

Committee:	Scrutiny Committee	Date:	Tuesday, 13 February 2024
Title:	Car Park Review and Consultation Responses		
Report Author:	Angela Knight, Director of Business Performance and People aknight@uttlesford.gov.uk		

Summary

1. The council in partnership with North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) commissioned a Parking review across the district, this was carried out by an external company with expertise and experience in parking, Parking Matters Ltd.
2. One specific area of the review looked at our current parking tariffs which have not had a complete review for 8 years, previous tariff changes were implemented in 2015.
3. A further detailed review was then commissioned to focus on our car park tariffs. This identified that it would be reasonable to increase our charges across all our car parks.
4. This report and the associated appendices set out the detail of the proposed increases and changes to car park tariffs.
5. The council ran a formal consultation for a period of 21 days as required by The Traffic Management Act 1984. The consultation ran from the 11 January 2023 to 2 February 2024.
6. A total of 485 responses to the consultation have been received. In addition the Saffron Walden BID submitted a formal petition against the proposals.

Recommendations

7. It is requested that members of the Committee consider the consultation responses and the formal petition submitted on the increased tariffs and proposed changes to the management of the council's car parks and provide comment to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

8. All financial implications are set out in the main body of the report.

Background Papers

9. 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.
[Uttlesford car parking review 2022 - Uttlesford District Council](#)

Impact

10.

Communication/Consultation	CMT and Cabinet members have seen the report. A formal consultation and publication of a notice of variation as set out in the 'Road Traffic Management Act 1984' has been carried out for 21 days, between the 11 January 2023 to 2 February 2024
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	An EqHIA is attached
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Road Traffic Management Act 1984
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Background

11. The Council is only responsible for the off street parking function (car parks only) and has no jurisdiction over on street parking which is the responsibility of Essex County Council (ECC).
12. NEPP manage both the on and off street parking functions for UDC and ECC.
13. The on street parking function is governed by a Joint Panel Committee (JPC) and membership is made up of a member representative from all partner authorities. In addition officers work closely with the NEPP on matters relating to on-street parking, both members and officers provide key local knowledge on the impact of any initiatives, projects or decisions relating to on-street parking ensuring the needs of the district are fully represented.
14. A full review of Parking within the district was commissioned in partnership with NEPP for both on street and off street parking and was carried out in the summer of 2022 by an external consultancy company, Parking Matters Ltd. The full report can be found using the following link [Uttlesford car parking review 2022 - Uttlesford District Council](#)
15. The review focused on three key areas, and these are set out below.
 - Car Park Tariffs
 - Airport Parking
 - Town Centre Parking
16. This report deals with the Car Park Tariffs only.

17. The car park tariffs were subject to a review in 2015 and parking tariffs were increased to reflect the recommendations at that time, this was the first tariff increase since 2008. The changes to tariffs were increased by an average of 22%, although no increases were applied to coach parking at either Swan Meadow or Lower Street in the 2015 review.
18. The February 2023 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identified the need for the Council to operate sustainably within available resources, including the need to reduce annual net expenditure by £6.6 million by 2027/28.
19. Blueprint Uttlesford is the council's change management programme set up to support the delivery of the MTFS and all Council services will be subject to a full service review. The schedule of reviews is planned over a four year period, and this was approved by Cabinet in June 2023. Parking tariffs were included in the schedule of reviews to be carried out in the first year of the programme, 2023/24.
20. Following the initial Parking review carried out in 2022/23 a further focused review was commissioned to look specifically at the council's car park tariffs. The report provides background information on parking charges, benchmarking data and inflationary implications had increases been applied more regularly. The report includes suggested recommendations for increases in charges and some specific changes to parking policies.
21. The following statement has been extracted from the main report provided by Parking Matters Ltd and summarises the council's responsibilities for parking.

Tariffs are a powerful tool for managing finite parking resources and influencing driver behaviour, for example to encourage higher turnover of parking spaces to support access to town centres. Unlike a private provider, local authorities must balance a range of policy objectives when setting tariffs and must consider the justification for parking management. The Road Traffic Management Act 1984 S.22 sets a duty: "to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking on and off the highway..."

22. The full report has been attached as Appendix A.

Car Park proposals under consultation

23. Members at their Cabinet meeting on the 20 December 2023 agreed to consult on the following proposals.
 - I. Extending the daily parking chargeable period to 6pm (currently 5pm)
 - II. To remove the 30 minute tariff from all Saffron Walden only car parks. This would make the minimum parking charge time one hour.
 - III. A flat rate charge for Sundays and Bank Holidays is introduced.

SUNDAY AND BANK HOLIDAYS - Flat rate charge	
Saffron Walden	£1.50
Great Dunmow	£1.00
Stansted Mountfitchet	£1.00

- IV. Catons Lane car park to become a chargeable car park, it is further proposed that the charges are aligned with Swan Meadow as both will function as long stay car parks.

Catons Lane is owned by Saffron Walden Town Council and currently offers free parking, Uttlesford has managed and maintained the car park on their behalf for many years.

Discussions have taken place and a full report setting out the options was presented to the Saffron Walden Town Council on 4 December, and all were in favour of supporting the option to make the car park chargeable and enter into a profit sharing agreement with Uttlesford.

- V. London Road (Council Offices car park) to become a chargeable car park at weekends and charges for Saturday will be aligned with Swan Meadow as it will operate as a long stay car park.

It is proposed that a resident parking permit is introduced to align with the permit scheme offered to residents in Swan Meadow.

London Road currently offers free parking to shoppers and visitors to the town at weekends and to the residents of London Road in the evenings and weekends.

- VI. To remove the long stay parking option and season tickets in Crafton Green, making the maximum stay three hours.

Stansted Mountfitchet currently offers long stay options in both Crafton Green and Lower Street car parks, the proposals are recommending that the long stay option and season tickets are no longer offered in Crafton Green. This would encourage long stay users to occupy Lower Street, users of the long stay option are, in the majority, commuters parking for the train station.

Crafton Green is owned by Stansted Parish Council and managed by UDC under a profit sharing agreement. It is acknowledged that Crafton Green long stay option is used by employees of Stansted Parish Council, separate discussions will be held with the Parish to accommodate the parking needs of their employees.

- VII. To remove the season ticket option in Chequers Lane, this has always been a short stay car park and season tickets are normally only provided in long stay car parks.

Historically season tickets have been issued at no cost to parents dropping off and picking up their children from St Marys Primary School where there is very limited parking in the area. These season tickets have no time restrictions, and it is proposed that an alternative option is set up to assist in traffic congestion during these periods, allowing parents to use the car park for limited periods of time during pick up and drop off to school.

- VIII. To introduce a hybrid season ticket to accommodate the change in people's working patterns. This would offer discounted parking in the same way a standard season ticket does, but with a variation to the number of days it is usable in a fixed period of time.

An example of the type of variation offered is set out below.

Hybrid Season Tickets
3 day season ticket – to be paid in advance for a minimum of 4 weeks. This would allow a maximum of 12 day visits to a car park` per 28 day period to be utilised flexibly.
3 day part time season ticket – to be paid in advance for a minimum of 4 weeks. This would allow up to 5 hours use for a maximum of 12 days in a 28 day period. This would be suitable for part-time employees.

- IX. The MiPermit convenience fee is passed onto the user when paying for their parking.

The pay by phone option (MiPermit) charges a 10p ‘convenience’ charge per transaction for using the app and currently the council covers the full cost of this charge. It is proposed that car park users using the app will be notified when purchasing their parking that this charge will be added to the cost.

All machines in the council’s car parks offer both the MiPermit app or pay by card options, so if the user does not want to pay the convenience charge, they can opt to pay by debit/credit card at the machine.

Car Park Tariffs and Season Tickets

24. Members were provided with three options for each element of parking tariffs, for general parking, coach parking and season tickets and these are set out in the following tables
25. Members at the Cabinet meeting on 18 December 2023 approved the following options for consultation.
- Car Park Tariffs – Option 2
 - Season Tickets – Option 3
 - Coach Parking – Option 3

Great Dunmow

	<1/2 hr	<1hr	<2hr	<3hr	<4hr	<5hr	<9 hrs (all day)	Max Stay
Angel Lane, Chequer's Lane and New Street								
Existing	£0.40	£0.60	-	£1.20	-	-	-	3 hrs
Option 1 Proposed	£0.60	£1.00	-	£1.50	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	£0.20	£0.40	-	£0.30	-	-	-	
% Increase	50%	67%	-	25%	-	-	-	
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	£0.80	£1.20	-	£1.70	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	£0.40	£0.60	-	£0.50	-	-	-	3 hrs
% Increase	100%	100%	-	42%	-	-	-	
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	£1.10	£1.50	-	£2.00	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	£0.70	£1.50	-	£2.00	-	-	-	3 hrs
% Increase	175%	150%	-	67%	-	-	-	
White Street								
Existing	£0.40	£0.60	-	£1.20	£2.00	£2.40	£3.50	All day
Option 1 Proposed	£0.60	£1.00	-	£1.50	£2.50	£3.00	£4.00	All day
Increase (£)	£0.20	£0.40	-	£0.30	£0.50	£0.60	£0.50	
% Increase	50%	67%	-	25%	25%	25%	14%	
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	£0.80	£1.20	-	£1.70	£2.70	£3.10	£4.20	All day
Increase (£)	£0.40	£0.60	-	£0.50	£0.70	£0.70	£0.70	
% Increase	100%	100%	-	42%	35%	29%	20%	
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	£1.10	£1.50	-	£2.00	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50	All day
Increase (£)	£0.70	£0.90	-	£0.80	£1.00	£1.10	£1.00	
% Increase	175%	150%	-	67%	50%	46%	29%	

Saffron Walden

26. Catons Lane and London Road currently offer free parking, both Car Parks offer long stay parking options. The proposal is that if charging is introduced the tariffs will align with Swan Meadow to ensure consistency across the long stay car parks in the town.

	<1/2 hr	<1hr	<2hr	<3hr	<4hr	<5hr	<9 hrs (all	Max Stay
Caton's Lane and London Road								
PML Proposal	-	-	£1.00	-	£2.00	-	£3.00	All day
Charges aligned with Swan Meadow Car Park								
Proposed	-	£1.00	£2.00	-	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50	All day
Proposed + 20p	-	£1.20	£2.20	-	£3.20	£3.70	£4.70	All day
Proposed + 50p	-	£1.50	£2.50	-	£3.50	£4.00	£5.00	All day

London Road will only offer parking to shoppers and visitors to the Town at weekends.

	<1/2 hr	<1hr	<2hr	<3hr	<4hr	<5hr	<9 hrs (all day)	Max Stay
Faircroft								
Existing	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20	£2.00	-	-	-	3 hrs
Option 1 Proposed	-	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.30	£0.80	£1.00				
% Increase	-	43%	67%	50%				
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	-	£1.20	£2.20	£3.20	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.50	£1.00	£1.20				
% Increase	-	71%	83%	60%				
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	-	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.80	£1.30	£1.50				
% Increase	-	114%	108%	75%				
Rose & Crown								
Existing	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20	-	-	-	-	2 hrs
Option 1 Proposed	-	£1.00	£2.00	-	-	-	-	2 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.30	£0.80					
% Increase	-	43%	67%					
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	-	£1.20	£2.20	-	-	-	-	2 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.50	£1.00					
% Increase	-	71%	83%					
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	-	£1.50	£2.50	-	-	-	-	2 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.80	£1.30					
% Increase	-	114%	108%					
Common								
Existing	£0.50	£0.70	£1.20	£2.00	-	-	-	3 hrs
Option 1 Proposed	-	£1.00	£2.00	£3.00	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.30	£0.80	£1.00				
% Increase	-	43%	67%	50%				
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	-	£1.20	£2.20	£3.20	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.50	£1.00	£1.20				
% Increase	-	71%	83%	60%				
Option Proposed + 50p	-	£1.50	£2.50	£3.50	-	-	-	3 hrs
Increase (£)	-	£0.80	£1.30	£1.50				
% Increase	-	114%	108%	75%				
Swan Meadow								
Existing	-	£0.70	£1.20	-	£2.00	£2.50	£3.50	All day
Option 1 Proposed	-	£1.00	£2.00	-	£3.00	£3.50	£4.50	All day
Increase (£)		£0.30	£0.80	-	£1.00	£1.00	£1.00	
% Increase		43%	67%	-	50%	40%	29%	
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	-	£1.20	£2.20	-	£3.20	£3.70	£4.70	All day
Increase (£)	-	£0.50	£1.00	-	£1.20	£1.20	£1.20	
% Increase	-	71%	83%	-	60%	48%	34%	
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	-	£1.50	£2.50	-	£3.40	£4.00	£5.00	All day
Increase (£)	-	£0.80	£1.30	-	£1.40	£1.50	£1.50	
% Increase	-	114%	108%	-	70%	60%	43%	

Stansted Mountfitchet

	<1/2 hr	<1hr	<2hr	<3hr	<4hr	<5hr	<9 hrs (all day)	Max Stay
Crafton Green								
Existing	£0.40	£0.60	0	£1.20	-	-	£3.00	All day
Option 1 Proposed	£0.60	£1.00	£1.50	£2.00	-	-	-	3 hours
Increase (£)	£0.20	£0.40	£1.50	£0.80				
% Increase	50%	67%	100%	67%				
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	£0.80	£1.20	£1.70	£2.20	-	-	-	3 hours
Increase (£)	£0.40	£0.60	£1.70	£1.00				
% Increase	100%	100%	100%	83%				
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	£1.10	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	-	-	-	3 hours
Increase (£)	£0.70	£0.90	£2.00	£1.30				
% Increase	175%	150%	100%	108%				
Lower Street								
Existing	£0.40	£0.60	£1.00	£1.20	£2.00	£2.40	£4.70	All day
Option 1 Proposed	£0.60	£1.00	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£3.00	£5.00	All day
Increase (£)	£0.20	£0.40	£0.50	£0.80	£0.50	£0.60	£0.30	
% Increase	50%	67%	50%	67%	25%	25%	6%	
Option 2 Proposed + 20p	£0.80	£1.20	£1.70	£2.20	£2.70	£3.20	£5.20	All day
Increase (£)	£0.40	£0.60	£0.70	£1.00	£0.70	£0.80	£0.50	
% Increase	100%	100%	70%	83%	35%	33%	11%	
Option 3 Proposed + 50p	£1.10	£1.50	£2.00	£2.50	£3.00	£3.50	£5.50	All day
Increase (£)	£0.70	£0.90	£1.00	£1.30	£1.00	£1.10	£0.80	
% Increase	175%	150%	100%	108%	50%	46%	17%	

27. Coach Parking is offered at Swan Meadow in Saffron Walden and Lower Street in Stansted Mountfitchet.

Coaches - Swan Meadow (Saffron Walden) and Lower Street			
	1/2 Day	All day	Max Stay
Existing	£3.00	£6.00	All day
Proposed	£6.00	£10.00	All day
Increase (£)	£3.00	£4.00	
% Increase	100%	67%	
Option 2	£7.00	£12.00	All day
Increase (£)	£4.00	£6.00	All day
% Increase	133%	100%	
Option 3	£8.00	£14.00	All day
Increase (£)	£5.00	£8.00	All day
% Increase	167%	133%	

Season Tickets

28. Seasons tickets are a cost effective option for users who park regularly in a specific car park. Season tickets are offered at a discounted rate compared to paying for parking on a day to day basis.
29. Season Tickets will be calculated across 7 days instead of 6 due to the proposal for charging on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Resident parking permits are charged at the same rate as on street parking permits.
30. The following two tables should be considered alongside each other, as the second table provides additional information to support the first table.
- The first table provides details of the current cost of a season ticket in each car park and offers three options on increasing the cost.
 - The second table provides details on the % discounts applied for each season ticket option compared to each of the three tariff options.

Table 1 – Season Ticket options

	Existing				Option 1				Option 2				Option 3				Number held @ October 2023
	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months	
Saffon Walden																	
Swan Meadow (employed locally)	£30	£90	£175	£300	£45	£135	£220	£385	£60	£160	£280	£440	£75	£200	£350	£550	124
<i>% Increase to existing</i>					50%	50%	26%	28%	100%	78%	60%	47%	150%	122%	100%	83%	
Swan Meadow (Resident)	-	-	-	£70	-	-	-	£78	-	-	-	£78	-	-	-	£78	44
<i>% Increase to existing</i>								11%				11%				11%	
Catons Lane (employed locally)	-	-	-	-	£45	£135	£220	£385	£60	£160	£280	£440	£75	£200	£350	£550	NEW
London Road (Resident)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£78	-	-	-	£78	-	-	-	£78	NEW
Great Dunmow																	
Chequers Lane	-	-	£175	£300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White Street (employed locally)	£30	£90	£175	£300	£40	£120	£200	£350	£55	£150	£250	£400	£65	£175	£300	£450	80
<i>% Increase to existing</i>					33%	33%	14%	17%	83%	67%	43%	33%	117%	94%	71%	50%	
Stansted Mountfitchet																	
Crafton Green	-	-	£220	£420	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crafton Green(Employed Locally)	-	-	£130	£250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	16
Lower Street(Employed Locally)	£30	£90	£130	£250	£40	£120	£200	£350	£55	£150	£250	£400	£65	£175	£300	£450	26
<i>% Increase to existing</i>					33%	33%	54%	40%	83%	67%	92%	60%	117%	94%	131%	80%	
Lower Street (Resident)	-	-	-	£35	-	-	-	£78	-	-	-	£78	-	-	-	£78	23
<i>% Increase to existing</i>								123%				123%				123%	
Lower Street	-	-	£220	£420	-	-	£450	£775	-	-	£470	£795	-	-	£490	£810	6
<i>% Increase to existing</i>							105%	85%			114%	89%			123%	93%	

Table 2 – Season Ticket % discounts

Season Ticket existing discounts	Daily charge	Annual charge	Season ticket	Discounted %
Swan Meadow	£3.50	£1,092.00	£300.00	73%
White Street	£3.50	£1,092.00	£300.00	73%
Lower Street (Local employed)	£4.70	£1,466.40	£250.00	83%
Lower Street (Commuter)	£4.70	£1,466.40	£420.00	71%

Season Ticket Options	Option 1 tariffs		Option 2 tariffs		Option 3 tariffs	
	Cost	Discounted %	Cost	Discounted %	Cost	Discounted %
Swan Meadow						
Daily charge	£4.50		£4.70		£5.00	
Annual charge	£1,482.00		£1,544.40		£1,638.00	
Option 1 season ticket	£385.00	74%	£385.00	75%	£385.00	76%
Option 2 season ticket	£440.00	70%	£440.00	72%	£440.00	73%
Option 3 season ticket	£550.00	63%	£550.00	64%	£550.00	66%
White Street						
Daily charge	£4.00		£4.20		£4.50	
Annual charge	£1,300.00		£1,362.40		£1,456.00	
Option 1 season ticket	£350.00	73%	£350.00	74%	£350.00	76%
Option 2 season ticket	£400.00	69%	£400.00	71%	£400.00	73%
Option 3 season ticket	£450.00	65%	£450.00	67%	£450.00	69%
Lower Street (Local employed)						
Daily charge	£5.00		£5.20		£5.50	
Annual charge	£1,612.00		£1,674.40		£1,768.00	
Option 1 season ticket	£350.00	78%	£350.00	79%	£350.00	80%
Option 2 season ticket	£400.00	75%	£400.00	76%	£400.00	77%
Option 3 season ticket	£450.00	72%	£450.00	73%	£450.00	75%
Lower Street (Commuter)						
Daily charge	£5.00		£5.20		£5.50	
Annual charge	£1,612.00		£1,674.40		£1,768.00	
Option 1 season ticket	£775.00	52%	£775.00	54%	£775.00	56%
Option 2 season ticket	£795.00	51%	£795.00	53%	£795.00	55%
Option 3 season ticket	£810.00	50%	£810.00	52%	£810.00	54%

Income

31. Parking Matters Ltd tariff report looked at the inflationary impact since 2015 had the council increased tariffs annually in line with inflation. The report shows that had the council increased its tariffs in line with RPI each year, this would have increased income by approximately 37% (£320,000) in 2022/23.
32. The following table sets out the estimated income that could be achieved for each of the options. The table sets out the income based on all options being the same for each activity, but individual income lines are included in the table to allow for an easy calculation of total income should a mix and match approach be applied. It should be noted that these are estimates based on current usage and footfall. The industry norm. estimates for every 10% increase in charges a reduction of 1-4% usage could be expected. Due to the element of estimation in the overall income, the user reduction has not been factored into the forecast income as it is expected to have a relatively low impact.

Forecast Annual Revenue Impact (Exc. VAT)	Option 1 PML Proposed	Option 2 Proposed + 20p	Option 3 Proposed + 50p	Options approved by Cabinet for consultation
Review of Tariffs	£299,569	£392,267	£506,184	£392,267
Catons Lane	£60,000	£63,600	£67,200	£63,600
London Road (weekends only)	£26,550	£28,143	£29,736	£28,143
Profit share adjustment	-£81,493	-£98,605	-£120,010	-£98,605
Car Park Tariff Sub Total	£304,627	£385,406	£483,110	£385,406
Season Ticket Review	£20,000	£30,000	£45,000	£45,000
Increase in Charging Hours	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000
Sunday/bank holiday charges	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000
Tariff income increases	£404,627	£495,406	£608,110	£510,406
Convenience Fee passed on to user	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000	£25,000
Total Income	£429,627	£520,406	£633,110	£535,406

33. The profit share adjustments are in place for the car parks we do not own but provide a management and maintenance service for. Fairycroft, The Rose and Crown in Saffron Walden and Crafton Green in Stansted are all managed by the council under a profit share agreement. If Caton's Lane becomes chargeable this will also be managed by the council under a similar agreement.
34. The table below sets out the estimated additional income for each car park, the figures include the adjustment for the profit share agreements.

Forecast Annual Revenue Impact (Exc. VAT)	Option 1 PML Proposed	Option 2 Proposed + 20p	Option 3 Proposed + 50p
Saffron Walden			
Fairycroft	£64,098	£82,230	£105,462
The Common	£61,427	£76,543	£86,800
Rose & Crown	£5,305	£6,571	£8,231
Swan Meadow	£60,967	£73,806	£91,556
Catons Lane	£30,000	£31,800	£29,736
London Road (weekend only)	£26,550	£28,143	£33,600
	£248,347	£299,093	£355,385
Great Dunmow			
Angel Lane	£7,874	£12,289	£18,475
Chequer's Lane	£8,086	£12,698	£19,106
New Street	£3,007	£4,626	£6,823
White Street	£28,990	£44,113	£65,119
	£47,957	£73,726	£109,523
Stansted Mountfitchet			
Crafton Green	£3,456	£5,414	£7,871
Lower Street	£4,867	£7,173	£10,331
	£8,323	£12,587	£18,202
Total Income	£304,627	£385,406	£483,110

Consultation and Notification of Variation Process

35. The consultation was conducted in line with the requirements of the under the legislation as set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) (“the Act”) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (as amended) to update the councils Off Street Parking Order, this sets the legal basis for providing parking spaces, setting appropriate charges and enforcing restrictions.
36. The council was required to formally consult on any changes it is considering making to the management of its car parks for a minimum period of 21 days. Although the council is not required to formally consult on increases to our car parking tariffs and season ticket charges it is required to issue and advertise a formal Notification of Variation for a minimum period of 21 days prior to increasing prices.
37. All responses to the consultation and any the council receive on the Notification of Variation will be responded to on an individual basis once a decision has been made at the Cabinet meeting on the 20 February 2023.

Consultation Responses

38. The total number of responses received were 485 of the responses 13 provided either positive or neutral comments about the changes.
39. The email responses have been collated into one document which is attached as Appendix B, there were also 8 letters received, three from residents and five from Town or Parish councils, Business forums, Saffron Walden BID Team and Waitrose which are attached as Appendix B (i – viii).
40. The majority of the responses were related to Saffron Walden and the responses have been broken down below.
- Saffron Walden - 315
 - Great Dunmow - 37
 - Stansted Mountfitchet – 18
41. The most recurring comment was related to the high percentage increases being proposed on both the tariffs and the season tickets, but season tickets seem to be raising the highest level of concern.
42. The key areas of concern have been summarised in the following table and includes collective comments taken from the individual responses received.

Proposals	Responses rec'd	Summary of responses	Financial impact
Tariff increases (option 2)	188 comments directly mention tariff increases A further 186 are general responses	Very strong feeling about the level of increases. General comments agreeing that tariff increases are justifiable but should be in line with inflation. Cost of living crisis is already affecting both residents individually and businesses. This would have a detrimental effect on the local economy which is already suffering from	£81,000 income reduction if option 1 charges are applied

Proposals	Responses rec'd	Summary of responses	Financial impact
	saying they disagree with all the higher charges	<p>falling footfall.</p> <p>Detrimental to charity shops and voluntary sector who cannot afford to pay higher charges whilst giving up their time.</p> <p>Lack of public transport makes visiting the town by car inevitable so no option but to pay higher charges.</p> <p>People will travel to other towns where parking is free (Ely is mentioned frequently) or cheaper.</p> <p>Comments made about the poor state of maintenance of the car parks and a lack of CCTV.</p>	
Remove 30 minute tariff in Saffron Walden	103	<p>Overall not well received.</p> <p>Removal of this affects residents dropping off their children, particularly those who attend RA Butler and St Thomas Moore and park in Faircroft.</p> <p>The school catchment area includes surrounding villages, parents have to drive to the school.</p> <p>Removal penalises people who just want to pop into town to pick up a prescription or quick bit of shopping.</p> <p>Concerns more people will park illegally or inconsiderately in nearby residential streets.</p>	No material impact
Season Ticket increases (option 3)	61 (NB. This figure includes very few town centre businesses as the SWBID and Dunmow Town Team responded on their behalf.)	<p>Cost of living is already affecting workers and businesses.</p> <p>The high percentage increases are disproportionately affecting the lower paid working sector as many of these work in hospitality or retail.</p> <p>Workers will choose to work elsewhere where they can afford to park.</p>	<p>£15,000 income reduction if option 2 applied</p> <p>£25,000 income reduction if option 1 applied</p>
Caton's lane being charged	79	General comments relating to it no longer being a free car park and affecting trade and	Overall estimated income for

Proposals	Responses rec'd	Summary of responses	Financial impact
in line with Swan Meadow charges		<p>businesses.</p> <p>Low paid workers can park here which helps support retail and hospitality.</p> <p>Market traders historically use this car park and are currently struggling with trade on a Tuesday so would add an additional financial burden to pay for parking.</p> <p>A minority of comments from local residents who use this area to park.</p> <p>Used extensively by people wanting to visit Bridge End Gardens, the play park or dog walk in the area.</p> <p>Concerns about more people parking illegally or inconsiderately in nearby residential streets.</p>	charging £64,000, management share agreement with SWTC - UDC estimated share £32,000
London Road charging on Saturday's in line with Swan Meadow charges	66	<p>General comments relating to it no longer being a free car park and affecting trade and businesses.</p> <p>Comments that if the public are to be charged to use this car park at weekends, then council officers should also be charged during the week.</p> <p>Comments from residents living nearby concerned that this will mean householders who currently park in London Road at weekends will now park in their streets.</p> <p>Too far out of town to be charged the same as other car parks.</p>	£2,000 reduction in income if option 1 tariff applied on Saturdays instead of option 2
Flat rate charging on Sundays and Bank Holidays	109	<p>Generally not well received.</p> <p>Affecting church goers who are coming to church in Saffron Walden.</p> <p>Largest response is in regard to Crafton Green, this is affecting volunteers and users of Touchpoint Centre where the Sunday afternoon sessions are used to help socially isolated residents from nearby villages.</p> <p>Responses questioning why there needs to be a flat rate; means they may pay more to go to the shops than they would during the week.</p>	Income £50,000

Proposals	Responses rec'd	Summary of responses	Financial impact
		<p>Car parking in Saffron Walden is already problematic on a Sunday with people parking inconsiderately as no restrictions on the yellow lines. If forced to pay those using the car parks will add to this problem as they move onto streets.</p> <p>A minority of comments from local residents who use the car parks to park their cars at weekends as they do not have dedicated parking.</p>	
Remove long stay option from Crafton Green	13	<p>Affects the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteers and users of Touchpoint Centre. Some volunteers stay all day to run the café/foodshare • Local businesses are affected as employees park here during the day. • Residents park here as no dedicated parking • Visitors staying at The Linden hotel <p>All assert that the walk uphill from Lower Street takes approx. 15/20 minutes which will stop people doing this.</p> <p>Concerns that this will merely push people into parking on nearby residential streets which already suffer issues with fly parking and commuter parking.</p>	The main impact would be loss of season ticket income currently approx. £4,000
Remove season tickets from Chequers Lane	2	<p>Will mean more people will park illegally or inconsiderately in nearby residential streets.</p> <p>Convenient for employees of local businesses to park here. Removal of this option will mean they will have to walk to White Street in the evening which is unpleasant for a woman on her own due to intimidating teenagers who hang out here.</p>	<p>Minimal impact as these were a mix of locally employed purchased and free of charge to parents to drop off their children. Parents tickets to continue free but will now be time limited to school pick up and drop off.</p> <p>Locally employed will be able to purchase season tickets for</p>

Proposals	Responses rec'd	Summary of responses	Financial impact
			White Street
Introduction of Hybrid season tickets	1	Only one comment who said it was probably a good idea.	New ticket option, no estimate of income available
Additional hour of charging	60	<p>Majority of comments relate to the fact few shops were open after 5/5.30 so not sure what the point of this was.</p> <p>Penalising people wanting to pop into shops to pick up food/take aways after work</p> <p>Penalising local people who pop to the shops/pharmacy outside busy periods and take advantage of the free parking after 5pm</p> <p>Car parks are generally empty at this time so no justification to charge.</p> <p>Additional burden on working families paying to pick children up from after school childcare.</p> <p>A minority of comments from local residents who use the car parks to park their cars after 5pm as they do not have dedicated parking.</p>	£30,000 estimated additional income
Convenience fee	37	<p>General comments are that UDC should absorb this cost as we have promoted the app.</p> <p>People will stop using the app meaning they won't be able to extend their stay when needed. Detrimental to businesses.</p>	£25,000 cost to the Council if not applied

43. A summary of responses from the letters received from key stakeholders has been provided below.

Waitrose plc – joint owner of Faircroft Road car park

- I. Object to increased tariffs, extending to 6pm and Sundays
 - such a significant level of tariff is unjustifiable in the context of ongoing cost of living pressures
 - Will stop people visiting both the town and Waitrose.
- II. Object to the season ticket increases
 - 150% increase in monthly ticket and 122% increase in 3 month ticket completely unjustified.

Saffron Walden Business Improvement District

- I. Object to increased tariff
 - Charges are higher than those recommended by the consultants who benchmarked against similar towns

- Cost of living, inflation and dropping footfall is having an impact
- II. Sunday parking
 - Will lead to rise in anti-social parking which is already a problem in Walden
 - Trading on Sunday has increased since the pandemic and this will be deterred by Sunday charges
- III. Catons Lane and London Road
 - Catons Lane used by workers. Removal will negatively impact recruitment and could see businesses move out of the town centre
- IV. Season Tickets
 - Increases are significantly higher than those recommended by the consultants
 - Most workers are in retail and hospitality which are usually minimum wage so hard to afford increases

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council – owner of Crafton Green car park

- I. Object to increased tariff
 - Proposals are well above inflation levels.
 - Excessive and unjustifiable
- II. Removal of long stay at Crafton Green
 - No reason given for this. Where will workers park? Push them onto neighbouring streets
 - Detrimental effect on Touchpoint volunteers
- III. Sunday parking
 - Currently no benefit to the community.
 - Appreciate a low charge but concerned this will continue to rise over time
- IV. Lower Street needs urgent reconfiguration

Stansted Business Forum and Economic Development Group

- I. Tariffs are well above inflation levels. Significant in light of ongoing cost of living pressures
- II. Footfall has dropped significantly in recent years
- III. Aging population who has not had their income increased by 100% so how can UDC justify raising tariff by this amount

Great Dunmow Town Team

- I. Footfall at all time low so higher prices not welcome. People will go where parking is free or cheap
- II. Footfall on a Sunday is non-existent so no reason to charge.
- III. Charging the convenience fee for the MiPermit app will stop people using it. The app works well as people can extend their stay and take advantage of the local shops.

Churches Together

- I. Tariff increases need to be proportionate. There is no good reason for the increases proposed
- II. Public transport is poor, so people have no option but to drive
- III. Sundays – no bus services at all and many of the churches are attended from people outside Walden. Charges will impact congregations.

Saffron Walden BID Team Petition

- 44. The Saffron Walden BID Team submitted a petition at 10 am on the 5 February 2024. The petition can be viewed using the following link: [Paper Petition - Modern Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/paper-petition).

45. The Council's petition scheme contained in the Constitution states the following in regard to the Council's response to the petition:

"The Council's response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it. The Council will consider all the specific actions it can potentially take on the issues highlighted in a petition, but its response may include one or more of the following:

- *taking the action requested in the petition*
- *considering the petition at a Council meeting (if there are at least 3,600 signatures)*
- *holding an inquiry into the matter*
- *undertaking research into the matter*
- *holding a public meeting*
- *referring the petition for consideration by the Council's Scrutiny Committee (if there are at least 1,800 signatures, or for other valid reasons)*
- *writing to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views about the request in the petition"*

46. On submission of the petition it was indicated that 3,000 signatures had been obtained from both paper copies of the petition and the online version. On initial checks made by officers the number of signatures is 2,406.

47. As per the Council's petition scheme (1,800 signatures obtained), Car Park Tariffs will be debated at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting on 13 February. The organisers have been invited to attend the meeting to present their petition.

48. The petition statement requests:

"As a resident of Saffron Walden, I am deeply concerned about the proposed parking tariff increases by Uttlesford District Council (UDC). Despite commissioning consultants to suggest new tariffs, UDC are choosing to ignore these recommendations and instead propose to increase prices on all areas of parking by as much as 133% in some areas. This is not just an arbitrary figure; it's a significant hike that will affect employees, shoppers and visitors alike.

Furthermore, UDC proposes to abolish free Sunday parking in all car parks. This move will undoubtedly discourage people from visiting our town during weekends, negatively impacting local businesses who rely on weekend footfall for their livelihoods.

Lastly, there are plans for huge increases in season ticket prices. These changes will disproportionately affect employees who commute daily using these facilities. The financial burden this places on working individuals is unjust and unacceptable.

These proposed changes seem more like a revenue-generating scheme than an attempt at improving our town's parking system. We must stand together against these unjustified increases that threaten the vibrancy and accessibility of our beloved town. Please show your support by signing this petition against the proposed parking tariff increases in Saffron Walden. Together we can make a difference!"

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The income predictions are not achieved	2	2	Income will be monitored closely as part of the budget monitoring process to allow for early intervention if required
Footfall in the car parks reduces	2	2	User data will be collected on a monthly basis, this has been made easier to monitor with the installation of the new machines as part of the cashless initiative
Season tickets purchased decrease	2	2	<p>This is a medium risk but will be monitored, most season tickets are purchased by locally employed.</p> <p>The commuter tickets in Stansted are a higher risk as these are increasing at a higher rate. But when compared to neighbouring areas still evidence good value for money</p>

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.