tickets sold up to the end of October 2012 compared to the equivalent period in 2011. For the whole of the financial year 2012/13 that trend has continued. The following table compares total ticket sales in 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 per car park.

	2010-11	2011-12	Change from 2010/11	2012-13	Change from 2011/12
Chequers Lane	51,595	47,299	-8.3%	44,164	-6.6%
White Street	153,406	172,352	+12.4%	171,639	-0.4%
Angel Lane	58,535	56,850	-2.9%	53,951	-5.1%
New Street	21,055	18,310	-13.0%	13,962	-23.7%
Lower Street	26,130	30,551	+17.0%	27,088	-11.3%
Crafton Green	12,217	14,374	+17.7%	17,721	+23.3%
Swan Meadow	91,020	97,747	+7.4%	86,255	-11.8%
Rose and Crown	48,023	45,729	-4.8%	44,992	-1.6%
The Common	166,643	167,186	+0.3%	153,667	-8.1%
Fairycroft	378,758	381,764	+0.8%	366,586	-4.0%
TOTAL	1,007,382	1,032,122	+2.5%	980,025	-5.0%

TOTAL TICKET SALES 2010/11 – 2012/13 (Source: NEPP data)

21. The winter weather is likely to have had an impact over sales since October 2012. The large reduction in New Street since 2010 will be the result of the redevelopment of the former Council Offices. Sales in Crafton Green have steadily increased (a recent trend noticed by the Parish Council), although this is from a low base.

22. From 2010/11 to 2011/12, the Council's share of net income from pay and display, penalty charges and rental reduced from £435,711 to £425,121 after expenses and income sharing. From 2011/12 to 2012/13 (subject to audit), the income increased from £425,121 to £508,636.

Pay and Display Usage

23. The task group has not had the resources to carry out real-time monitoring of car park usage. Data from 2010 is available for Fairycroft Road and Swan Meadow car parks in Saffron Walden.

24. A local resident has submitted uncorroborated vehicle parking counts for Crafton Green and Lower Street car parks in Stansted Mountfitchet. Some of these counts were representations on the planning application for the Lotus site (see paragraph 61). No count data has been found for Great Dunmow.

25. The Fairycroft Road and Swan Meadow counts were undertaken in September 2010 on a Friday and Saturday following the return to school. This is a traditionally busy period, representing a robust test of capacity. The counts were part of a transport assessment submitted by Glanville with Waitrose's planning application for a store extension. The counts were all-day "in and out" broken down into 15-minute intervals. Fairycroft Road had sufficient capacity at all times on the Friday, peak occupancy being 241 spaces between 11.15 – 11.30am. On Saturday, its capacity of 294 spaces was exceeded from about 11.00am for about an hour when queuing for spaces (rather than just circulating looking for the closest spaces to Waitrose) would have resulted. This is typical of the pattern of car parking at supermarkets. On both days, Swan Meadow was at its busiest just before 1.00pm (298 spaces occupied), well within its 394 space capacity. The full transport assessment is available on the Council's website via the Planning Search function (UTT/2012/10/FUL).

26. The Crafton Green and Lower Street counts were spot counts at one or two times on different days in 2012 and 2013 for Lower Street and in 2013 for Crafton Green (about 80 days for Lower Street and 30 for Crafton Green). There was adequate pay and display capacity at Crafton Green at all times, with more than 50% of the pay and display spaces being vacant about 30% of the time. At Lower Street there were a number of days when pay and display was full or nearly full between 11.00am – 2.00pm. The counts at Crafton Green appear to have included the marked season ticket spaces as pay and display, so an adjustment has been made in this report to compensate for that.

27. The task group has looked at the performance of each car park in 2012/13. 3 indicators are used to gauge performance. The indicators have been derived from data provided by NEPP and Finance. The 3 indicators are:

i) average number of pay and display tickets sold per space per day,

- ii) average net pay and display income generated per space per day, and
- iii) percentage of total available parking time sold

The indicators are based on parking being chargeable on every day of the year (excluding Sundays and Bank / public holidays) for 9 hours from 8.00am to 5.00pm. As Angel Lane is closed on Tuesdays for a market, the number of chargeable days is further reduced for that car park. Allocated season ticket spaces are excluded, and 120 spaces have been excluded from Swan Meadow to cater for regular use by season ticket holders. Disabled spaces are also excluded.

28. Indicator iii) presumes that everyone parks for all the time that they have paid – they obviously do not, but there isn't any way of knowing about actual lengths of stay without conducting entry and exit surveys using either manual or automatic number plate recognition techniques. It should also be borne in mind that the tariff bands differ between Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow / Stansted Mountfitchet. In Saffron Walden, there is a 2-hour tariff for £1.20, whereas in Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet there is no 2-hour tariff, but a 3-hour tariff for £1.20 (in effect, an extra free hour's parking). This will slightly inflate the percentage of parking time sold in Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet compared to Saffron Walden. Nonetheless, the task group still considers that this is a useful indicator for high-level comparison purposes.

29. The following table compares the 3 performance indicators for the ten car parks in 2012/13:

	Short or Long Stay	No of pay and display spaces	Tickets sold / space / day	Net income / space / day	Parking time sold
GREAT DUNMOW					
Chequers Lane	Short	61	2.36	£1.76	38.6%
White Street	Long	123	4.58	£3.67	84.1%
Angel Lane	Short	29	7.34	£4.16	94.8%
New Street	Short	11	4.16	£2.82	71.0%
STANSTED MTFT					
Lower Street	Long	57	1.56	£3.10	60.6%
Crafton Green	Long	40	1.45	£1.49	38.0%
SAFFRON WALDEN					
Swan Meadow	Long	266	1.05	£1.86	43.4%
Rose and Crown	Short	23	6.40	£4.77	89.3%
The Common	Short	103	4.89	£5.07	96.0%
Fairycroft Road	Short	285	4.21	£3.47	66.7%

COMPARISON OF CAR PARK PERFORMANCE 2012/13 (Source: NEPP and Finance data)

The table shows that there are 3 general groupings of car parks:

1) White Street, Angel Lane, New Street, Rose and Crown, The Common and Fairycroft Road. These are busy car parks displaying a quick turnover of parking spaces, a higher income generation per space and a higher percentage of total parking time sold.

2) Chequers Lane, Crafton Green and Swan Meadow. These are far less busy car parks with a slower turnover of parking spaces, a lower income generation per space and a lower percentage of total parking time sold. A recent factsheet produced by Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council (attached as Appendix C) confirms that Crafton Green was subject to a period of low use, but this position is now reversing.

3) Lower Street. Falls into neither grouping, as its turnover of spaces is relatively slow, its income generation per space is relatively high and it has a medium percentage of total parking time sold.

30. Angel Lane and Rose and Crown have the quickest turnover of spaces. This is because Rose and Crown has a 2-hour limit and at Angel Lane, whilst there is a 3-hour tariff, 81.3% of ticket sales are for 30 minutes or 1 hour. In the residents and visitors survey, only 11% of respondents said they regularly used the Rose and Crown, which reflects the low number of spaces available. However, it is clearly very popular to those who do use it because of its location.
31. The Common has the highest amount of parking time sold. The Common functions as a short stay car park, but is the only short stay car park in the District with a full range of tariffs (30 minutes, 1,2, 3 and 4-hours), with just over 20% of all tickets sold being for the 2 longer periods. The 4-hour tariff was added at the last tariff increase in order to give a longer stay option. 9,471 4-hour tickets were sold in 2012/13, representing only 6% of total sales. This does not indicate that the 4-hour tariff has resulted in much of a decrease in the use of The Common as a “turnaround” car park (Scrutiny Committee 6/12/11). The high percentage of parking time sold may indicate that the range of tariffs available at The Common, plus its location, best suits customer’s needs. The purpose of the 4-hour tariff is unclear, especially as Swan Meadow has adequate capacity for long stay. It is recommended that the 4-hour tariff at The Common be discontinued.
32. White Street is the only long stay car park in Great Dunmow, but only 28.7% of ticket sales are for the 3-hour tariff or longer and only 4.9% are for the 5-hour tariff or longer. In effect, White Street operates as a short stay car park principally linked to the Co-Op which offers free parking for an hour via a redeemable voucher. The ticket sales data for Great Dunmow indicates that most people stay for less than an hour.

33. Fairycroft's indicators are lower than the other car parks in the same grouping, particularly in relation to parking time sold. This is hard to explain, but could be due to the large number of pay and display spaces available, relatively short stays and peak demand as picked out by the Glanville assessment. About 58% of tickets sold at Fairycroft and for the 30-minute and 1-hour tariffs. From Glanville's parking duration data, it is clear that many stays at Fairycroft are for less than 30 minutes.
34. Chequers Lane does not seem to be a popular car park, perhaps because it is slightly more remote from the town centre than either Angel Lane or White Street, in spite of having the same short stay tariff bands. In the residents and visitors survey, only 34% of respondents said they regularly used Chequers Lane compared to 56% for Angel Lane and 70% for White Street.
35. Crafton Green and Swan Meadow are both long stay car parks with a 10-hour tariff, but the take-up of the 10-hour tariff is only 8.7% and 12.6% of all tickets sold respectively. Swan Meadow has an intermediate 6-hour tariff, the take-up of which is 8.2%.
36. Lower Street is also a long stay car park with an intermediate 6-hour and a 10-hour tariff. The take-up of these 2 tariffs is 12.2% and 20.4% respectively of all tickets sold, considerably higher than for either Crafton Green or Swan Meadow. This is reflected in the higher income / space /day generated at Lower Street. The conclusion is that Lower Street functions more as a long stay car park than either Crafton Green or Swan Meadow. Likely explanations are the lack of on-site parking for local employees and proximity to the railway station.
37. Stansted Mountfitchet, unlike Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden, does not have a shoppers' parking charge rebate scheme. This was referred to at the Scrutiny Committee on 6/12/11 in the context of a rebate perhaps being offered by Tesco and / or Co-Op for the Crafton Green car park. Co-Op offers a rebate in Great Dunmow, as does Waitrose in Saffron Walden. If there is a business case for a similar scheme in Stansted Mountfitchet, the Council should facilitate it.
38. Stansted Mountfitchet has about 16 on-street free 30-minute or 1-hour parking bays on both sides of Cambridge Road outside the Tesco and Co-Op stores. These are co-located with the bus stop and loading bays and do restrict the carriageway. Local concerns have been expressed about the carriageway restrictions, vehicles pulling out on the wrong side of the road and the uncontrolled crossing of the road by shoppers. These are highway safety issues, and are within the remit of the Local Highways Panel (LHP) to consider. The LHP has an annual budget for local highway improvement schemes. A request for a mitigation scheme, which is fully supported by the Parish Council and endorsed by the local County Councillor, can be submitted

via the Parish Council for LHP consideration.

Residents and Visitors Survey

39. This survey generated 276 responses, which is considered to be a good response. A full statistical summary is included as Appendix D. Looking at the “Your Experience” section there is a very high level of satisfaction with the convenience of the district’s car parks and a good level of satisfaction with space availability and road access to the car parks. Scoring poorly is local traffic congestion, and there is some concern about ticket prices.
40. In relation to traffic congestion, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that plans and decisions should ensure developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable modes can be maximised. In rural areas it is highly likely that car usage generated by new developments will be proportionately higher than in urban areas. 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.
41. Under “Potential Improvements”, the most effective improvements are stated to be additional parking spaces (slightly contradictory to “Your Experience”), more short stay ticket options and pay on exit ticketing.
42. Tariffs are due to be reviewed in 2014. In terms of more short stay ticketing options, the review should consider whether there should be free parking for 30 minutes in all the pay and display car parks. Free parking is referred to quite frequently in the open responses to the survey. 30-minute ticket sales currently represent about 21.6% of all ticket sales and about 9.6% of pay and display income. Based on 2012/13 data, it is estimated that this would reduce the Council’s pay and display income (before expenses and income sharing is deducted) by about £88,300 from its 2012/13 level of £919,568. It is also likely that if free parking were offered some people who currently pay for a 1-hour stay would try to speed up to benefit from free parking. However, this probably already happens due to customers trying to benefit from the existing cheaper 30-minute tariff. Free parking after 5.00pm is a concession that was granted when the 2012 tariff changes were implemented, and should be advertised more widely.
43. Swan Meadow would not be suitable for a free 30-minute parking offer. It is about 525m from the car park to Market Square, which takes about 6-7 minutes to walk. A round trip of 12-14 minutes would not make 30-minute free parking an attractive offer. Whilst the route to / from Swan Meadow and the town centre is signposted, it is not clear actually how close it is on foot or how

long it takes to walk. It is considered that this information should be provided.

44. Another option referred to in the Committee's report of 4/12/12 was a free or cheap parking tariff after 3.00pm. The intended objective was to increase parking after 3.00pm by persuading people to stay longer in town centres rather than shift their shopping from, say, early to late afternoon. The task group's concern about this option is that it could nevertheless skew demand for parking spaces towards the late afternoon putting extra pressure on the car parks that are already busy. The concern particularly relates to Angel Lane, The Common and Rose and Crown. The free 30-minute option should be neutral in that respect.
45. Pay on exit would be a popular option, but would not be managed by NEPP. Pay on exit would require ticket spitter entry barriers, payment / ticket validation machines and a ticket grabber exit barrier. In addition, there would need to be an attendant in the event of barrier failure. The cost of running pay on exit was reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 6/12/11 as being £250,000. The layout of many of the car parks would also be unsuited to pay on exit where there is a single point of entry / exit. Pay on exit is better suited to larger car parks where there are separate entry and exit flows.
46. There is support from Saffron Walden Town Council for pay on exit to be implemented at all the town's car parks, starting with Fairycroft when it is redeveloped. There are serious concerns that this could result in congestion at peak times. The Glanville assessment indicates that at peak times, 70-80 vehicles enter the car park during a 15-minute interval, with similar numbers leaving. This equates to at least 5 cars through a single-lane ticket-operated barrier every minute, with no spare lane as a back-up. This is not considered to be practical, and would likely result in traffic backing up in Elm Grove and within the car park circulation area. Pay by phone is a more flexible option.
47. A comment raised in the open responses is that the disabled spaces at The Common are less convenient than those at Rose and Crown, because of the need to cross Common Hill to reach the shops. It is considered that there would be merit in relocating the disabled spaces from The Common to Rose and Crown. This should be investigated and implemented if possible.

Businesses Survey

48. This survey generated only 25 responses, which is rather disappointing. A full statistical summary is included as Appendix E. Looking at the "Car Parking Issues" section, convenience of car parks, availability of spaces and signposting to/from car parks are listed as main problems, contrary to the residents and visitors survey. In common with residents and visitors, ticket prices and congestion are also considered to be problematical.

49. Under “Potential Improvements”, the most important improvements are signposting, pay on exit and more short stay ticket options. Pay on exit and more short stay ticket options have already been considered in this report. A free 30-minute option and a voucher scheme for Stansted Mountfitchet (should there be a business case for it) should help local businesses attract trade. Via the survey, the group has details of local traders (in both Stansted Mountfitchet and Great Dunmow) who have expressed an interest in a voucher scheme.
50. The Council is already aware of concerns about signposting, and back in May received a petition from residents of Hanover Place about residents having to re-direct pedestrians back to Swan Meadow. Officers have been liaising with ECC Highways over improved car park signposting. Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council have organised improved signposting at Crafton Green.

Season Tickets

51. Season tickets can be bought for 6 months or a year at White Street and Chequers Lane car parks in Great Dunmow and at Swan Meadow. At Swan Meadow, there are group discounts for companies. In Stansted Mountfitchet, season tickets are available at both Crafton Green and Lower Street for 6 months or a year at a lower price for a commuter employed locally, or at a higher price for a commuter employed elsewhere. Pricing information is available on the NEPP website.
52. The number of season tickets sold per car park is set out in the table below.

Car Park	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Lower Street	56	43	61	60
Crafton Green	14	6	5	17
White Street	88	72	65	58
Chequers Lane	21	21	19	10
Swan Meadow	278	258	234	234
Common	9	4	4	4
Total	466	404	388	383

SEASON TICKETS SOLD (Source: NEPP data)

The table shows an overall decline in the number sold since 2009-10, which may be due to the economic recession and the price of fuel. The exception is in Stansted Mountfitchet. This may be due to the lower price for local commuters and, as previously mentioned, the lack of on-site parking for local employees and the proximity of the railway station. According to the local

count there were, however, only 6 or 7 occasions when the season ticket spaces at Lower Street were full or nearly full.

53. Lower Street, Crafton Green and White Street have spaces marked for season ticket holders, (although NEPP has no policy on this). In these cases they are the spaces furthest from the shops, meaning that shoppers using the car parks should not have so far to carry their shopping. At Swan Meadow, however, the 2 sections of car park closest to the town centre are customarily occupied by season ticket holders, but are not so reserved. This may be deterring some shoppers from using the car park as they will have slightly further to walk as a result of the nearest spaces being occupied by season ticket holders. It would be worth considering whether marked season ticket spaces should be provided in Swan Meadow, perhaps in the second and third, or third and fourth bays from the entrance, so that pay and display customers can use those spaces nearest to the town centre.

Residents' Parking

54. Residents' parking schemes operate in some streets in Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted. Permits cost £70 per year and are available to permanent residents of a street upon proof of residency. Second permits can be obtained for those who do not have any off-street parking. If Saffron Walden residents do not qualify for a second permit, they are offered a place in Swan Meadow for the same price as a resident's permit. There are no resident's parking schemes in Great Dunmow.

55. Permanent residents can also apply for a visitor parking permit, which are available in packs of 10 for 1 hour (£3.50) or for 4 hours (£8). The schemes are in operation from 8.00am – 9.00pm Monday to Saturday.

56. The number of permits issued in Saffron Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted is set out in the table below.

Resident scheme	Spaces	Number of permits issued		
		2011	2012	2013
SAFFRON WALDEN				
Abbey Lane	10	5	10	10
Castle Street	71	60	69	70
East Street	31	21	23	23
Fairycroft Road	18	18	18	19
Gold Street	41	40	35	41
High Street	6	5	6	6
Museum Street	11	15	13	14
STANSTED MTFT				
Grove Hill	65	10	12	7
High Lane		5	4	4
Lower Street		32	29	34
THAXTED				
Stoney Lane	12	0	2	2

RESIDENTS' PARKING PERMITS SOLD (Source: NEPP data)

The guidance for permit holders makes it clear that the issue of a permit does not carry with it any guarantee that a parking space will always be available. Broadly, there is a close correlation between the number of available spaces and the number of permits issued. This implies that each qualifying resident household has one permit, the most strain appearing to be on Museum Street. The Stoney Lane scheme is under-subscribed at the moment. The residents' parking scheme in Stansted Mountfitchet is a single scheme, which is why the number of available spaces is recorded collectively.

57. If Saffron Walden permit holders are unable to part on-street, their permit does entitle them to part in Swan Meadow so long as their permit is displayed. Whilst this might be reasonably beneficial to residents of Abbey Lane, it would not be particularly helpful to those who live elsewhere.
58. Separate evidence obtained by the task group suggests that there could be a level of support for residents' parking schemes or additional parking restrictions in the area of the Mountfitchet Estate in Stansted Mountfitchet, as well as along Cambridge Road, Meadowcroft and Chapel Hill. There is also concern about office overspill car parking in Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden. Any proposals which receive Parish or Town council support would be considered by NEPP.

Other Matters (outside the task group's terms of reference)

Airport-related on-street car parking

59. This is monitored by the airport operator via a Freephone hotline. Each caller is prompted for relevant information so a judgement can be made whether the

instance being reported is likely to be airport related. Every 3 months, the hotline data is reported to the Highways and Local Access Working Group of the Stansted Area Transport Forum, which is chaired by an officer from Essex County Council. An officer from the District Council attends as well.

60. Under the planning agreement for airport expansion to 25 million passengers per annum granted in 2003, money is available from the airport operator for drawing up, publicising, consulting and implementing on-street parking restrictions or a residents' parking scheme if that is preferred. A prerequisite for the release of the money by the airport operator is that a significant parking "hotspot" has been identified which is causing a loss of amenity to local residents. A one hour "no waiting" scheme for parts of Takeley was implemented a few years ago as a result of information received via the hotline. At the moment there is not sufficient evidence being reported to the hotline for the working group to be satisfied that loss of amenity is being caused. In the last quarter, only 15 instances were reported to the hotline (in Stansted Mountfitchet, Bishop's Stortford and Takeley).

Lotus site, Lower Street, Stansted Mountfitchet

61. Planning permission has been granted for a mixed development on this site, including shops, a health centre and flats. A planning agreement between the developer, Hilton Properties Ltd, and the District Council requires parking improvements to be carried out to the Lower Street car park. Prior to occupation of the development, the developer is required to submit the improvements to the District Council for its written consent.
62. The improvements require that the Lower Street car park be redesigned and laid out in accordance with the Council's approved parking standards, including the provision of bus / coach parking spaces, adequate vehicle turning space, CCTV and a lighting scheme. The improvements have not yet been submitted to the Council.
63. The approved parking standards give guidance on the number of parking spaces required for different uses. To avoid over-provision, they also advise on the sharing of parking spaces where mixed use of a site would occur. The Council will take the approved guidance into account when assessing the developer's improvement proposals for the Lower Street car park. The Parish Council's factsheet mentions that usage issues are more difficult to resolve until the health centre development is open and operating. The task group agrees.

Waitrose / Fairycroft

64. Planning permission has been granted for an extension to the store, with replacement decked car parking. The existing car park deck and ramp access

will be demolished, with associated excavations carried out to enable the construction of two car park decks with ramps. Whilst the works are carried out (which is expected to take at least 6 months), the Fairycroft car park will be closed. Whilst Fairycroft is closed, there will be carry-to-car provision at The Common and a shuttle bus to Swan Meadow. A planning condition requires details of the temporary transport service (including frequency, times and drop off/pick up locations) to be agreed with the Council.

65. The Saffron Walden Town Team has been set up as a local initiative to encourage more people to shop in the town. The Council is part of the Town Team. The Town Team is looking at ways to help shoppers through the period of the closure of the Fairycroft car park.

66. During the closure of Fairycroft, Swan Meadow will have an increased public profile as it will be used by more shoppers. Once Fairycroft reopens, it would be useful to closely monitor the use of Swan Meadow to see if usage returns to historic levels, or whether some knock-on effect of increased usage remains.

Membership of the North Essex Parking Partnership

67. This issue was raised during the work of the group. In November 2008 the Environment Committee resolved that the Council should become part of a joint parking service for Braintree, Colchester and Uttlesford. This would meet the Council's objectives which were to improve service quality and make ongoing financial savings. There would be modest one-off costs and would provide pay-back within a few years (Minute E35). Over subsequent years the Partnership has expanded and now includes Harlow and Epping Forest.

Risk Analysis

68.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Data supplied by NEPP contains errors or is incomplete.	2. There are some apparent anomalies in the tariff sales data provided.	2. There could be some impact on the statistical information contained in the report.	Further checks by NEPP. Ongoing monitoring.
The Waitrose extension and	2. There is a chance that	2. This could affect any	Delay any recommendations on

the development of the Lotus site changes car park usage patterns once completed.	this will occur.	recommendations contained in this report about Lower Street and Fairycroft.	Lower Street and Fairycroft until developments are completed. Post-development monitoring of Lower Street, Fairycroft and Swan Meadow is required.
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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.