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COMMITTEE:	BABERGH CABINET
DATE:	MONDAY, 8 APRIL 2024 11.00 AM
VENUE:	KING EDMUND CHAMBER, ENDEAVOUR HOUSE, 8 RUSSELL ROAD, IPSWICH

Members		
<u>Green Party</u> Jessie Carter Sallie Davies Daniel Potter Deborah Saw	<u>Liberal Democrat</u> David Busby (Chair) Helen Davies	<u>Independent</u> Derek Davis Alastair McCraw John Ward

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AGENDA

PART 1

MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PRESS AND PUBLIC PRESENT

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7 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

Please note the most up to date version can be found via the website:

[Forthcoming Decisions List - Babergh District Council](#)

- 8 **BCa/23/48 CAR PARKING CHARGES AND ROAD TRAFFIC ORDERS** 15 - 114
Leader of the Council
- 9 **BCa/23/49 PROCUREMENT OF REPAIRS MANAGEMENT AND SCHEDULING SYSTEM** 115 - 118
Cabinet Member for Housing
- 10 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (WHICH TERM INCLUDES THE PRESS)**

To consider whether, pursuant to Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public should be excluded from the meeting for the business specified below on the grounds that if the public were present during this/these item(s), it is likely that there would be the disclosure to them of exempt information as indicated against the/each item.

The author(s) of the report(s) proposed to be considered in Part 2 of the Agenda is/are satisfied that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- 11 **BCa/23/49 PROCUREMENT OF REPAIRS MANAGEMENT AND SCHEDULING SYSTEM - CONFIDENTIAL APPENDICES** 119 - 124

Date and Time of next meeting

Please note that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 7 May 2024 at 4.00 pm.

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https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSWf_0D13zmegAf5Qv_aZSg

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Agenda Item 3

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH CABINET** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 4 March 2024

PRESENT:

Councillors: Sallie Davies
Daniel Potter
Helen Davies
Derek Davis
John Ward

In attendance:

Councillor(s): Elisabeth Malvisi
Mary McLaren
Brian Riley

Officers: Chief Executive (AC)
Interim Monitoring Officer (JR)
Director – Planning & Building Control (TB)
Director – Operations & Climate Change (ME)
Director – Corporate Services (SW)
Director – Housing (DF) – Via hybrid
Head of Strategic Policy (JH)
Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure (CT)
Infrastructure Officer (JM)
Senior Finance Business Partner (SC)
Finance Business Partner – HRA (JS)
Senior Business Partner – Capital & Treasury (AG)
Climate Change Manager (SW)
Governance Officer (BW)

Apologies: David Busby (Chair)
Jessie Carter
Alastair McCraw
Deborah Saw

84 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY COUNCILLORS

84.1 None received.

85 BCA/23/41 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2024

It was **RESOLVED**: -

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 8 February 2024 be confirmed and signed as correct record.

86 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE

COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

86.1 None received.

87 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

87.1 None received.

88 MATTERS REFERRED BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OR JOINT AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEES

88.1 There were no matters referred from the Overview and Scrutiny or the Joint Audit and Standard Committees.

89 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

89.1 There were no comments made by Councillors.

90 BCA/23/42 FINANCIAL MONITORING QUARTER 3 2023/24

90.1 The Chair introduced the report as Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments.

90.2 Councillor John Ward proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Sallie Davies seconded this motion.

90.3 Councillor Sallie Davies queried whether the amount the Council was borrowing was too much despite being within the prudential indicators. The Senior Business Partner – Capital & Treasury responded that under the Council's Treasury Management Strategy two limits were set to regulate borrowing, the Operational Limit and the Authorised Limit. The Operational Limit set the guide for the amount of borrowing the Council would expect to spend in year to year operation to fund the capital programme with some headroom to allow for short term borrowing. The Authorised Limit was the maximum amount of borrowing the Council permitted by statute under the Local Government Act 2003.

90.4 Councillor Helen Davies referred to section 5 of the report on page 22 and asked for clarification on projects and how they were controlled. Councillor Ward responded that many of the identified projects had been identified for many years and had been carried forward with provisions being agreed 2-3 years ago. Under the budget some of the projects had been reprofiled to save on interest costs, and any new projects would be approved by Cabinet and Council and some projects would be reviewed to decide whether they were appropriate and match the priorities in the new Plan. The Senior Business Partner – Capital & Treasury added that in reference to capital loan to Babergh Growth there were factors outside of the Council's control which were reliant on the progress on the capital scheme.

- 90.5 Councillor Potter referred to the Regen Fund – HQ Sites on page 23 of the report and questioned whether this was under the housing programme. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments responded that this referred to Babergh Growth and were not part of the HRA and would be open market.
- 90.6 In response to questions from other Members present The Senior Business Partner – Capital & Treasury highlighted that all PWLB loans were from other borough and district Councils and not from town and parish councils, with no parish councils offering lending.
- 90.7 Councillor Derek Davis referred to page 27 of the report and questioned why the Pin Mill planned maintenance budget had not been spent for quarter 3. The Director – Operations & Climate Change responded that the Council had sought legal advice to establish next steps and progress with actions.
- 90.8 During the debate Councillor Ward summarised that whilst the positions of the General Fund and HRA was better, there were still substantial deficits.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1.1 That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the projected overspend on the General Fund of £440k referred to in section 4.2 and Appendix A of the report be noted.**
- 1.2 That, subject to any further budget variations that arise during the rest of the financial year, the projected overspend on the Housing Revenue Account of £616k over budget referred to in section 4.3 and Appendix B of the report be noted.**
- 1.3 That, the Council's compliance with the Prudential Indicators during quarter two referred to in section 4.4 and Appendix C of the report be noted.**

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that Members are kept informed of the financial position for both General Fund Revenue and Capital, Housing Revenue Account and Capital and the Prudential Indicators.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

The recommended option is set out in the Recommendations. There are no other available options.

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

91 BCA/23/43 UPDATE ON THE REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING REFERRAL AND OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE POSITION

- 91.1 The Chair introduced the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Housing.
- 91.2 Councillor John Ward proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Daniel Potter seconded this motion.
- 91.3 Councillor Derek Davis asked for assurance that the armed forces covenant was being adhered to in line with housing requirements for ex- services personnel. The Director – Housing responded that the Council was working to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- 91.4 In response to questions from other Members present, on the use of contractors and the potential to upskill current staff, the Director – Housing outlined that contractors could be a necessity and more cost effective in cases where repairs were irregular, or the work was high risk.
- 91.5 During the debate Councillor Derek Davis praised the Housing team for their work.
- 91.6 Councillor John Ward summarised that the report had indicated improvements in most areas and there had not been any overdue actions. However, due to the identification of damp and mould numbers were not dropping as fast.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

That members note the report.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that members and senior leaders of the councils have oversight of the journey with the Regulator back to a position where we are compliant.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

92 BCA/23/44 BDC Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 92.1 The Chair introduced the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvement.
- 92.2 The Chair drew Members attention to the Customers section of the report and highlighted that 97% of users of customer access points had their query resolved at their first contact, online forms were being redesigned with input from residents, and 76% of customers were satisfied or highly satisfied with telephone services, with a fall in phone wait times and abandoned calls.
- 92.3 The Chair outlined that the report format would be amended in the future to show progress on the priorities as set out in The Plan for Babergh.
- 92.4 Councillor Derek Davis thanked the Director – Economic Growth and Climate Change for the work she had done on economy and regeneration, especially on Belle Vue and the continued progress on the project and wished her the best in the future.
- 92.5 Councillor Sallie Davies drew Members attention to the People and Place portfolio and highlighted that 26% of Babergh residents were over 65 years old which was higher than the national average, and Sudbury Sporting Memories and Abbeycroft Leisure Centre were putting on regular dementia friend sessions that were open to all in Sudbury. Additionally, for young people work was ongoing for providing transport for free school meal recipients in villages to attend Holiday Activity & Food events.
- 92.6 Councillor Daniel Potter referred to the housing section of the report and highlighted that engagement with tenants was being undertaken to identify necessary repairs and was streamlining the process of engagement with tenants.

The BDC Q3 Performance Report was noted.

93 BCA/23/45 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - CIL EXPENDITURE PROGRAMME MARCH 2024

- 93.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Planning to introduce the report.
- 93.2 Councillor Sallie Davies introduced the report and proposed the recommendations. Councillor Helen Davies seconded this motion.
- 93.3 Councillor Derek Davis questioned who the landowners were for the Brantham and Long Melford play area applications. The Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure responded that Babergh was the landowner for the Long Melford application and that the land would be transferred or leased to the parish council.
- 93.4 Councillor Derek Davis further questioned what the timescale for implementing the lease would be. The Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure responded that there was no current timescale however there would be a move to put it in place as soon as possible, and reasonable

timescales could be put in place in future.

- 93.5 Councillor Helen Davies queried how long leases were and what happened at the end of the lease. The Professional Lead – Key Sites and Infrastructure responded that leases were no shorter than 25 years so that communities could benefit from the investments and this timeframe had been set by the Joint Member Panel.
- 93.6 The Chair invited Councillor Malvisi to speak on the Long Melford bid as Ward Member.
- 93.7 In response to Councillor Malvisi’s statement the Director – Planning & Building Control responded that there was a risk that if too short a timeframe was put in place the CIL funding would have to come back to Cabinet for agreement and cause further delays. He suggested that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Assets and Investments liaise with the Assets team. Councillor Ward added that he would raise this outside of the meeting.
- 93.8 During the debate Councillor Derek Davis endorsed the importance for Parish Councils to make the best use of CIL from developments and it needed to be advertised to parishes what the benefits were.
- 93.9 Councillor Ward highlighted that there were substantial applications with good merit and the development in Long Melford and Sudbury were good developments that demonstrated what benefit to the community CIL could have.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1.1 That the CIL Expenditure Programme (March 2024) and accompanying Technical Assessments of the following CIL Bids (forming Appendices, A and B) be approved (including decisions on these CIL Bids for Cabinet to make/or note) as follows: -**

Decisions for Cabinet to approve: - Ringfenced Infrastructure Funds (Long Melford)

CIL Bid, Location and Infrastructure Proposed	Amount of CIL Bid and total cost of the infrastructure	Cabinet Decision
B23-12 LONG MELFORD Cordell Place Play Area	Amount of CIL Bid £97,437.31 Total cost of the project £129,946.26 (excluding VAT)	Recommendation to Cabinet to approve CIL Bid B23-12 for £97,437.31 from the Ringfenced

	Total of other funding	Infrastructure Fund
	£12,942.08 - S106 funding	
	£19,566.87 - Parish Council	

Decisions for Cabinet to approve: Local Infrastructure Fund

CIL Bid, Location and Infrastructure Proposed	Amount of CIL Bid and total cost of the infrastructure	Cabinet Decision
B21-07 SUDBURY Belle Vue Toilets/Changing Places Facility and improvements to car park/walls	Amount of CIL Bid £240,570.00 Total cost of the project £533,329.31 (eligible costs excluding VAT) Total of other funding BDC Council Reserves £292,759.31	Recommendation to Cabinet to approve CIL Bid B21-07 for £240,570.00 from the Local Infrastructure Fund

Delegated decisions for Cabinet to note: - Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund

CIL Bid, Location and Infrastructure Proposed	Amount of CIL Bid and total cost of the infrastructure	Cabinet Decision
B23-08 BRANTHAM Merriam Close Play Area Upgrade	Amount of CIL Bid £3,833.47 Total cost of the project £5,111.29 Total of other funding:- Parish Council £1,277.82	Recommendation to Cabinet to note this approved CIL Bid B23-08 by delegated decision for £3,833.47 from the Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund

- 1.2 Cabinet are also asked to note and endorse this CIL Expenditure Programme which includes the position in respect of approved CIL Bids from Rounds 1 to 11 inclusive (Appendix A Section B) together with details of emerging infrastructure /CIL Bids (Appendix A Section C).**

REASON FOR DECISION

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) monies have been collected since the implementation of CIL on the 11th April 2016. The CIL Expenditure Framework (originally adopted in April 2018) has been reviewed with amendments adopted by both Councils in March 2019, April 2020, March 2021, July 2022 (Mid Suffolk) October 2022 (Babergh) and in March 2023. The CIL Expenditure Framework requires the production of at least two CIL Expenditure Programmes for each District (per year) and contains decisions for Cabinet to make or note on CIL Bids for CIL expenditure. These decisions relating to the expenditure of CIL monies form one of the ways in which necessary infrastructure supporting growth is delivered.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

There is a diverse spectrum of approaches to CIL expenditure across the country from Unitary Authorities who have absorbed CIL into their individual Capital Programmes to others who ringfence all funds to be spent locally. A range of different approaches was identified in Appendix A of the Framework for CIL Expenditure report provided to Cabinet's on the 5th and 8th of February 2018 and discussed in full during the workshops with the Joint Member advisory panel. Members adopted the original Framework documents set out in paragraph 1.1 above by Council decision in April 2018. These were subsequently reviewed and adopted by both Councils on:-

- First Review - March 2019
- Second Review – April 2020
- Third Review – March 2021
- Fourth Review – 21st July 2022 (Mid Suffolk) and 6th October 2022 (Babergh)
- Fifth Review - March 2023
- Sixth Review – Occurred in Winter 2023; likely to be considered by both Councils in March 2024

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

94 **BCA/23/46 REFRESHED CARBON REDUCTION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

- 94.1 The Chair invited the Cabinet Member for Environment to introduce the report.
- 94.2 Councillor Daniel Potter proposed the recommendations as set out in the report. Councillor Helen Davies seconded this motion.
- 94.3 Councillor John Ward questioned what the timeframe was for switching public realm vehicles to electric vehicles. The Director – Operations and Climate Change responded that the changing of the waste fleet to electric vehicles was linked to the new depot and charging infrastructure. Additionally, due to the forthcoming implementation of the Government’s new Resource and Waste Strategy, new waste vehicles would be required in 2026 and there could be the opportunity for these to be electric vehicles.
- 94.4 Councillor John Ward further questioned whether there was any possibility of the introduction of electric vehicle charging at the existing depots. The Director – Operations and Climate Change responded that there may be capacity to change a small portion of the fleet to electric vehicles with modification to existing power supplies.

By a unanimous vote.

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1.1 That the contents of the refreshed Carbon Reduction Management Plan and accompanying narrative at Appendix A & B to the report be approved.**
- 1.2 The portfolio holder for the environment, in consultation with the director will develop a funding package to deliver on the priority actions for 24/25.**

REASON FOR DECISION

Following the declaration of a climate emergency on 25 July 2019, the council produced their first Carbon Management Action Plan.

A refresh of this plan is therefore prudent, particularly with a new administration and Corporate Plan to set new priorities and continue the roadmap to reach net zero by 2030.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Do nothing.

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None

The business of the meeting was concluded at 17:13pm.

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Chair

Agenda Item 8

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: BDC Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/23/48
FROM: Councillor David Busby, Leader of the Council	DATE OF MEETING: 09042024
OFFICER: Mark Emms, Director of Operations	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB474

CAR PARKING CHARGES AND ROAD TRAFFIC ORDERS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Babergh Council has an approved Parking Strategy for 2022-2042 and this report proposes the next action for the charging theme within this strategy.
- 1.2 Cabinet resolved 9th January 2024 that further engagement be carried out and then for transparency the intended full proposal to vary the existing charging arrangements be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their examination, before returning for a cabinet decision.
- 1.3 A petition not to change the current free parking arrangements provided in council operated parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham was debated by Council 20th February 2024 and voted in favour of being noted (17-12).
- 1.4 The full written report for cabinet was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and scrutinised on 18th March 2024, with 11 recommendations made by the committee to cabinet, and these have been duly considered by cabinet and the officer in amending this report, and separately by the Interim Monitoring Officer where applicable.
- 1.5 This report details the full estimated budget cost of providing the parking service, tariff options, income projections and covers amendments to parking orders required to position the Council better financially to deliver its agreed parking strategy, without relying on subsidy from outside of the parking service.
- 1.6 This proposal duly considers the consequences of maintaining the current local free 3-hour parking arrangements in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham and balances these against protecting other essential services for residents and communities, whilst meeting its sustainable travel and environmental objectives.
- 1.7 The proposal adopts a significant step towards full cost recovery to remove the current parking service subsidy from other council income sources, so that is the motorist who pays for the cost of parking provision, as opposed to all taxpayers including those who may not use the service.
- 1.8 The Council has budgeted a general revenue fund gap for the three years 2025/26 to 2027/28 of £6.7m in total, whilst it only has £2.4m of useable reserves available to fund this gap. An acceptance of the recommendations in this proposal will assist in part, but will not solve the whole budget challenge ahead and the council will still need to make further difficult service decisions.

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Outsourcing of car parks to an external private provider was considered and rejected by Cabinet 9th January 2024.
- 2.2 Not varying the charges was considered and rejected by Cabinet 9th January 2024.
- 2.3 A range of options have been considered from the engagement process and led to amendments being incorporated within this proposal;
- 2.4 Increasing the long stay all day parking tariff from the current £3 per day has been rejected and replaced by a proposed reduction to £2.50 for Tariff Option A and £2.70 for Tariff Option B. This is intended to support local residents of the district working in our towns and villages, and visitors who have travelled from further afield to spend the whole day in the location.
- 2.5 Outsourcing of car parks to a Community Interest Company comprised of the local Town and Parish Councils where car parks are located, has been considered and rejected. The primary funding model underpinning a CIC proposal would be the avoidance of paying business rates to fund a continuation of free parking. The Council can award discretionary rate relief where properties are occupied by organisations not established or conducted for profit whose main objectives are charitable or are otherwise philanthropic or religious or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts or premises occupied by organisations not established or conducted for profit and wholly or mainly used for purposes of recreation. 40% of the cost of awarding discretionary relief is borne by the Council, 10% Suffolk CC and 50% Central Government. It is not considered that a CIC for car parks meets any of these objectives. If it was to be considered, the Council would need to be aware of any precedent set. Regardless, the level of relief awarded would not be enough to maintain free parking, along with paying for cost increases, delivering the parking strategy, sustainable travel and environmental aims. Consideration would need to be given to breaking up the on street and off-street enforcement responsibilities and end to end parking system resulting in higher costs.
- 2.6 Different tariff options have been considered that would fall under the agreed general principle of a modest tariff scheme set at a level not to compete with neighbouring local authorities. Options including an initial free period have been ruled out as they will not get anywhere close to providing full cost recovery. With 98% of existing transactions being for less than 3 hours, offering up a free period directly and significantly reduces available income. A universal 1 hour free period has been modelled as initially reducing total income by full year £205,000 to £262,000 per annum. This is approximately one third of the total projected positive budget variance, and would make the delivery of parking and sustainable travel strategy aims unaffordable. Furthermore, free periods complicate off street enforcement, which can negatively impact on street enforcement productivity. The benchmarking showed that in Suffolk and Essex only East Suffolk Council offers 30 mins free parking in some selected car parks, and this could be subject to review.
- 2.7 Sunday and bank holiday charging have been considered as an option as this is commonplace in several of the benchmarked authorities. This new charging option has been rejected as approaching full cost recovery can be achieved without the need to introduce these charges.

- 2.8 It is not easy to separate residents parking from visitors and commuters as residents can also be both visitors and commuters to other locations. We are not proposing a tariff scheme which tries to make this distinction and any future offer of reduced rates or free parking to residents would need to be made universally across the district to be fair, unless the designation of a car park has been allocated for residents only.
- 2.9 Cashless payments have been considered as a default (the only payment type across all car parks) option and this would involve promotion of the digital payment mobile application or making payment via card at a machine. This option has been rejected as full cost recovery can be achieved without the need to do this. The government is developing a National Parking Platform aimed at giving parking users the ability to use their preferred app everywhere and driving down mobile application costs to local authorities and we are monitoring its progress closely.

3.	RECOMMENDATIONS
3.1	Tariff Option A Table 6.7 for short and long stay, hourly and daily parking charges, is implemented as soon as is practically possible.
3.2	Parking Permit (season ticket) changes in 6.24 - 6.27 are implemented as soon as is practically possible, the charges as already agreed under the annual fees and charges report.
3.3	Changes from Short Stay to Long Stay designations in 2 car parks as indicated in table 6.22 are implemented as soon as is practically possible.
3.4	Blue Badge Holders will continue to be allowed to park for free for up to 3 hours in any bay of all public car parks.
3.5	The current hours, days of the week and bank holidays where off-street restrictions apply are amended as per 6.15 as soon as is practically possible.
3.6	The Director of Operations and Parking Services Manager are delegated authority to put in place suitable refund arrangements with Abbeycroft Leisure for users of the Councils' Leisure Centres (Sudbury and Hadleigh) and agree arrangements with Roys Sudbury store to co-inside with new tariff introduction.
3.7	The Director of Operations and Parking Services Manager continue to engage with health, mobile health screening and village community centres which are accessed via or occasionally sited on council car parks, as to the feasibility and appropriateness of utilising the councils' virtual permits and enforcement in managing parking for their patients and visitors.
3.8	That delegated authority be given to the Director of Operations to make changes to the councils' off-street parking orders and put in place suitable resources to implement the recommendations in this report in compliance with all statutory obligations and law.
3.9	The Director of Operations and Parking Services Manager continue to engage with the councils where council car parks are located and any groups making representation, and carry out more detailed local survey work to bring forward

proposals to continue to improve parking as set out in the council's car parking strategy, which may include residents parking zones.

- 3.10 The Director for Operations and Parking Services Manager continues to consider how to enhance the councils offer for contactless, longer term parking permits, using intelligent parking control processes that benefit and offer value to residents.

REASON FOR DECISION

In order to deliver the approved parking strategy, move towards full cost recovery, remove the budget burden of subsidising parking, protect other essential services, transfer cost and choice to the parking service user and to be better funded to assist with meeting sustainable travel and environmental objectives, varying existing parking charges is proposed.

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Babergh Cabinet approved and published its long-term Parking Strategy for 2022-2042 in October 2022 and has since started to make changes to the service over the last year, including the introduction of online purchasing of digital permits to park, commencing the roll out of new car park signage, other minor quality enhancements and updating the council's car park website pages.
- 4.2 The approved strategy recognises a range of service themes including enforcement, technology, land use, sustainable transport, designation, quality, capacity and charges.
- 4.3 To progress more beneficial delivery of the approved strategy, significant funding is required and the strategy theme of varying charges now needs to be progressed from the current postponed position.
- 4.4 The parking service is subsidised by other non-parking derived income and this is neither fair to non-car users nor financially sustainable to the Council. Parking for the first 3 hours is currently free of charge (other than Pin Mill, Chelmondiston which is outside of this proposal) and is free all day in Lavenham, with tariffs being set lower than other local councils.
- 4.5 Whilst Babergh and its market towns and villages are truly unique in character, the challenges around on street and off-street parking management, to ensure that shoppers, visitors, residents, workers and commuters have access to sufficient, good quality, safe and welcoming car parking, are not unique ones within the parking sector and there are a range of established solutions.
- 4.6 There are already car parking enforcement challenges both on and off street, including nuisance parking, hopping from car park to car park and unenforceable restrictions. Charging over the first 3 hours will mean there are more parking restrictions that become enforceable, and this will lead to a connected increase in enforcement patrol hours. This will lead to some improvement both on and off street which will benefit residents and make it fairer for parking users who respect the rules.
- 4.7 Introducing a charge over the first 3 hours would lead to some (unknown quantity) worsening of existing or new nuisance parking in some (uncertain) areas. We have

allowed for resources to carry out resident parking surveys which could lead to the introduction of resident parking zones and/or further on street restrictions (signs and lines) to manage this existing problem (subject to available funding from the council and support of schemes by the county council).

- 4.8 Commercial retailers are adept at managing their own car parking when the need arises and we would expect they would put their own or vary their existing enforcement in place. Where Roys, Sudbury is concerned the Council leases the car park from the retailer and would work with Roys to put suitable arrangements in place to refund the cost of tickets to customers in store.
- 4.9 A summary of the specialist advice of Ethos (formally 2020 Highways and Transportation) Consultants in respect of charging contained within the councils approved Parking Strategy 2022-42 can be read in Appendix F. There are a range of advantages and disadvantages in varying charges which have been given balanced consideration thought this proposal.
- 4.10 It should be recognised that the base position of a £0.00 tariff for 3 hours parking is resulting in overall charges that are benchmarking significantly lower other local authorities and private car parking operators in the area. The council aspires to invest more into its market towns, but this is being hampered by the overall subsidy that is having to be made to the parking service. In making this proposal we have considered the balance between the significant value of the existing local offer to shoppers, visitors and workers, versus the modest cost of the proposed parking tariffs.

5. LINKS TO OUR PLAN FOR BABERGH

- 5.1 The Councils 'Our Plan for Babergh: A more resilient and sustainable future for Babergh (2023-2027)' has been adopted and there are clear opportunities and challenges which the annual delivery plan will be developed to address.
- 5.2 Those directly applicable to being met by this proposal appear under the Revitalised and Improved Environment theme and include tackling and mitigating the impacts of climate change, reducing council and district carbon emissions and promoting greener and healthier forms of travel.
- 5.3 It can be argued that the remaining opportunities and challenges all require funding to be achieved or mitigated. Whilst the financial benefits of this proposal would only contribute in part to solving the councils overall budget challenges, this proposal could indirectly contribute to delivery of any of these objectives, as the proposal will reduce the budget burden of subsidising parking services from other sources of Council income, which will in turn free up budget to used elsewhere.
- 5.4 Sustainability is a core theme in the Councils new plan. We need the Councils' finances to be both resilient in the short term and sustainable in the longer term. For the avoidance of any doubt it should be noted that the car parking services financial position is currently 'not' sustainable, nor resilient, but this proposal would contribute towards significantly improving this position.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Benchmarking Tariffs

- 6.1 The lack of local private parking operators leads to benchmarking comparisons being made against neighbouring local authorities. Of 29 local councils surveyed within Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire, Babergh is one of only 6 that do not charge for short stay parking and the only council in Suffolk and Essex that does not charge. In Suffolk and Essex, only East Suffolk Council offers 30 minutes of free parking in some selected locations (see Appendix A - Table 3 for details).
- 6.2 Appendix A Table 1 shows the tariffs available currently in Local Authority car parks in the main surrounding towns within a sub 30 mile driving distance. When considering this information, it should be noted some authorities may be in the process of increasing their own charges. Mileage distances between locations are shown in Table 2 and Map 1 shows the location area.
- 6.3 There is limited information available from other District Councils on local economic impact (positive and negative) from varying charging. On this area the parking strategy suggests that “the link between parking and prosperity is difficult to isolate from amongst all these other factors and there is not much quantitative evidence beyond the anecdotal” and the strategy further comments “Babergh tariffs offer the most value for money across all areas included within the benchmarking exercise”.
- 6.4 The strategy recommends carrying out regular parking charges benchmarking exercises with neighbouring local authorities and towns with similar characteristics to those within Babergh and to assess varying tariffs on a more regular basis, the frequency is suggested as biannually.
- 6.5 With the benchmarking in mind, we are proposing modest increases to our current tariff scheme, set at a generally lower level so as not to compete with neighbouring local authorities.

Tariff Options

- 6.6 Different tariff options have been considered, with initial free period tariffs being ruled out as they will not move far enough towards full cost recovery. With 98% of existing transactions being for less than 3 hours, offering up a free period directly and significantly reduces available income to fully recover costs (see rejected option 2.6). Free periods complicate off street enforcement, with time being wasted chasing no returns and users attempting to hop between car parks, which can negatively impact on street enforcement resource.
- 6.7 Two options have been proposed that would achieve full cost recovery and fall under the agreed general principle of a modest tariff scheme, set at a level to not compete with neighbouring local authorities.

Tariff Bands	Tariff Option A		Tariff Option B	
	Short Stay	Long Stay	Short Stay	Long Stay
Upto 1 hour	£1.00	n/a	£1.20	n/a

Upto 2 hours	£1.50	£1.00	£1.70	£1.20
Upto 3 hours	£2.00	£1.50	£2.20	£1.70
Upto 4 hours	£2.50	£2.00	£2.70	£2.20
All Day	n/a	£2.50	n/a	£2.70

- 6.8 The principle of a **single universal district wide tariff for short stay and for long stay**, with the same pricing in place based on car parking designation (short or long stay) as opposed to location is being proposed.
- 6.9 This universal principle has the benefit of being both equitable to all areas and car park users across the district, and being easier for car parking users to understand (especially where they are users of many different car parks). There is limited demonstratable difference in the purposes for which car parks are being used across the district to justify applying different charging tariffs by location.
- 6.10 **The proposed All Day Long Stay tariff band for both Option A and Option B is a reduction (£0.50 or £0.30 respectively) on the existing £3/day all day charge.**
- 6.11 This reduction is intended to support long stay users of car parks, especially local residents of the district working in our towns and villages, but additionally visitors who have travelled from further afield to spend the whole day in the location.
- 6.12 Long Stay tariffs have been deliberately set below short stay to encourage parking in these car parks, including start of day workers and free up spaces in short stay parking which will benefit users requiring spaces closer to shops and some other services.
- 6.13 Short stay has been increased from 3 hours to 4 hours maximum stay which will both benefit some users from a convenience perspective and allow for improved EV charging.

Restricted Periods

Monday to Saturday

- 6.14 Currently, the period in which the Short Stay free for 3 hours tariff applies in Sudbury, Hadleigh is between 08:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 and 12:00 on a Saturday. Long Stay restrictions apply 08:00 and 17:00 Monday to Saturday. The reason for the discrepancy between the two is not known.
- 6.15 It is proposed to harmonise the short and long stay restrictions to apply Monday to Saturday and extend the charging period to 18:00. These are the same times as West Suffolk and East Suffolk, and Mid Suffolk also charges until 18:00.
- 6.16 Having a charging period of Monday to Saturday 08:00 to 18:00 matches the standard on-street single yellow line 'no waiting' restrictions and makes enforcement of both on and off street more effective and easier to understand. Charging should be applicable all day on Saturdays otherwise there would be no need for an all-day tariff (as is currently the case).

Sundays & Bank Holidays

- 6.17 Charges apply on Sundays and Bank Holidays in West Suffolk, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Colchester, and Braintree. Although, outside of this proposal we already charge on Sundays and Bank Holidays at Pin Mill Car Park in Chelmondiston.
- 6.18 We are not proposing to extend charging to Sundays and Bank Holidays in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham.

Car Park Designations

Magdalen Road Car Park, Hadleigh

- 6.19 This car park is currently split into two sections. There are 79 spaces at the front of the car park that are designated short stay and 99 spaces towards the rear of the car park that are designated long stay. This system causes confusion for customers and requires excessive signage. Blue Badge holders who wish to park all day are forced to park at the back, making access more difficult.
- 6.20 We propose to designate the whole of this car park as long stay regardless of where customers park. We will allow all Blue Badge holders to park in the most accessible spaces at the front of the car park.

Great Eastern Road Car Park (Roys), Sudbury

- 6.21 This car park is currently designated short stay. It neighbours both Station Road Car Park (Kingfisher) and The Station Car Park, both of which are long stay. At present this does not cause an issue as a free 3-hour stay is available in all three car parks. We are proposing to introduce a higher tariff for short stay car parks because of their proximity to the immediate town centre. Due to its location, we propose to designate this car park to long stay to remain consistent with the surrounding car parks in the area and to provide a greater capacity for long stay parking in Sudbury.
- 6.22 This table shows the designations (including proposed) and spaces within the charged car parks in the locations covered in this proposal within the council.

Location	Car Parks	Designation (* denotes proposed change)	Spaces
Sudbury	Girling Street	Short Stay	62
	North Street	Short Stay	181
	Great Eastern Road (Roys)	Long Stay *	260
	Station Road (Kingfisher)	Long Stay	277
	The Station (Railway Station)	Long Stay	135
Hadleigh	High Street	Short Stay	49
	Magdalen Road	Long Stay *	152
	Maiden Way	Short Stay	6
	Toppesfield	Short Stay	18
	Stonehouse Road	Long Stay	45
Lavenham	Prentice Street	Long Stay	21

	Cock Horse Inn	Long Stay	78
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Season Tickets and Residents Permits

6.23 We currently offer Season Tickets in the following car parks;

- Magdalen Road Car Park, Hadleigh
- Station Road Car Park (Kingfisher), Sudbury
- The Station Car Park, Sudbury

6.24 Season Tickets are available to any member of the public to purchase to enable them to park without the need to purchase a daily stay in the car park. The price of Season Tickets was recently increased in the annual Fees and Charges review. The new prices have not yet been implemented as the Off-Street Parking Order requires updating to reflect the increase. It is proposed to implement the increase at the same time as updating new daily parking tariffs.

Season Ticket type	Current cost	Agreed fee (2024)	Fee Increase	* Average Discount / Permit
1 Month	£25	£30	20%	35%
3 Months	£70	£85	21%	38%
12 Months	£250	£300	20%	45%

*Average % Discount / Permit = pro rata of 46 weeks * 5 days * £2.50/day

6.25 Season ticket numbers are currently 281 per annum with an income of £24,035, with numbers predicted to rise if the proposal to vary the current free 3-hour tariff is accepted. The budget change is not easy to predict and the increase in charge is expected to be offset by the transfer from ad-hoc purchasing and is not anticipated as generating any overall material income gain that needs to be detailed at this stage.

6.26 Season tickets should continue to increase in line with inflation and the comparable local market rates but should also continue to be set at an attractive discount level to encourage uptake and offer good value over ad-hoc purchasing.

6.27 With the redesignation of some car parks (see 6.22) we would also propose to introduce Season Tickets in the following car parks:

- Great Eastern Road Car Park (Roys), Sudbury
- Cock Horse Inn Car Park, Lavenham
- Prentice Street Car Park, Lavenham
- Stonehouse Road Car Park, Hadleigh

Full Service Cost Assessment

6.28 The Council's general revenue budget net cost for parking services (Car Parks General and Civil Parking Enforcement), as published in the annual Budget Book 2023/24 is £353,000. The budget book represents the council's responsible budget

managers area of accounts and is not intended to show the full actual cost of the service. When corporate overhead recharges are included, this budget increases to £427,000. The breakdown of this is included in Appendix B and has been the basis of the 'approximately £425k' deficit figure used in communications reports prior to the O&S paper publication 18.03.24. Of this figure there are costs of £561,000 and income of £208,000.

- 6.29 When making an actual full cost assessment, consideration has been given to budget (in year and next year) and current forecast outturn. Where in year costs have been examined, it has been necessary to consider expenditure which has been delayed to reduce the overall in year budget overspend position of the Council, whilst this potential for varying charges has been considered.
- 6.30 The full cost assessment of the parking service includes estimates of retained and future business rates, resource inputs from other services (Assets, Public Realm, Sustainable Travel), underfunded capital replacement financing costs (lifecycle replacement maintenance, machines) and adequacy of general maintenance.
- 6.31 The breakdown of the full cost assessment for 2024/25, indexed by 5% for labour and 3% for Operational costs for estimated inflation to 2026/27 and the financial assumptions that have been made in making this assessment can be seen in Appendix C.
- 6.32 The actual full current forecasted expenditure of delivering the parking service has been assessed as £880,689 for 2024/25 rising to £1,024,127 by 2026-27.
- 6.33 With total income of £213,602 for 2024/25 increasing marginally (as is the current position on parking fees and charges) to £231,502 is netted off this, the actual full cost total subsidy of the parking service is estimated as being £667,096 for 2024/25 rising to £792,625 by 2026/27.
- 6.34 For the avoidance of doubt this full cost assessment does not include delivering the approved parking strategy (including addressing quality and capacity challenges) or investing in sustainable travel (beyond what external funding may become available through the process of application).

Budgeting of Tariff Option A and Option B

- 6.35 The proposed tariff options have been modelled and the results are shown by subjective spend category in Appendix C for the 3 years 2024/25 to 2026/27.
- 6.36 Under Tariff Option A the Babergh Council Budget Variance benefit is modelled as £395,754 for 2024/25 increasing to £725,374 by 2026/27 and the cumulative benefit over this period is modelled as £1.865m.
- 6.37 Under Tariff Option B the Babergh Council Budget Variance benefit is modelled as £445,933 for 2024/25 increasing to £833,521 by 2026/27 and the cumulative benefit over this period is modelled as £2.128m.

- 6.38 Not accepting either of Tariff Option A or B will result in a further budget pressure of £50,489 for 2025/26 rising to £75,054 in 2026/27 which will need to be met from reserves.
- 6.39 A prudent approach has been taken to option budget modelling. Income projections have been based on machine and mobile transaction data and assess risks, accounting for VAT payable and likely rebates. Options are based on a 6-month implementation period.
- 6.40 These modelling figures include a revenue cost allowance for £1m of capital borrowing over 7 years, subject to further business case approval and agreement to add into budgets, which would be invested in delivering the car parking strategy aims and enhancing sustainable travel options.
- 6.41 The full details of the financial assumptions which have been made in the modelling are listed in Appendix C.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Certain changes will require the council's off-street road traffic order to be updated. This is a statutory process which must be carried out in accordance with law. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, together with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulation 1996, set out the procedure the Council must follow. The Council is required to publish the proposed (updated) order in the car park and in the local press. The Council must also consult with the County Council (who must consent to the order) and other appropriate organisations including the Police. Cabinet must consider all representations received before making the order.
- 7.2 Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended by the Traffic Management Act 2004) does not stipulate how councils must account for and spend any surplus from off street income for car park charging.
- 7.3 For clarity the income this act refers to as needing to be ringfenced is on-street charging (but for the council there is none and this would be managed by Suffolk County Council if there was) and/or on/off-street enforcement charges (the Penalty Charge Notices). The Council's enforcement account runs at a deficit as the cost of the Service Level Agreements for enforcement with Ipswich Borough Council and West Suffolk Council exceed the PCN income. Therefore, the need for the council to ringfence is not required.
- 7.4 Any surplus income over expenditure in respect of off street car parking charging falls into the general fund. As a matter of general principle, a public body must exercise a statutory power for the purpose for which the power was conferred by Parliament and not for any unauthorised purpose. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 is not a revenue-raising or taxing statute and does not authorise local authorities to use their powers to charge increased parking charges with the purpose of raising surplus revenue for other purposes funded by the General Fund.
- 7.5 It is therefore reasonable for the Council to raise funds through off street car parking income, including budgeting for a surplus to manage fluctuation in costs over time,

with the aim of delivering its car parking, sustainable travel and environmental strategies.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 The Key corporate risk which the recommendation in this report could contribute to a reduction in likelihood is:

Key Risk Description	Likelihood	Impact	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference
Babergh District Council may fail to be financially sustainable	3	4	Continued monitoring and reporting of the Councils financial position including actual and reserves. Cabinet briefings to review position and budgets. Internal and external audits. Finance transformation project to review expenditure and income and balance future years budgets. Robust medium term financial strategy, shared integrated workforce with Mid Suffolk. Development of medium term financial strategy and creation of long term financial strategy.	Strategic Risk Register SRR08BDC

8.2 A significant risk the Council faces is not being financially sustainable if it does not adequately address budgets shortfalls in its medium-term financial plan. If accepted then under this proposal car parking charges could become a more significant council income line and contribute to reducing the likelihood of this risk.

8.3 Operationally, whilst being an infrequent occurrence, making the changes to the off street car parking orders are not considered to be of a significant risk. In fact they provide an opportunity to make minor amendments and layout changes to the orders that make them both more intelligible to the public and more enforceable by our enforcement partners. Whilst a project plan will be developed if this proposal is agreed, the income assumptions in the proposal allow for the assured delivery to the statutory process outlined in section 7.1.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 Building on the detailed district wide consultation questionnaire and roadshows carried out between August 2021 and June 2022 which have informed the council's approved car parking strategy, further targeted engagement specifically on varying charging has been carried out between 1st February and 3rd March 2024.

9.2 This has involved Sudbury, Hadleigh, Lavenham and all other Babergh Town and Parish Councils, District Councillors, and a number of recognised groups being

invited to complete an online survey to better inform the details of this proposal to vary existing tariffs and associated off-street road traffic orders. For Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham some local meetings and walk rounds have also taken place. The details of the engagement can be viewed in Appendix D.

9.3 As detailed consultation has already been carried out, this shorter piece of further engagement has been aimed at obtaining any additional local intelligence or recent changes that will minimise any unintended operational consequences of the proposed changes, with all submissions and evidence being considered.

9.4 The response rates for the different groups that have been surveyed are:

	Invitations	Number
Total responding to the survey	123	86
Town and Parish Councils	66	15
Individual Town and Parish Councillors		50
Babergh District Councillors	32	12
Other recognised groups and organisations	25	9
Other responses received via email		2
Individual Town and Parish Councillors		1
County Councillor		1

9.5 The survey addressed four themes, these being: parking tariffs, parking provision, on-street parking and sustainable transport. Some context for each theme was provided along with link to frequently asked questions. The full report in Appendix D contains more extensive detail from the engagement. Along with any mitigation included in this proposal, we would summarise as:

Question 1 - Parking tariffs

9.6 It is acknowledged that many of the respondents were not in favour of the council's proposals with 48% mentioning that the introduction of charges will be detrimental to the town's high streets, shops and businesses.

9.7 Requests to retain an element of free parking was mentioned by 20% of respondents and 17% mentioning requesting that the charges are kept low.

9.8 There are also concerns that increasing the charges will increase the demand for on-street parking and will have a negative impact for vulnerable residents, staff and volunteers.

9.9 Not all respondents are against the proposals with 9% mentioning that charging was necessary to cover costs and protect council services. 6% of respondents mentioned car park users should pay for parking facilities rather than all taxpayers subsidising free car parking.

9.10 We have benchmarked and researched the tariffs in operation in neighbouring districts. Our proposed tariffs are competitive when compared.

- 9.11 Short-term free parking periods are not without their difficulties. The current 3-hour free parking is often abused, with motorists obtaining multiple free stays to park longer than the maximum permitted stay or moving from car park to car park to gain long periods of free parking, adding to congestion and air pollution. Offering shorter periods of free parking will encourage visitors to stay for shorter periods of time. We want to encourage visitors to spend longer in our towns and villages by providing modest fees compared to other towns in the region.
- 9.12 7% of the respondents were concerned that the cost of enforcement and cash collection would exceed the income generated. All the car parks that feature in our proposals are already patrolled by the parking enforcement teams. The structure of our agreements with the enforcement teams will not change under these proposals so there will not be any increased costs.
- 9.13 At present, only 6% of the transactions in our car parks are conducted via our digital parking app provider. This is because our customers often choose to obtain a free ticket from the machines. With the introduction of charges, we predict that the percentage of customers that will use their phone to pay will increase to 30% and this will increase year on year, therefore minimising the impact of increased cash collections from machines.
- 9.14 Despite the growing popularity of paying by phone to park, we will be retaining ticket machines in the car parks so that there are facilities for those customers who prefer to pay by coins. This was a concern of 7% of the respondents.

Question 2 – Car park provision

- 9.15 24% of the respondents stated that the current car park provision in Babergh is good, adequate or fine however 9% reported that the facilities are insufficient or inadequate. 9% of respondents also had concerns about the need for better signage, bay markings, and general maintenance.
- 9.16 The Parking Strategy identified that investment is required in our car parks, and we are working to create an improvement plan. Any plan is fundamentally dependent on increasing income under this proposal to service borrowing costs to facilitate this plan. New and clear signage forms an integral part of our proposals and will be installed.

Question 3 – On-street parking and parking enforcement

- 9.17 22% of the respondents mentioned varying of parking charges will increase the demand for parking spaces on-street and therefore, greater on-street enforcement will be required. 6% of respondents mentioned that the current levels of enforcement are good but 16% said that more enforcement is needed or would be welcome.
- 9.18 We acknowledge that some motorists will choose to park on-street if charges are introduced. We are committed to ensuring that our car parks are well maintained, safe, convenient and with improved signage therefore being the preferred destination for many motorists.
- 9.19 The parking enforcement teams that patrol our car parks also enforce the on-street parking restrictions on behalf of Suffolk County Council. Our current car park arrangements are labour intensive with the enforcement officers having to spend

prolonged periods of time monitoring vehicles that are abusing the free parking periods. The introduction of simple parking tariffs will mean that more on-street enforcement will be possible. We will continue to work closely with the enforcement teams to identify areas where increased enforcement is required in the future.

- 9.20 We are aware that some schools already experience short term traffic congestion and nuisance parking Monday to Friday during term times at the beginning and end of the school day. It is envisaged improved enforcement resulting from this proposal may assist with this localised issue.
- 9.21 10% of the respondents raised the need to consider/prioritise parking for residents including the mention of residents permits.
- 9.22 Suffolk County Council are responsible for on-street parking restrictions including the introduction of residents parking permit schemes however we are committed to working with all stakeholders to seek solutions and helping where and when we can.

Question 4 – Sustainable travel

- 9.23 55% of respondents stated that public transport is limited and requires improvement. 24% stated that there is lack of safe cycle paths in the towns and 7% refer to a need for cycle parking facilities.
- 9.24 14% of respondents stated that increasing sustainable transport options is unlikely to get people out of their cars as the culture change required is too great or that public transport is unlikely to ever improve enough.
- 9.25 The Parking Strategy identified that parking tariffs can be an effective tool to encouraging motorists to make the modal shift from using a motor vehicle to using other sustainable transport options.
- 9.26 Section 15 of this report goes into greater detail about environmental implications and provides some sustainable transport options that we could consider implementing.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Initial Screening Form has been completed (See Appendix E). The overall result of this is that this proposal does not have the potential to have a negative impact on any grouping under any of the protected characteristics.
- 10.2 We are specifically aware that users with physical mobility disability, some elderly users, and some mothers during pregnancy can find it more difficult to navigate our car parks. The current blue badge designated bays for parking users with a disability will be maintained as free of charge for 3 hours, and on street parking availability also remains unchanged for these users under this proposal.
- 10.3 In some car parks it may be possible to improve the location of blue badge bays where they have previously been designated as both long and short stay in the same car park.

- 10.4 It is expected that better funding will lead to being able to improve quality of our car parks, including signage clarity, surfacing (providing level access), lighting and bay markings and this will benefit all users, irrespective of age.
- 10.5 By introducing clear short and long stay tariffs and redesignating the use of some car parks, we hope to marginally improve availability of spaces where they are required for short or long stay, and this will benefit all users.
- 10.6 By introducing clear short and long stay tariffs and redesignating the use of some car parks, we hope to marginally improve availability of spaces where they are required for short or long stay, and this will benefit all users.
- 10.7 The changes that are proposed are the same for all short and long stay car parks across the district, which is a fairer arrangement than is currently in place.
- 10.8 Whilst accepting the district is a largely rural setting, we do have some public transportation, comprehensive home delivery options (and many drop box options), free on-street and off-street parking and we have proposed a reduced cost for long stay all day parking.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Changing tariffs will influence some driver's parking behaviour and encourage some modal shift to sustainable forms of transport. The additional income generated will allow more sustainable travel progress to be made. The climate change budget has become depleted as encouraging progress has been made and the availability of further funds from within the council can make more external match funding opportunities feasible in this area.
- 11.2 Under the proposed varied tariffs there will be less car movements 'hopping' between car parks to obtain additional free parking after 3 hours and this will be more beneficial in Sudbury and to some lesser extent in Hadleigh. Clear car park designation and pricing differential between short and long stay parking will lead to improved availability of short stay spaces closer to shopping in Sudbury, this in turn could reduce cruising for spaces and lead to some modest associated air quality improvement.
- 11.3 Whilst it is not being claimed that parking charges might provide a panacea to our lack of public transport, additional funding could allow significant progress and kick start a range of sustainable transport initiatives and interventions. A pipeline of potential projects has been developed that could be implemented if funded, including, but not limited to;
- Installation of cycle parking where no provision exists currently
 - Install bicycle maintenance stands
 - Install e-bike charging facilities
 - Subsidised e-bike rental schemes
 - Investigation of e-cargo bike schemes
 - Providing higher capacity electric vehicle charging points in key locations
 - Investment into existing local passenger and community transport operations in order to enhance/extend provision, including digital on demand transport services
 - Supporting community zero emission shuttle busses

- Delivery of Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans schemes

- 11.4 The implementation of sustainable travel interventions such as these would support modal shift from car journeys to low carbon alternatives. This aims to reduce demand on car parking spaces and support Babergh District Council’s Sustainable Travel Vision and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. This, in turn supports the emerging corporate plan priorities and Carbon Reduction Management Plan.
- 11.5 Aside from the sustainable travel and low carbon transport benefits that would be enabled with these interventions, they also bring place-making value. More facilities for cyclists within Babergh’s town centres will demonstrate commitment to the ‘Cyclists are Welcome’ ethos. This is particularly relevant to Hadleigh and Lavenham, where Cycling UK’s Wolf Way is routed through the centre of the town/village, which – when paired with good quality parking and facilities for cyclists – encourages cyclists to stop and enjoy the visitor economy offer.
- 11.6 A zero-emission shuttle bus for the Sudbury and Hadleigh areas would enable sustainable commuting and provide passenger transport services for those wishing to access the town centre – bringing further economic benefits as well as reducing the issues currently faced around rural connectivity and isolation. The availability of additional funding would make a partnership project to deliver this more likely.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Benchmarking	Attached
(b) Base Budget 2023/24	Attached
(c) Full Cost Assessment and Budget Options	Attached
(d) Engagement Results	Attached (End)
(e) Summary of ETHOS Advice	Attached
(f) EIA Screening Form	Attached
(g) Location Maps	Attached
(h) Draft Minutes from the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 18 th March 2024	Attached

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 13.1 The Council’s Parking Strategy can be viewed on our website <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/parking-strategy>
- 13.2 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils A Vision for Sustainable Travel can be viewed on our website <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/asset-library-54706/babergh-mid-suffolks-vision-for-sustainable-travel-2022-1>

13.3 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan can be viewed on our website <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/sustainable-travel>

REPORT AUTHORS

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Jack Burton – Finance Business Partner

Katherine Davies – Sustainable Travel Officer

APPENDIX A

Table 1 benchmarking of charging periods and tariffs currently in operation in nearby Local Authority managed car parks.

Location	Charging period	Short stay tariff	Long stay tariff
Stowmarket, Suffolk	Monday – Saturday 8:30 – 18:00	2 hours £1.00 3 hours £2.00	2 hours £1.00 3 hours £1.50 4 hours £2.00 All day £2.50
Felixstowe, Suffolk	Every day 8:00 – 18:00	30 mins FREE 2 hours £1.50 4 hours £3.00	2 hours £1.50 4 hours £3.00 All day £4.00
Haverhill, Suffolk	Monday – Saturday 8:00 – 18:00	1 hours £0.50 3 hours £1.50	1 hour £0.50 3 hours £1.50 All day £2.50
Woodbridge, Suffolk	Every day 8:00 – 18:00	30 mins FREE 2 hours £1.00 4 hours £2.00	2 hours £1.00 4 hours £2.00 All day £4.00
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk	Monday – Saturday 8:00 – 18:00 Sundays 10:00 – 16:00	2 hours £3.00 3 hours £4.00	3 hours £3.00 All day £4.00
Ipswich, Suffolk	Every day 8:00 – 22:00	1 hour £1.50 2 hours £3.00 3 hours £4.50 4 hours £6.00 5 hours £7.50	1 hour £1.20 2 hours £2.40 3 hours £3.60 4 hours £4.80 5 hours £5.50 All day £6.20
Colchester. Essex	Every day 24 hours	30 mins £1.00 1 hour £2.10 2 hours £3.20 3 hours £3.90 4 hours £4.00 5 hours £6.50 12 hours £12.00 24 hours £16.50 18:00-24:00 £2.00	30 mins £1.00 1 hour £2.10 2 hours £3.20 3 hours £3.90 4 hours £4.00 5 hours £6.50 12 hours £12.00 24 hours £16.50
Braintree, Essex	Monday – Saturday 7:00 – 19:00 Sunday 8:30 – 17:00	1 hour £1.50 3 hours £2.80 6 hours £4.50 All day £7.00 Overnight £1.00	1 hour £1.50 3 hours £2.80 6 hours £4.50 All day £7.00 Overnight £1.50 Sunday £1.50
Halstead, Essex	Monday – Saturday 8:00 – 18:00	1.5 hours £1.00 3 hours £2.00 6 hours £3.00 All day £5.00	1.5 hours £1.00 3 hours £2.00 6 hours £3.00 All day £5.00

Table 2 - mileage distances between towns in the benchmarking table.

	Hadleigh	Sudbury	Lavenham
Stowmarket	14	19	13
Felixstowe	22	34	31
Haverhill	28	16	19
Woodbridge	22	34	31
Bury St Edmunds	21	17	12
Ipswich	10	21	19
Colchester	15	15	18
Braintree	27	16	22
Halstead	19	9	15

Map 1 - showing the towns features in the benchmarking table.



Table 3 - Local Authorities in East Anglia that offer free car parking.

Local Authority	Free parking available?
Suffolk	
Mid Suffolk District Council	No
West Suffolk Council	No
East Suffolk Council	30 minutes free in some short stay car parks
Ipswich Borough Council	No
Essex	
Colchester City Council	No
Tendring District Council	No
Braintree District Council	No

Uttlesford District Council	No
Chelmsford	No
Maldon District Council	No
Brentwood Borough Council	No
Basildon Borough Council	No
Rochford Borough Council	No
Southend On Sea City Council	No
Thurrock Council	No
Castle Point Borough Council	No
Cambridgeshire	
Cambridge City Council	No
South Cambridgeshire District Council	Unable to find any information on car parks
East Cambridgeshire District Council	Yes
Huntingdonshire District Council	No
Fenland District Council	Yes
Peterborough City Council	No
Norfolk	
Norwich City Council	No
Breckland District Council	Yes
South Norfolk District Council	First hour free
Broadland District Council	Yes
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Council	No
North Norfolk District Council	No
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	No

APPENDIX B

Babergh Car Parks

	<u>2023/24 Base Budget</u>
Babergh Car Parking	427,485
Employee Costs	39,947
Operational Costs	435,428
Car Parks General Repairs	3,000
C Parks General NNDR Payable	297,428
C Parks General Electricity	20,880
C Parks General Software licences	3,740
C Parks General Equipment, Tools & Materials	50,000
C Parks General Contracted Services	51,930
C Parks General Subscriptions	450
C Parks General Ticketing	8,000
Enforcement Costs	24,330
Civil Parking Enforcement Contributions to other Bodies	86,722
Civil Parking Enforcement General Fees & Charges	(62,392)
Corporate Overhead & Recharges	73,370
C Parks General Corporate Recharges In	73,370
Income	(145,590)
C Parks General Car park income	(112,100)
C Parks General C park permits/season tickets	(26,410)
C Parks General General Fees & Charges	(4,580)
C Parks General Legal/Prof Costs & Fees Rec'd	(2,500)

APPENDIX C

Car Parks General and Civil Parking Enforcement

Subjective Type	Subjective Code	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
		Budget Book	Full Cost Forecast	Full Cost Forecast	Full Cost Forecast	Option A Half Year Implement	Full Cost Option A	Full Cost Option A	Option B Half Year Implement	Full Cost Option B	Full Cost Option B
Employees	Direct Officer Employee Costs and Travel	40,764	84,990	89,156	93,530	91,040	142,606	115,500	91,040	142,606	115,500
Premises Expenses	Revenue Repairs, Business Rates & Utilities	258,308	313,771	340,890	371,150	353,029	361,311	390,277	353,029	361,311	390,277
Supplies & Services	Equipment, Merchant Fees and	130,602	135,060	142,685	148,734	200,667	268,755	276,398	206,518	281,628	289,658
Support Services	Corporate Overhead & Public Realm Costs	142,110	313,080	327,913	342,656	329,655	367,721	360,998	329,655	367,721	360,998
Capital Financing Costs	Capital Investment Costs to Revenue	0	33,797	38,443	68,058	33,797	53,887	181,884	33,797	53,887	181,884
Total Expenditure		571,784	880,698	939,087	1,024,127	1,008,188	1,194,280	1,325,057	1,014,040	1,207,153	1,338,316
Income	H9131 Car park income	(112,100)	(112,100)	(115,000)	(120,000)	(473,931)	(877,550)	(903,877)	(529,961)	(995,213)	(1,025,069)
Income	H9132 C park permits/season tickets	(30,530)	(30,530)	(30,530)	(30,530)	(30,530)	(30,530)	(32,057)	(30,530)	(30,530)	(32,057)
Income	H9161 General Fees & Charges	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)	(6,080)
Income	H9172 Legal/Prof Costs & Fees Rec'd	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)
Income	H9161 General Fees & Charges	(62,392)	(62,392)	(67,392)	(72,392)	(67,734)	(83,395)	(87,564)	(67,734)	(83,395)	(87,564)
Total Income		(213,602)	(213,602)	(221,502)	(231,502)	(580,775)	(1,000,055)	(1,032,077)	(636,805)	(1,117,718)	(1,153,270)
Total Subsidy (Amount adrift from full cost recovery)		358,182	667,096	717,585	792,625	427,413	194,225	292,979	377,234	89,435	185,046
Babergh Council Budget Variance		-	-	50,489	75,040	(395,754)	(744,731)	(725,374)	(445,933)	(849,521)	(833,307)
Babergh Council Budget Variance (Cumulative)					125,530			(1,865,859)			(2,128,761)

Assumptions

Employees

- Addition of Full Time Project Officer (fixed term two years) in Option A & B
- Share of non-parking services manager costs where applicable
- Assets Officer advice contribution
- Climate Change Team Officer time contribution

Premises

- Inspection and resurfacing (22 site programme), emergency repairs allowance
- Reactive response complaints such as potholes, safety and anti-social behaviour
- Control of repair costs as capital investment programme improved
- Strategy delivery and changes to parking orders
- Retained Business Rates (£8k) or 1.13% of whole Council rates bill, allowance for possible increase of up to 33% over three years
- Energy recalculated for all sites

Supplies and Services

- Low value revenue items such as stationery, cones, fencing, safety equipment, tickets
- Merchant fees (Mobile App, Contactless, Cash collection contract) will all increase based on increased payments
- Printed ticket cost reduced if no longer free tickets based on current mobile app uptake.
- Enforcement cost increases in line with Penalty Charge Notice increase based on new sites that are no longer free requiring higher demand of enforcement and travel not an increased effort to actively seek income.

Support Services

- Corporate Overhead factored by FTE as set in the budget; inclusion of all cross-service staff increases the allocation to Parking Services
- Public Realm costs included based on no change to the current service provided across car parks including sweeping, litter picking, bin emptying, hedges, gritting, gulley clearances and grass cutting

Capital Expenditure Shown as Financing Costs

- New machines and replacement programme
- Signage upgrades and replacement programme
- Improvements and enhancements to car park infrastructure
- Year 2 capital investment for strategy and sustainable travel subject to business case approval

Income

- Income is expressed net of VAT i.e. for every £1.00 paid for parking £0.83 is banked
- Rebates modelled to Leisure Centres and Roys
- Reductions over time based on reduced spaces for increased disabled space provision and Electric Vehicle Spaces
- Pin Mill is excluded from any tariff adjustment
- Electric Vehicle costs, investment and income is excluded from this model
- There is no increase or future tariff review included or inflated.
- There is a notional population growth increase of 5%.

APPENDIX D

See Engagement Report.



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Initial Screening Form

Screening determines whether the policy has any relevance for equality, ie is there any impact on one or more of the 9 protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

<p>1. Policy/service/function title</p>	<p>Proposal to vary car parking charges in Babergh Car Parks</p> <p>Parking Services</p>
<p>2. Lead officer (responsible for the policy/service/function)</p>	<p>Mark Emms (Director of Operations) Matt Smith (Parking Services Manager)</p>
<p>3. Is this a new or existing policy/service/function?</p>	<p>Variation of existing charges and parking orders within the existing service, with some charges being increased from £0 (free) in some locations.</p>
<p>4. What exactly is proposed? (Describe the policy/service/ function and the changes that are being planned?)</p>	<p>This is a proposal to vary car parking charges in Babergh Car Parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham.</p> <p>This involves varying the existing tariffs for both short stay and long stay car parks across the district.</p> <p>Parking permit prices are proposed to be increased.</p>

	<p>Some car park designations are proposed to be changed from short stay to long stay.</p> <p>The current hours where restrictions apply are proposed to be amended and become consistent Mon-Sat.</p> <p>Parking permits (season tickets) are proposed to become digital only, and it is proposed one car park will become cashless.</p>
<p>5. Why? (Give reasons why these changes are being introduced)</p>	<p>To fund delivery of the existing approved parking strategy, move the service to full cost recovery, remove the budget burden of subsidising parking, protect other essential services, transfer cost and choice to the parking service user, and be better funded to assist with meeting sustainable travel and environmental objectives.</p>
<p>6. How will it be implemented? (Describe the decision making process, timescales, process for implementation)</p>	<p>This proposal builds on the councils approved car parking strategy Parking Strategy - Babergh District Council - Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together which was subject to detailed district wide consultation questionnaire and roadshows carried out between August 2021 and June 2022.</p> <p>Cabinet on 9th January approved an engagement process with Town and Parish Councils, District Councillors and Recognised groups which has been carried out between 1st February and 3rd March 2024 and incorporated into the proposal.</p> <p>This proposal is going to Overview and Scrutiny for examination and comment 18th March and then subject to amendments this is planned to go to Cabinet 9th April for a decision.</p> <p>If the recommendations are approved then a project plan will be actioned which is expected to take 5-6 months to deliver, via a statutory consultation process (in accordance with the law) to update the councils off street road traffic order, and to also make signage and system/machine configuration changes.</p>

	<p>Any approved changes are not expected to be delivered before October 2024.</p>
<p>7. Is there potential for differential impact (negative or positive) on any of the protected characteristics?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No – whilst modest parking charges may not be universally supported by all users, varying charges and restrictions would have no negative impact over the current arrangements for any grouping.</p> <p>We are specifically aware that users with physical mobility disability, the elderly, and mothers during pregnancy, can find it more difficult to navigate our car parks.</p> <p>The current blue badge designated bays for parking users with a disability will be maintained as free of charge for 3 hours, and on street parking availability also remains unchanged for these users under this proposal.</p> <p>In some car parks it may be possible to improve the location of blue badge bays where they have previously been designated as both long and short stay in the same car park.</p> <p>It is expected that better funding will lead to being able to improve quality of our car parks, including signage, surfacing (providing level access), lighting and bay markings and this will benefit all users.</p> <p>By introducing clear short and long stay tariffs and redesignating the use of some car parks, we hope to marginally improve availability of spaces where they are required for short or long stay, and this will benefit all users.</p> <p>The changes that are proposed are the same for all short and long stay car parks across the district, which is a fairer arrangement than is currently in place.</p>

8. Is there the possibility of discriminating unlawfully , directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?	Yes No
9. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?	Yes No
10. Does the policy explicitly involve, or focus on a particular equalities group , i.e. because they have particular needs?	Yes No
<p>If the answers are 'no' to questions 7-10 then there is no need to proceed to a full impact assessment and this form should then be signed off as appropriate.</p> <p>If 'yes' then a full impact assessment must be completed.</p>	
Authors signature	Matt Smith
Date of completion	February 2024

Any queries concerning the completion of this form should be addressed to the Equality and Diversity Lead.

* Public sector duty does not apply to marriage and civil partnership.

APPENDIX F

The specialist advice of Ethos (formally 2020 Highways and Transportation) Consultants that was provided to inform the Cabinet approved Parking Strategy 2022-42 (<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/parking-strategy>) has (in summary) on charging advised and recommended:

- effectiveness of any variation to charges is constrained by the cost of parking in nearby towns that may compete for visitors

This has been taken into account in proposed Tariff Option A and B

- cost of parking is generally lower than all neighbouring areas and towns that have similar characteristics and it is unlikely that increasing parking charges would result in a significant reduction in footfall as there will be no cheaper alternative

This has been taken into account in proposed Tariff Option A and B and in considering anecdotal and independent survey responses, especially where no survey questions provided no context of council's overall budget position

- ensure there are no alternative parking operators that would benefit from variation to the councils parking tariffs, currently no alternative parking operators apart from those car parks for specific designations (i.e. supermarkets, where visitors tend to use these car parks only for that purpose)

The potential impact on supermarkets and bigger retailers from any parking which may be displaced and potential impact on modelled income has been considered in the proposal.

- for these reasons there is scope for parking charges to be increased within Babergh

Ethos provided independent research by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) for the Department for Transport (Table 3 overpage) in the strategy which summarises the key advantages and disadvantages of increasing or reducing parking tariffs.

In preparing this report it is accepted that there are both advantages and disadvantaged to varying parking charges, and that a balance has needed to be struck between these, which takes into account the context of the wider organisation wide budget challenges the council faces.

Increasing Charges	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Increases turnover of the most convenient parking spaces, improving consumer convenience, facilitating deliveries, and reducing cruising for parking (searching for an unoccupied space)	May discourage people from visiting the area and reduce economic viability
Reduces the number of spaces needed to meet demand, reducing the total parking costs and allowing more compact development	May reduce accessibility for less well-off users and prove politically and socially unpopular
Encourages long-stay parkers to use less convenient spaces, and encourages travellers (particularly commuters) to use alternative modes when possible	May not provide sufficient funds to facilitate delivery of viable alternative forms of travel
May reduce total vehicle traffic and therefore problems such as traffic congestion, accidents, energy consumption and pollution emissions	If poorly managed and implemented congestion, accidents, energy consumption and emissions could increase as a result of redirection of traffic into inappropriate alternative areas
Generates revenue; ensuring that users pay a greater share of municipal road and parking costs	Only if overall demand for parking is maintained and policy does not divert users to alternative locations
	May discourage people from visiting or returning to the area
	May shorten stays in the area
	May encourage 'searching' traffic which would increase congestion and air pollution, and possibly illegal or inappropriate parking
	May reduce the image of the region as a retail and leisure destination
Decreasing Charges	
Advantages	Disadvantages
Cheaper parking may boost demand for travel into the area, supporting economic activity	Cheaper parking may contribute to an overreliance upon car-based travel into the area and undermine efforts to support adoption of sustainable travel patterns
Decreased charges would likely be a popular move and would be socially easy to implement	Reduced tariffs may lead to reduced income to the Council to invest in wider transport infrastructure
	Reduced tariffs may boost demand for parking leading to issues with supply of parking spaces

Table 3 - Altering Parking Tariffs Key Advantages / Disadvantages

APPENDIX G



HADLEIGH Car Park locations and current tariffs

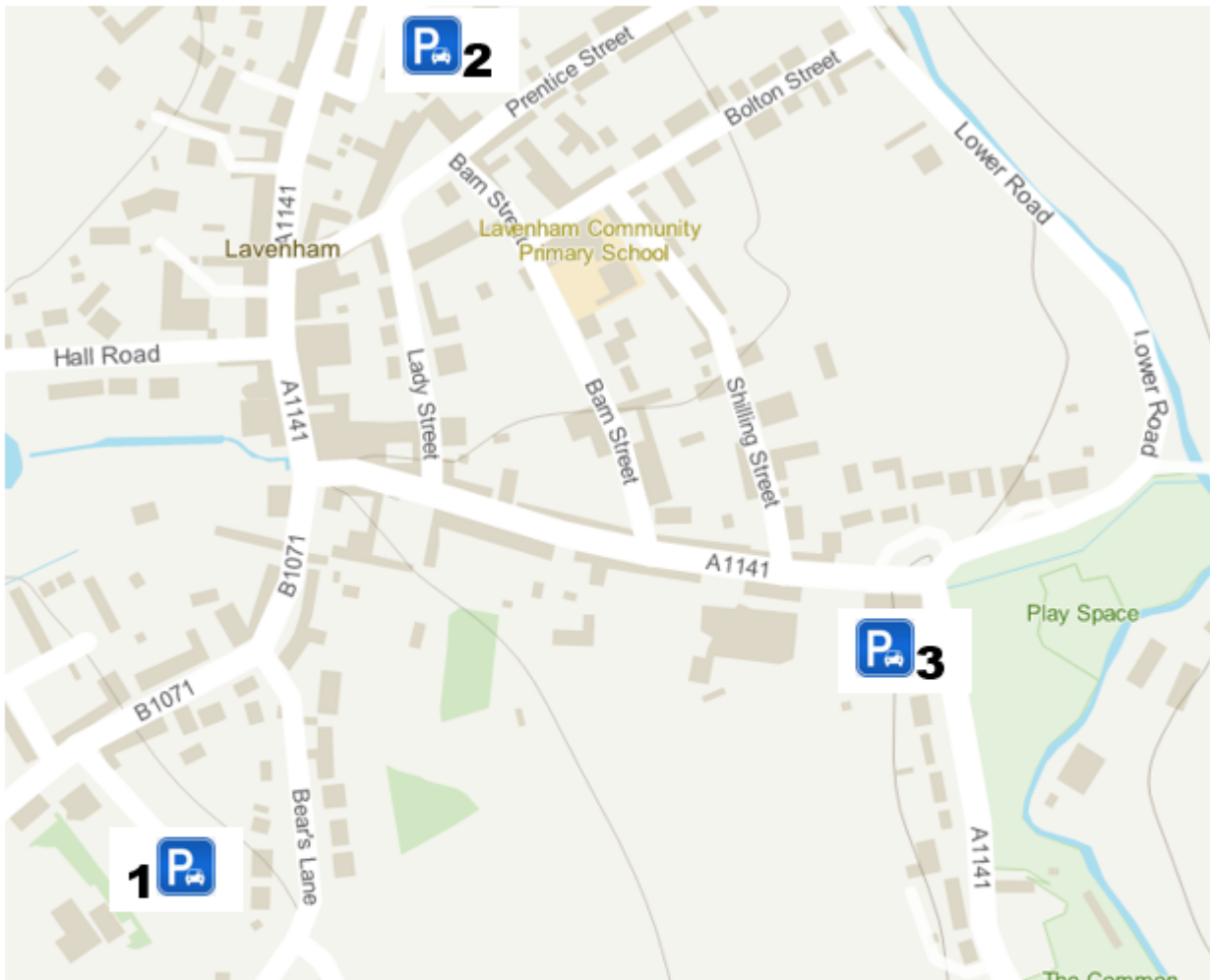
1 Magdalen Road Car Park – 3 hrs free. Over 3 hrs £3.00
3 High Street Car Park – 3hrs free
5 Stonehouse Road Car Park – free

2 Maiden Way Car Park – 3hrs free
4 Toppesfield Hall Car Park – 3 hrs free
6 Railway Walk North Car Park – [free](#)



SADBURY Car Park locations and current tariffs

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 North Street Car Park – 3 hrs free | 2 Girling Street Car Park – 3 hrs free |
| 3 Gt Eastern Road Car Park – 3 hrs free | 4 Station Road Car Park – 3 hrs free. Over 3 hrs £3.00 |
| 5 The Station Car Park – 3 hrs free. Over 3 hrs £3.00 | |



LAVENHAM Car park locations and current tariffs

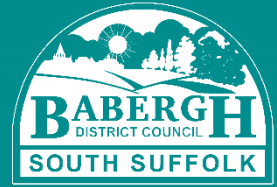
BABERGH OWNED CAR PARKS

1 Cock Inn Car Park – free

2 Prentice Street Car Park - free

TOWN COUNCIL CAR PARK

3 Water Street Car Park - This car park is owned by Lavenham Town Council but is covered by the Babergh Parking Places Order for enforcement purposes. The car park is free.



Babergh District Council Parking Charges Proposals Engagement Survey Feedback Report

Prepared by: BMSDC Strategic Policy

March 2024

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Background

Background

As part of Babergh District Council's proposals to vary parking charges in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham, an online engagement survey was conducted in early 2024 with town and parish councils, district councillors and selected recognised groups within the district.

The survey – which ran from 1st February until 3rd March 2024 – aimed to build on previous feedback captured from residents and other stakeholders as part of Babergh District Council's Parking Strategy consultation in 2022.

Feedback from the survey will be reflected in proposals to be examined by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee before going to Cabinet for a final decision.

This report provides a summary of the feedback received from survey respondents. The report has been prepared by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's Research and Insight Lead, on behalf of its Parking Services team.

About the proposals

Babergh District Council has brought forward proposals to vary parking charges in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham.

Subsidising the current three-hour free parking cost the Council approximately £425K in 2023/24, and that is set to rise further. The Council faces significant budget pressures in the next financial year and over the medium term and can no longer afford the subsidy if it is to continue delivering other essential services to residents and communities.

The proposal is to introduce modest, revised tariffs in council-run car parks which are as low as possible compared to other authorities, so as to continue to attract visitors, ensure shoppers and workers have access to the right spaces in the right places, and increase space turnover.

Further information outlining the background to the proposal, details of the engagement exercise, and answers to some frequently asked questions were hosted on Babergh District Council's website during the engagement period. A copy of this information is included in Appendix A.

Survey development, distribution and response

Survey development

The survey questions were developed by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's Parking Services team with support from its Strategic Policy team. It sought views on:

- the proposal to vary the tariffs in council-run car parks in Babergh;
- current car park provision and facilities in Babergh;
- on-street parking and parking enforcement; and
- sustainable transport.

Respondents also had the option to upload any supporting documentation.

A copy of the survey questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

Survey distribution

An invitation and reminder to complete the survey was sent to town and parish council clerks, district councillors and selected recognised groups via email. The number of recipients within each group is shown below.

Table 1: Survey distribution by respondent type

	n
Total survey invitations	123
Town and Parish Councils	66
Babergh District Councillors	32
Other recognised groups and organisations	25

Survey response

The survey was open for four and a half weeks between 1st February and 3rd March 2024, during which a total of 86 survey responses were received. In addition, two submissions were received via email. These have been included in the reporting in relation to Q1.

Although the survey was sent to town and parish council clerks to provide a response on behalf of their council as a whole, a number of responses were received from individual town and parish councillors. In total, representation was received from 35 Town and Parish Councils, either on behalf of the council as a whole or from one or more individual councillors.

A breakdown by respondent type is shown below.

Table 2: Survey response by respondent type

	n
Total responding to the survey	86
Town and Parish Councils	15
Individual Town and Parish Councillors	50
Babergh District Councillors	12
Other recognised groups and organisations	9
Other responses received via email	2
Individual Town and Parish Councillors	1
County Councillor	1

Analysis and reporting

Responses were thematically coded to enable responses to each question to be quantified. Data tables are included within this report for each question to show the number and percentage of comments by theme. Please note that some comments were coded under more than one theme, therefore percentages add up to more than 100%.

Illustrative quotes are included throughout the report.

Key findings

Key findings

Q1. Comments on the proposal to vary the tariffs in council-run car parks in Babergh

All respondents (88) commented on the proposal to vary the tariffs in council-run car parks in Babergh.¹

More than half (59) of the comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

The key concerns raised by respondents were that:

- The introduction of charges will be detrimental to the towns, high street, shops or businesses (42 mentions / 48%).
- Free parking represents an important benefit for households and certain groups (e.g. elderly and vulnerable residents, staff and volunteers) (15 mentions / 17%).
- Rural communities and/or lack of public transport means residents need to use cars/car parking to access shops/services/town centres (14 mentions / 16%).
- The introduction of charges will negatively impact on-street parking (12 mentions / 14%).
- The introduction of charges will negatively impact supermarket parking provision (6 mentions / 7%).
- The introduction of charges will negatively impact / deter users of Kingfisher Leisure Centre (5 mentions / 6%).

A number queried or challenged the basis of the proposal, stating that:

- There is a lack of information/clarity around the cost figures quoted / 425K figure is considered misleading (14 mentions / 16%).
- They do not agree with the rationale / running costs should not be seen as a subsidy / role of the council is to support residents and businesses (10 mentions / 11%).
- Savings should or could be found from elsewhere instead (9 mentions / 10%).
- There is a lack of information about the proposals (including level of the charges being proposed) (6 mentions / 7%).
- The cost of collection and/or parking enforcement is significant / enforcement costs could be greater than the funds collected (6 mentions / 7%).

Other respondents felt that:

- Charging is necessary to cover costs / offset financial pressures / protect other council services (8 mentions / 9%).
- Car park users should pay for parking facilities (rather than all council taxpayers) (5 mentions / 6%).

¹ Comments from the two responses received by email are included with the Q1 survey responses.

Respondents highlighted a range of conditions that they felt were important if tariffs were to be varied, including:

- Retaining a period of free parking (18 mentions / 20%), specifically:
 - at least 30 minutes of free parking (2 mentions / 2%)
 - at least 1 hour of free parking (13 mentions / 15%)
 - at least 1.5 hours of free parking (1 mention / 1%)
 - at least 2 hours of free parking (2 mentions / 2%)
- Ensuring that any charges are kept low / to a minimum (15 mentions / 17%).
- Ensuring that coin/cash payment facilities are retained (6 mentions / 7%).

Several respondents put forward alternative or additional proposals.

Q2. Comments on current car park provision and facilities in Babergh

Fifty-nine respondents (69%) provided a response about on-street parking and parking enforcement. Percentages are shown based on all 86 survey respondents.

Some comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

Respondents provided a range of views on the current car park provision and facilities, including that:

- Current car parking provision / level of parking is good/adequate/fine (21 mentions / 24%).
- Current car parking provision is insufficient / inadequate (8 mentions / 9%).
- Car parks could be better maintained (e.g. better signage, markings, general maintenance, ticket machines not working) (8 mentions / 9%).

Additional comments also reiterated views related to the proposal, including that car parking should be left free / arrangements kept as they are / 3 hours parking is good for local businesses (8 mentions / 9%).

Respondents also highlighted a range of parking-related issues or queries, including some specific comments related to the Parking Strategy. This included several detailed comments relating to parking provision in Lavenham; whilst not reported in full within this section – due to the length and detail of responses – they will be reviewed in detail by Babergh District Council's Parking Services team.

Q3. Comments regarding on-street parking and parking enforcement

Sixty-nine respondents (80%) provided a response about on-street parking and parking enforcement. Percentages are shown based on all 86 survey respondents.

Some comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

This included a number of responses about increased on-street parking and enforcement related to the proposal to vary parking tariffs, with respondents commenting that:

- Varying the charges will increase on-street parking / increase the need for on-street parking enforcement (19 mentions / 22%).
- Increasing enforcement will create/add to costs (10 mentions / 12%) or questioning the cost-benefit of enforcement (4 mentions / 5%).

Respondents also put forward views on on-street parking enforcement and restrictions more generally, including:

- That more enforcement is needed / would be welcomed (14 mentions / 16%).
- That more / better marked restrictions are needed (9 mentions / 10%).
- Positive comments about current levels of enforcement / enforcement generally (5 mentions / 6%).
- Mentions of on-pavement parking / need for enforcement (4 mentions / 5%).

The importance of access to on-street parking was also raised, including:

- The need to consider/prioritise parking for residents (including mention of resident permits) (9 mentions / 10%).
- The need to consider businesses / business deliveries (4 mentions / 5%) and the provision of on-street parking for Blue Badge users and residents with mobility issues (3 mentions / 3%).

Several respondents provided comments on specific local area issues.

Q4. Comments on sustainable transport

Seventy-two respondents (84%) provided a response about sustainable transport. Percentages are shown based on all 86 survey respondents.

Some comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

Comments highlighted several transport-related issues and opportunities, including:

- That public transport / bus travel is limited and/or needs improvement (47 mentions / 55%).
- A lack of cycle paths / need for more cycle paths and/or that cycling on the roads is too dangerous (21 mentions / 24%).²
- Improvements to pedestrian routes / lack of safe walking routes (10 mentions / 12%).
- A need for bike parking facilities (6 mentions / 7%).

A number of respondents (12 mentions / 14%) stated that increasing sustainable transport options is unlikely to get people out of their cars, the culture change required is too great or public transport unlikely to ever improve enough.

Supporting documents

Two respondents submitted supporting documentation alongside their response, detailing the results from two separate surveys of car park users, in Sudbury and Hadleigh. The findings from these surveys will be reviewed and considered by Babergh District Council in addition to the survey submissions.

² Each of these were mentioned by the following number of respondents, with 5 respondents mentioning both: A lack of cycle paths / need for more cycle paths (15 mentions / 17%); Cycling on the roads is too dangerous (11 mentions / 13%).

Full results

Question 1: Parking tariffs

Q1. PARKING TARIFFS

The Council is proposing to vary the tariffs in our car parks to help tackle the financial deficit that we are facing to lessen the cuts or savings we will have to make to other services. At present, the free parking that is provided in our car parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham is subsidised by all council tax payers in the district.

We are committed to ensure that the charges that would be introduced would remain as low as possible and are in line with towns and villages of a similar size across the East Anglian region.

What comments would you like to make regarding this proposal?

All respondents (88) commented on the proposal to vary the tariffs in council-run car parks in Babergh.³ More than half (59) of the comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

The key concerns raised by respondents were that:

- The introduction of charges will be detrimental to the towns, high street, shops or businesses (42 mentions / 48%).
- Free parking represents an important benefit for households and certain groups (e.g. elderly and vulnerable residents, staff and volunteers) (15 mentions / 17%).
- Rural communities and/or lack of public transport means residents need to use cars/car parking to access shops/services/town centres (14 mentions / 16%).
- The introduction of charges will negatively impact on-street parking (12 mentions / 14%).
- The introduction of charges will negatively impact supermarket parking provision (6 mentions / 7%).
- The introduction of charges will negatively impact / deter users of Kingfisher Leisure Centre (5 mentions / 6%).

A number queried or challenged the basis of the proposal, stating that:

- There is a lack of information/clarity around the cost figures quoted / 425K figure is considered misleading (14 mentions / 16%).
- They do not agree with the rationale / running costs should not be seen as a subsidy / role of the council is to support residents and businesses (10 mentions / 11%).
- Savings should or could be found from elsewhere instead (9 mentions / 10%).
- There is a lack of information about the proposals (including level of the charges being proposed) (6 mentions / 7%).

³ Comments from the two responses received by email are included with the Q1 survey responses.

- The cost of collection and/or parking enforcement is significant / enforcement costs could be greater than the funds collected (6 mentions / 7%).

Other respondents felt that:

- Charging is necessary to cover costs / offset financial pressures / protect other council services (8 mentions / 9%).
- Car park users should pay for parking facilities (rather than all council taxpayers) (5 mentions / 6%).

Respondents highlighted a range of conditions that they felt were important if tariffs were to be varied, including:

- Retaining a period of free parking (18 mentions / 20%), specifically:
 - at least 30 minutes of free parking (2 mentions / 2%)
 - at least 1 hour of free parking (13 mentions / 15%)
 - at least 1.5 hours of free parking (1 mention / 1%)
 - at least 2 hours of free parking (2 mentions / 2%)
- Ensuring that any charges are kept low / to a minimum (15 mentions / 17%).
- Ensuring that coin/cash payment facilities are retained (6 mentions / 7%).

Several respondents put forward alternative or additional proposals.

Table 3 displays the full range of responses received to this question, coded by theme.

The remainder of this section includes illustrative quotes related to the most frequently mentioned themes.

Table 3: Q1. Parking tariffs – coded responses

	Count	%
Key concerns		
Introduction of charges will be detrimental to the towns/high street/shops/businesses	42	48%
Free parking represents an important benefit for households and certain groups (e.g. elderly and vulnerable residents, staff and volunteers)	15	17%
Rural communities and/or lack of public transport means residents need to use cars/car parking to access shops/services/town centres	14	16%
Introduction of charges will negatively impact on-street parking	12	14%
Introduction of charges will negatively impact supermarket parking provision	6	7%
Introduction of charges will negatively impact / deter users of Kingfisher Leisure Centre	5	6%
Costs unlikely to remain low / there is a risk/likelihood they will increase following introduction	4	5%
On-street parking restrictions are not currently enforced / needs to be more enforcement	3	3%
Queries and challenges around the basis of the proposal		
Lack of information/clarity around the cost figures quoted / 425K figure is misleading	14	16%
Do not agree with the rationale / running costs should not be seen as a subsidy / role of the council is to support residents and businesses	10	11%
Savings or funding should/could be found from elsewhere instead	9	10%
Lack of information about the proposals (including level of the charges being proposed)	6	7%
Cost of collection and/or parking enforcement is significant / enforcement costs could be greater than the funds collected	6	7%
Query around whether an impact study has been carried out	4	5%
Query / comment about the potential impact on (reduced) business rates received by BDC	3	3%
Revenue won't be spent on better public transport / no proposals in place to improve public transport	2	2%
Rationale for varying the charges		
Charging is necessary to cover costs / offset financial pressures / protect other council services	8	9%
Car park users should pay for parking facilities (rather than all council tax payers)	5	6%
Other councils/towns charge for car parking	4	5%
Question around whether councils should be incentivising car travel over environmental and active travel aims	2	2%

	Count	%
Key considerations		
Retain a period of free parking	18	20%
<i>Retain at least 30 minutes free parking</i>	2	2%
<i>Retain at least 1 hour free parking</i>	13	15%
<i>Retain at least 1.5 hours free parking</i>	1	1%
<i>Retain at least 2 hours free parking</i>	2	2%
Charges should be kept low / to a minimum	15	17%
Ensure that coin/cash payment facilities are retained	6	7%
Expectation that car parks will be well-maintained if charges are varied	2	2%
Need additional bus services / revenue should be invested in public and/or active transport	2	2%
Alternative or additional proposal(s) suggested	8	9%
Other comments		
Public/businesses are against this	6	7%
Other generally supportive comment	5	6%
Other generally unsupportive comment	4	5%
Other comment	9	10%
TOTAL	88	

NOTE: some comments were coded under multiple themes, therefore percentages add up to more than 100%.

Key concerns

The introduction of charges will be detrimental to the towns, high street, shops or businesses (42 mentions / 48%)

“Sudbury Town Council is shocked by the proposal to increase parking charges in Sudbury and the other towns and villages. The Town Council met on 2 January 2024 and unanimously resolved that the retention of 3-hours free parking in Sudbury is vital to sustain the local economy and is non-negotiable.”

Together, Hadleigh and Sudbury comprise the economic heart of Babergh District with a third of Babergh residents living within 5 miles of the town centre businesses. Parking charges are not just an issue for the people who live in these towns, but also for all those travelling in from the surrounding villages and rural parishes. The current 3-hours free parking encourages longer stays and unplanned spending in our towns. Our towns’ increasing experience economy (restaurants, cafes, hairdressers, beauty treatments, nail bars, etc) relies on extended dwell time. This is only possible if they are not worried about exceeding their parking time limit and the current 3 hours free parking allows reasonable time for this style of visit. Any reduction in free parking will damage business confidence and make the recovery from the current economic crisis all the more difficult. For many families there is no realistic alternative to using a car to visit town and this will only increase their costs and discourages visits. This is not the right time to gamble with our future.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“I am very concerned at the risk to services in the event that parking charges are not implemented. However I do feel that Sudbury is not yet ready to take the removal of parking charges. Sudbury has a lot more to offer than free parking but needs more time to build on its shopping and visitor experience.”

(Other group/organisation)

“I strongly feel that now is not the right time to be bringing in these proposals. Our market towns are slowly recovering from the devastating effects of Covid, having been out in Sudbury gathering car park users views on the subject the majority of respondents said that parking charges would mean they would either shop elsewhere, cut down on the amount of times they visited or limit the amount of time they spent in the town centre. This in my view would put the many independent businesses in Sudbury at risk of closure which will not benefit any area of Babergh.”

(District Councillor)

“Concerned this will drive people out of the towns and villages to larger shopping sites where parking is free. I believe all locals are passionate about supporting small shops and businesses and especially the market in Sudbury on Thursdays and Saturdays. If parking charges are introduced, I fear this might be to the detriment of these businesses.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“A substantial majority of respondents to our survey believe that varying parking charges will have a negative effect on trade in the town centre and on the town in general. Several mentioned that on-street parking is likely to rise as people seek to avoid paying a fee. While the unusual benefit of free parking for up to three hours is appreciated, the prevailing view is that this is a key factor in making Hadleigh a desirable destination for visitors travelling from beyond the immediate location. We found a substantial number of visitors who choose to travel at least five miles because they see Hadleigh as attractive, at least in part because they can park for free.”

(District Councillor)

“We cannot be convinced that the varying of parking charges will not have a detrimental impact on the high street businesses - we only have to look at Ipswich town centre. The lack of affordable parking and the removal of numerous free parking spaces will have contributed to the demise of the town centre.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“...[The] removal of free parking will have a direct impact on the level of support Hadleigh high street currently enjoys, and that like so many other town centres that have become deserted due to lack of footfall, that this will ultimately have a bigger (and negative) impact on the economy than the savings made by introducing parking fees.”

(Other group/organisation)

“Cabinet are prepared to risk the economy of are two Market Towns at a time we are suffering a cost of living crisis and have entered a recession, you have not carried out a study or produced any evidence to back up your claim that changing tariffs will have no effect. Markets in our two Towns are essential not only from an economic point of view but also from a community and health and wellbeing point of view they are places where communities can meet, especially the elderly, we must protect them not destroy them, Market Traders are hanging on and fear any change in tariffs will be the final straw for them.”

(District Councillor)

“Free parking in our active towns has always been enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. Both these groups must be assumed to spend money in the towns. If we are to preserve our towns then maintenance footfall must be maintained. Increased business rates have already driven many retail outlets from our towns.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Free parking represents an important benefit for households and certain groups (e.g. elderly and vulnerable residents, staff and volunteers) (15 mentions / 17%)

"I am totally against this proposal. Free parking in these towns and villages are a must in this time of financial pressure on households."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

"BDC also seem at risk of forgetting they serve an above average number of elderly residents. How many of those using the free car parks are elderly, who have made use of the chance to spend what could have been parking money on a coffee with friends in a small local business? With pensions under growing strain with the cost of living, how many could afford both parking and coffee? How many would then become isolated, and potentially increase demand on adult social care? Perhaps the £421k cost is a cheaper alternative to that scenario."

(Town/Parish Council)

"Great Cornard is the second largest ward in Babergh but it is mostly housing with very few amenities meaning residents have no choice but to go into Sudbury for most of their needs. It is too far out to be a comfortable walking distance for most people, especially if you factor in bags of shopping, children or health issues. Our bus services have been decimated over the last 10 years, the few buses we still have are notoriously unreliable. Many parts of Great Cornard are deprived areas, this will be an unfair tax on some of our poorest residents."

(District Councillor)

"At Lavenham, the main public car park is shared with the Long Melford Doctors surgery, Public Library, Village Hall, Play School, Recycling area, Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and used by visitors to the church, pub etc. It would be unreasonable to charge patients/clients of the Doctors surgery parking area and difficult to prevent anyone else from using this parking area if parking in the remainder of the car park required payment."

(Town/Parish Council)

"The main employers in Lavenham are retail and catering. Both sectors are characterised by minimum wage and slightly above minimum wage levels. These employers are unable to hire staff from within the village (by observation a sizeable proportion of Lavenham is aged over 65) and so there is a considerable amount of commuting to Lavenham by those who are not highly paid. The imposition of car parking charges on these employees will either significantly raise costs for local businesses or significantly reduce the take-home pay of their employees. There is therefore real possibility that some businesses may cease trading."

(Town/Parish Council)

“Although we run a bus collection/delivery scheme, we do have service users (adults with learning and physical disabilities) that arrive by car as some are from outlying villages and come with a 1-2-1 carer. We would like you to ensure that this is taken into consideration when setting any parking charges... Not all are entitled to a blue badge.”

(Other group/organisation)

“We do not feel that our visitor numbers will drop significantly if charges are introduced. Our biggest concerns will be for staff who are already paying £3 per day to park - any uplift in this will cause financial anxiety and also for our volunteers on whom we rely on heavily. Currently we have volunteers that will be onsite for 2.5 hours as they can park for free for 3 hrs. If they have to pay then we will no doubt see a reduction in volunteer hours which could be very detrimental to our organisation and to the wellbeing of those volunteers, some of whom use volunteering as a way of coping with grief etc. If there could be consideration given to this (perhaps some sort of annual, monthly, weekly, daily season tickets available) it would be appreciated.”

(Other group/organisation)

Rural communities and/or lack of public transport means residents need to use cars/car parking to access shops/services/town centres (14 mentions / 16%)

“The current free parking with restricted time is an attraction when deciding where to shop or do business. Sudbury and Hadleigh are a greater attraction than Colchester or Ipswich. The declining public bus service with few return journeys each day mean that car transport is still paramount.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Many businesses depend on the villages around the towns for income. People come in to town to browse such shops as are left, and in many cases to stop for coffee, and sometimes lunch. One has to drive; many of these people are retired and have no alternative transport, they cannot cycle, and public transport is almost useless these days.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Whilst the desire to improve sustainable transport is to be commended, BDC seem to forget the fact that these towns support very rural communities. Walking is not an option. Cycling is not an option for most. And many villages do not have a bus service at all, let alone to these towns.”

(Town/Parish Council)

The introduction of charges will negatively impact on-street parking (12 mentions / 14%)

“It would also encourage other drivers to drive about looking for a free roadside space and clutter the streets beyond the town centre, increasing pollution and road safety hazards”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Every time parking charges are introduced, cars will be parked all around the town in narrow streets, outside people’s houses, on corners even, and exacerbating the all day parking such as around the Croft area and at the end of Quay Lane. Public wanting to use the Quay, the Jetty etc often have trouble finding a parking space due to all day parkers who won’t pay in a car park.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“The impact of charging is likely to be particularly significant in Lavenham where the close mix of houses and commercial premises in the centre, many dwellings without parking, could, particularly in the tourist season, lead to difficult on-street problems unless sensitively managed.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Although I fully understand the need to introduce parking fees from a financial justification, I am very concerned that if this is done to a rural car park in a very small village that it will merely encourage people to park in the high street and there is nothing to prevent this at the moment. We need to encourage locals to regularly use the car park, not to deter them. So unless some regulation is introduced to prevent people parking in the main street, then I am against introducing any fee for use of the car park.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Introduction of charges will negatively impact supermarket parking provision (6 mentions / 7%)

“If charges are introduced I foresee people leaving their cars in Morrison’s / Q.D. car park and walking to the High Street which will lead to the overcrowding of their car park. This in turn may lead to the imposition of time limits in their car parks but as this is difficult to monitor it is likely that only extreme cases would be penalised.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Removal of free parking in the surrounding car parks may cause more people to park in the Waitrose free car park, and we are concerned that less-mobile residents may need to park further away. Parking charges may also increase the number of visitors using Aldi car park, potentially causing a queue of traffic on the main road leading to its car park.”

(Town/Parish Council)

Introduction of charges will negatively impact / deter users of Kingfisher Leisure Centre (5 mentions / 6%)

“In the event that this proposal goes ahead I would ask that the 3 free hour parking is retained in the Kingfisher car park for those using this facility as this is key to people's health and well being and in some cases their actual survival.”

(Other group/organisation)

“Kingfisher Leisure Centre is the closest leisure centre facility... Removal of free parking would increase the cost of visiting the Kingfisher Leisure Centre, which would have impacts on the health and well-being of... residents of all ages.”

(Town/Parish Council)

Queries and challenges around the basis of the proposal

There is a lack of information/clarity around the cost figures quoted / 425K figure is considered misleading (14 mentions / 16%)

“Thus far there has been insufficient information justifying the claims that subsidised parking costs £425K and rising.

I am sympathetic to the notion that introducing a short term charging regime might help the Council meet its obligation to deliver a balanced budget but the lack of explanation around the make up of current costs to Councillors outside of Cabinet means I cannot easily evidence the compunction to introduce charging.”

(District Councillor)

“The apparent costs of £425k include rates, a portion of which are retained by Babergh. It is misleading in the extreme to include this in the running costs and causes people to be highly sceptical of the justification if you cannot present the reason for the charges in a transparent way.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“I feel if they start to charge it WILL affect the shops and what I want to know is why hasn't Babergh Council been more transparent about how much the carparks cost to run, instead they have just made up a figure as an overall price.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“...I appreciate the cost increases all round but I do not believe these carparks cost £440,000 per year to run... I need the evidence of these car park costings as this figure makes no sense to me at all...”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Do not agree with the rationale / running costs should not be seen as a subsidy / role of the council is to support residents and businesses (10 mentions / 11%)

“You say that introducing these parking charges would mean the cost burden is removed from those in the district that don't use the car parks. To us that is completely at odds with one of the purposes of a Council. We pay our Council Tax knowing that it goes into services we don't all use, such as social housing, education and adult social care. Will you be taking the same stance with those services to reduce the burden of them? We think not.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“The support of the custom of car owners to town shops benefits non - car owners, who have the ability to do business in those shops. If those shops close due to lack of custom, this will of course be to the detriment of town dwellers. Within that context the argument, that free car parking is “subsidised” by all council tax payers, fails.”

(Town/Parish Council)

The council says that parking is subsidised to the tune of £425k this year and is increasing YoY. Instead of looking at this as a subsidy, they should look at it as a cost of doing business. The free parking encourages people to come to the towns and spend money in the shops, which allows the council to charge the shops rates, some of which is income to the council. Has the council modelled the consequential impact on implementing parking charges on the long-term impact to the shops? Are there any other councils where this change has been made and if so what was the impact?

(Town/Parish Council)

“Whilst it is true that free car parking is subsidised by all council tax payers it must be recognised that in Babergh 88% of households have a car (Census 2021) and therefore the subsidy from those who do not own a car is less than in many other areas. Any suggestion that lower income groups are subsidising more affluent car owners is hard to make. The situation is not as is in more urban areas. The bus service is extremely limited and does not serve some smaller villages at all. Reliance on public transport is therefore difficult or impossible. In our view this point is weak.”

(Town/Parish Council)

Savings should or could be found from elsewhere instead (9 mentions / 10%)

“I believe the current free parking should be maintained to help encourage shoppers into the towns concerned. If you want to save money, cut the wages and pension contributions of your Senior Leadership Team.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

The other option of NOT charging and determining what services should be cut does not seem to have been explored or certainly hasn't been determined.

(District Councillor)

“Rates are going up so use money from that.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Lack of information about the proposals (including level of the charges being proposed) (6 mentions / 7%)

“We are OPPOSED to any variation in parking arrangements until a specific proposal is put before us and we would expect that to be consistent with Babergh's Parking Strategy published in 2022.

In order to examine any emergent proposal and the full extent of the underlying reasons for it, we would welcome the proposal being supported by detailed analysis of the financial and economic case, the proposed tariff collection system and the enforcement arrangements.”

(Other group/organisation)

“No clear proposal on parking charges, free parking times, review mechanism, cost of enforcement and overall cost/benefit analysis... Difficult to make constructive comments with so little information.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“We would like to know what the specific recommendations regarding charging will be in order to better assess the impact on [our] residents. We would welcome another consultation period with an opportunity to feed back on specific suggestions.

(Town/Parish Council)

The cost of collection and/or parking enforcement is significant / enforcement costs could be greater than the funds collected (6 mentions / 7%)

“Implementing parking charges is not a simple matter of turning on the meters. It will require people to monitor the cars and issue tickets. This a team of people to be employed and managed with all the consequential costs of that. In addition, fines for nonpayment of a tickets will have to be issued and collected and nonpayment of those dealt with. Has the council considered all of those costs in the financial modelling and, if so, can we see the model, please?”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“I oppose the imposition of charges and question the statement that you will keep it as low as possible as you may find the costs of collection are greater than anticipated and charges will be revised upwards.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Rationale for varying the charges

Charging is necessary to cover costs / offset financial pressures / protect other council services (8 mentions / 9%)

"I believe small and reasonable charges, seen in almost every town, would be a fair way of covering the costs of this service."

(District Councillor)

"I am in agreement with this proposal. It is necessary to help balance future budgets and prevent the council getting into substantial and damaging financial difficulties."

(District Councillor)

"Beachside parks, parking in Ipswich, football parking and even hospitals charge for parking regardless of how little time one spends there."

I appreciate that these views will be very unpopular with the vast majority of people but there is already a pay system in place for longer term parking and it would be irresponsible for B.D.C. to forego the potential income from short term parking particularly when it is costing so much to subsidise."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Car park users should pay for parking facilities (rather than all council taxpayers) (5 mentions / 6%)

"Should householders who do not own cars or people who don't use such car parks be subsidising (via their council tax) three-hour free car parking in Hadleigh?"

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

"Car parking and roads use a disproportionate amount of public space when compared to their benefit to the public and those that contribute to their upkeep. Car park users should make a contribution to this benefit they receive."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Key considerations

Retaining a period of free parking (18 mentions / 20%), specifically:

- At least 30 minutes of free parking (2 mentions / 2%)
- At least 1 hour of free parking (13 mentions / 15%)
- At least 1.5 hours of free parking (1 mention / 1%)
- Retaining at least 2 hours of free parking (2 mentions / 2%)

“The proposed scheme is ill considered because of the detrimental effect on the High Street businesses. I could support a scheme which allowed free parking for a reduced time, say 30 mins but I cannot support the current proposals.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“The consequence of introducing a parking charge will be that, drivers looking to use shops on the High Street, will drive directly to Morrisons and QD if they can't find parking on the High Street. Half an hour or one hour's free parking will mean that drivers are likely to buy their newspaper or make a quick shop in the Co-op or Andrews, for example, rather than go to Morrisons or QD.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“I am strongly opposed to the imposition of across the board parking charges, I do accept we have to do something to offset the financial deficit, therefore I propose bringing in parking charges but with the first hour free.”

(District Councillor)

“A free hour would help support the high street and dissuade everyone from just heading to a supermarket car park to do their shopping...”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Although I understand the reasons for varying the tariffs in Babergh car parks I am concerned that if there was no free parking at all it might harm businesses on Hadleigh High Street. If some free parking, of perhaps the first hour, could be considered I feel it would help to support these businesses. This would allow people to visit a few shops, the market on a Friday, the Post Office or Library. It wouldn't help support the many independent cafes though.”

(District Councillor)

Ensuring that any charges are kept low / to a minimum (15 mentions / 17%)

“As long as charges are kept as low as possible and so affordable for all car drivers I support the proposal.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Free parking for 3 hours or more at each of these sites is a very useful concession to attract people to the towns. If the Council decide it must impose charges then it is hoped the introduction of charges would be modest and allow people to be able to decide how long they wish to stay by a range of charges per hour.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“It must be recognised that Lavenham is a village and not a town. As referred to above its retail offer cannot be compared to Sudbury or Hadleigh and therefore any charges introduced cannot be comparable. Any similarity of parking tariffs and hours of operation is inappropriate.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“[Our] residents do use Hadleigh for shopping and social purposes and so would be affected by parking charges as there is no public transport route to Hadleigh. If the parking fees were minimal and paying for them easy to do then any objection would be remediated by saving other more essential services. However if charges were higher this could reduce the number of people visiting Hadleigh and we would not wish to see a reduction in Hadleigh's retail outlets.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Ensuring that coin/cash payment facilities are retained (6 mentions / 7%)

“Also, how will parking charges be collected? I think it's essential that a cash option is available. Many elderly people have difficulty with payment methods. Some may also be able to handle card payments and those should be available too. But smartphone payments will be beyond many people so please don't rely on that.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Please make sure that any parking payment facilities still have the coin facility, there are many elderly residents who will not be able to pay by phone apps and not all have bank cards.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Additionally, several respondents put forward alternative or additional proposals:

“We feel strongly that a free parking period of at least one hour should remain. We also think that free parking should be considered at other times. This could take the form of an after school period to support young families, or making Thursdays free in order to support the market and encourage people to purchase local produce and support local small businesses.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“I would want to see preferred rates for disabled, families and village residents.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Offer more long stay parking for people working in Sudbury at reasonable rates. Keep free parking in villages such as Lavenham & Long Melford.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“It is worth noting that the main street in Hadleigh has no parking single lines Mon-Sat. These are normally ignored. Enforcement with fines would offset some of the cost of free parking.

The bold step would be to introduce a one way traffic flow to Hadleigh. Add more parking bays with 30mins free parking and enforce over stays. Then apply as above free one hour in carparks. This would make Hadleigh more attractive as a shopping and leisure destination.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“There should be more restrictions and greater enforcement against High Street parking [in Hadleigh] by more double yellow lines and a campaign to retain the Bridge Street car park to compensate for the loss of any spaces.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“...if parking charges for short stays were to be imposed then they should be accompanied by a season ticket system, permitting residents of Babergh to make a one-off payment to provide them with the existing three hour free parking. Once the payment had been made, there would then be no incentive for residents to minimise their use of the town centres.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Does this mean the district council tax payers will see a reduction in council tax? If not maybe they could have a card to allow free parking for a limited period?”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Introducing carpark charges will reduce this shortfall but by how much remains to be modelled. We need to see what could be brought in by modelling different levels of carpark charging which should include one model with a car parking permit for locals.

The alternate possibility of removing the cost of the car parks by handing over the car-parks to the town councils should also be looked at. If this is done as a CIC I gather that business rates do not need to be paid thereby reducing the majority of the cost of running the car-parks.”

(District Councillor)

Question 2: Current car park provision and facilities

Q2. CAR PARKING PROVISION

The Council published its Parking Strategy in 2022, which outlines both on-street and offstreet parking provision for the next 20 years. More information about the Parking Strategy is available on our website at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/parking-strategy>

The Strategy looks at the improvement and maintenance of our parking provision to ensure that we have the right level of parking provision in the right places.

Do you have any comments on our current car park provision and facilities?

Fifty-nine respondents (69%) provided a response about on-street parking and parking enforcement. Percentages are shown based on all 86 survey respondents.

Some comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

Respondents provided a range of views on the current car park provision and facilities, including that:

- Current car parking provision / level of parking is good/adequate/fine (21 mentions / 24%).
- Current car parking provision is insufficient / inadequate (8 mentions / 9%).
- Car parks could be better maintained (e.g. better signage, markings, general maintenance, ticket machines not working) (8 mentions / 9%).

Additional comments also reiterated views related to the proposal, including that car parking should be left free / arrangements kept as they are / 3 hours parking is good for local businesses (8 mentions / 9%).

Respondents also highlighted a range of parking-related issues or queries, including some specific comments related to the Parking Strategy. This included several detailed comments relating to parking provision in Lavenham; whilst not reported in full within this section – due to the length and detail of responses – they will be reviewed in detail by Babergh District Council's Parking Services team.

Table 4 displays the full range of responses received to this question, coded by theme.

The remainder of this section includes illustrative quotes related to the most frequently mentioned themes related to car parking provision and facilities.

Table 4: Q2. Car parking provision and facilities – coded responses

	Count	%
Car parking provision and facilities		
Current car parking provision / level of parking is good/adequate/fine	21	24%
Current car parking provision is insufficient / inadequate	8	9%
Car parks could be better maintained (e.g. better signage, markings, general maintenance, ticket machines not working)	8	9%
Car parks are well-used	4	5%
Car parks are well maintained	3	3%
Other generally positive comment	3	3%
Comments related to the proposal		
Car parking should be left free / arrangements kept as they are / 3 hours parking good for local businesses	8	9%
Introducing charges will increase on-street parking	4	5%
Free / current parking provision encourages car use / discourages active travel	3	3%
Further parking-related issues and queries		
On-street / pavement parking issues	7	8%
More parking for Blue Badge holders	3	3%
Resident parking should be considered on some streets	2	2%
Wider availability of season tickets	2	2%
Other individual queries / issues (including specific comments relating to the Parking Strategy)	11	13%
Other comments		
Other comment	4	5%
<i>No comment / left blank</i>	27	31%
TOTAL	86	

NOTE: some comments were coded under multiple themes, therefore percentages add up to more than 100%.

Car parking provision and maintenance

Current car parking provision / level of parking is good/adequate/fine (21 mentions / 24%)

"The parking provision in Sudbury is currently very good."

(District Councillor)

"There is plenty of parking available in Sudbury. As someone that drives in most days... it is very rare for me to struggle to find a parking space."

(Other group/organisation)

"Current parking provision in these areas is adequate in my opinion."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

"The current parking provision and facilities are seen as exemplar and playing a significant role in facilitating a vibrant town centre in Hadleigh."

(Other group/organisation)

"Hadleigh has a reasonable amount of car parks, could possibly consider more on-street availability."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Current car parking provision is insufficient / inadequate (8 mentions / 9%)

"The additional housing in Hadleigh has not been met with any growth in the infra-structure including the requirement for additional parking. It is noticeable that in the past there was always space in either of the two Magdalen Road car parks. Sometimes I find it necessary to drive between the two hoping to find somebody leaving. Charging by the hour may relieve the situation."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

"There are plenty of 'First 2 or 3 hours free' car parks in Sudbury, but don't appear to be enough long term parking areas."

(Town/Parish Council)

“Demand for parking in Lavenham fluctuates regularly and seasonally.

REGULARLY: Both car parks enjoy heavy use day time.

During the day, Prentice Street located closest to the High Street and Market Place is thought to be used by employees, shoppers, and visitors. Overnight, there is evidence that some residents have resorted to using this space because of poor availability near their homes.

The Cock Inn due to its location is also used throughout a 24 hour period. In the day time, employees, users of the village hall site who cannot be accommodated in the limited space that Community resource is able to provide, shoppers, patients, attendees to Church (sometimes in large numbers for funerals) and visitors park here. In the evenings, there is less demand and but it is thought that some residents use spaces overnight.

Frequently, overspill arises from this car park both during the day and evenings and this causes congestion on the B1071 and smaller streets accessed from this main road. This most commonly arises when there are cultural events at the Church or Village Hall with large attendances, monthly Farmers Market and especially where those dates, clash with sporting tournaments which take place at the Recreation Ground off Bridge Street Road.

SEASONALLY: Through tourism, Lavenham is fortunate to be a contributor to the overall economy of Babergh. Of the 3 Babergh settlements where variations to off-street parking is being focussed, Hadleigh, Sudbury and Lavenham, our village is the only one where traffic signs invite visitors, by provision of brown backed destination directional signage. Whilst welcome, this however brings added pressure to parking provision both on and off street day-time and overnight. By far, the majority of visitors arrive by car. Holiday accommodation is located in two hotels and holiday lets in the centre of the village, in narrow streets which generally do not have private parking.”

(Other group/organisation)

Car parks could be better maintained (e.g. better signage, markings, general maintenance, ticket machines not working) (8 mentions / 9%)

“The current car parking provisions should be kept as they are with no cost for parking, but the maintenance could be much better with shrub and tree areas being pruned more frequently and as far as I can remember the car parks in Sudbury have not been resurfaced in ten years.”

(Town/Parish Councillor)

“Carparks have for sometime been earmarked for line marking and new signage which were part of the Vision for Sudbury work and nothing has been delivered.”

(District Councillor)

“The current car parks in Hadleigh need attention with regard to re-painting markings and making one-way systems around them clearer (Magdalen Rd car park especially). At Magdalen Road car park there is also the issue of some trees having been fenced off because of their roots lifting the paving for a number of years. I don't want to lose the trees but it looks unsightly and is keeping parking spaces from being used.”

(District Councillor)

“Too often ticket machines inoperative. Even when free parking somewhat galling to have to walk to the far side to find working unit.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

Question 3: On-street parking and parking enforcement

Q3. ON-STREET PARKING

In 2020, Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced to the Babergh District, with Ipswich Borough Council and West Suffolk Council sharing the on-street parking enforcement duties. This has had a positive effect in many areas.

We understand that varying the tariffs in our car parks could impact on-street parking, but it could also mean that we could encourage more enforcement where required.

What comments would you like to make regarding on-street parking and parking enforcement?

Sixty-nine respondents (80%) provided a response about on-street parking and parking enforcement. Percentages are shown based on all 86 survey respondents.

Some comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

This included a number of responses about increased on-street parking and enforcement related to the proposal to vary parking tariffs, with respondents commenting that:

- Varying the charges will increase on-street parking / increase the need for on-street parking enforcement (19 mentions / 22%).
- Increasing enforcement will create/add to costs (10 mentions / 12%) or questioning the cost-benefit of enforcement (4 mentions / 5%).

Respondents also put forward views on on-street parking enforcement and restrictions more generally, including:

- That more enforcement is needed / would be welcomed (14 mentions / 16%).
- That more / better marked restrictions are needed (9 mentions / 10%).
- Positive comments about current levels of enforcement / enforcement generally (5 mentions / 6%).
- Mentions of on-pavement parking / need for enforcement (4 mentions / 5%).

The importance of access to on-street parking was also raised, including:

- The need to consider/prioritise parking for residents (including mention of resident permits) (9 mentions / 10%).
- The need to consider businesses / business deliveries (4 mentions / 5%) and the provision of on-street parking for Blue Badge users and residents with mobility issues (3 mentions / 3%).

Several respondents provided comments on specific local area issues.

Table 5 displays the full range of responses received to this question, coded by theme.

The remainder of this section includes illustrative quotes related to the most frequently mentioned themes.

Table 5: Q3. On-street parking – coded responses

	Count	%
Views towards on-street parking and enforcement related to the proposal		
Varying the charges will increase on-street parking / increase the need for on-street parking enforcement	19	22%
Increasing enforcement will create/add to costs	10	12%
Question about the cost-benefit of enforcement	4	5%
Retaining a free hour in the car parks / ensuring fees are kept low would help counter on-street parking	3	3%
Views towards on-street parking enforcement and restrictions		
More enforcement is needed / would be welcomed	14	16%
More / better marked/signed restrictions needed	9	10%
Positive comment about current levels of enforcement / enforcement generally	5	6%
Mention of on-pavement parking / need for enforcement	4	5%
Parking enforcement should be fair and proportionate	3	3%
Importance of access to on-street parking		
Need to consider/prioritise parking for residents (including mention of resident permits)	9	10%
Need to consider businesses / business deliveries	4	5%
Provision of on-street parking for Blue Badge users and residents with mobility issues	3	3%
Importance of retaining free on-street parking to keep towns attractive	2	2%
Other comments		
Specific comment on local area issue	8	9%
Other comment	12	14%
<i>No comment / left blank</i>	17	20%
TOTAL	86	

NOTE: some comments were coded under multiple themes, therefore percentages add up to more than 100%.

On-street parking and enforcement – views related to the proposal

Varying the charges will increase on-street parking / increase the need for on-street parking enforcement (19 mentions / 22%)

“I do feel that there might be more 'opportunist' street parking to evade the charges causing more congestion within the high streets.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“If these proposals are brought in, I feel that on street parking will increase. Many of the streets near the town centre have no off street parking, even if parking permits are brought in there will still not be enough, many residents are forced to park overnight in the car parks. Unless you bring this in in every street people who know the area will find a street to park in to avoid the charges.”

(District Councillor)

“We believe that our users may well seek out free alternative parking around the locality of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre. While this may encourage users to walk more the impact on local residents living around the Station Road area could be significant. It is important for us a trusted local business that we do everything possible to limit environment and noise disruptions around our centres.”

(Other group/organisation)

“On street parking in Hadleigh is limited and can be occasionally chaotic at peak times. Limiting free parking in the two main car parks can only make matters worse and would require additional enforcement at the appropriate cost and aggravation to residents and visitors alike.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Traders and service-providers on the [Hadleigh] High Street told us that improved enforcement in the past few years has reduced the number of casually parked vehicles near their premises. But current enforcement arrangements seem to be sporadic - it's felt by some that a considerable increase in enforcement presence would be needed to counteract the expected increase in on-street parking if car park fees are varied.”

(District Councillor)

Increasing enforcement will create/add to costs (10 mentions / 12%)

“It is inevitable that the ending of free parking in the council's car parks will cause an increase in on-street parking, particularly when someone is making a short trip into the town to buy a forgotten item of shopping or a very small purchase. More enforcement will mean more wardens or increased hours for existing ones, leading to increased cost to council tax payers.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Clearly imposing charges on car parks will necessitate the need for more enforcement to control on-street parking. The additional cost of reinforcement could be high and will offset the income raised from Car Parks.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“The officers do patrol the centre of the town but if this came into effect they would have to patrol a much wider area as workers, volunteers and shoppers avoid charges. Its human nature to do so. You acknowledge that you may need more enforcement thus more officers, more costs thereby much of the income you may generate will not be of benefit. Laws of unintended consequence.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Encouraging more enforcement” is liable to require additional personnel and therefore additional salary costs for the Council.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Varying tariffs might result in more on-street parking, however this can be managed and planned for. The cost of enforcing on-street parking restrictions must be taken into consideration when varying the tariffs.”

(District Councillor)

Question about the cost-benefit of enforcement (4 mentions / 5%)

“Enforcement of on street parking is generally a good thing but the quantity of enforcement is directly linked to the cost. There should be a thorough cost benefit analysis before any change is made.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

On-street parking enforcement and restrictions

More enforcement is needed / would be welcomed (14 mentions / 16%)
AND More / better marked/signed restrictions needed (9 mentions / 10%)

“Yes! We need more on street enforcement! Trucks unloading is one thing. Maybe a private car parked for 1 minute to collect the weeks wine. But when you notice habitual long term parking in restricted places there are many like myself who have a desire to be a traffic warden.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

I welcome more parking enforcement. Hadleigh High Street can get very congested at times especially if people have parked inconsiderately creating problems for other drivers.

(District Councillor)

“Currently, enforcement is sporadic and restrictions in some places are not clearly signed.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Enforcement is essential to a well managed strategy. However, rural areas lack any access to effective and ongoing enforcement.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Parking enforcement is a must. We rarely/never see the Ipswich parking enforcement team, they refuse to penalise cars on our centre village white lines until the county council have put in correct parking signage/measures so we have dangerous parking in the centre of the village on our 90 degree bend which goes uncorrected.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“On-street parking enforcement has been ineffectual due to the lack of maintenance by SCC Highways particularly on road markings.”

(District Councillor)

“There are some streets with double yellow lines but those are in very poor condition. There has been negligible civil parking enforcement in Lavenham. Daily there are already parking infringements. Water Street is particularly noticeable.”

(Town/Parish Council)

Positive comment about current levels of enforcement / enforcement generally (5 mentions / 6%)

"I have noticed an increase in the enforcement of on street parking that has reduced congestion kerbside. I find the enforcement effective and proportionate."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

"On-street parking enforcement seems entirely sensible; it must surely help prevent anti-social/nuisance parking, and may even encourage some drivers to leave their cars at home when making shorter journeys which could be made, instead, on foot or by bicycle."

(Town/Parish Council)

Mention of on-pavement parking / need for enforcement (4 mentions / 5%)

"Pavement parking is a very significant problem which arises from the [Lavenham] High Street being the A1141."

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

"We need a solution for pavement parking, but that requires government legislation."

(District Councillor)

Importance of access to on-street parking

Need to consider/prioritise parking for residents (including mention of resident permits) (9 mentions / 10%)

"If these proposals are brought in, I feel that on street parking will increase. Many of the streets near the town centre have no off street parking, even if parking permits are brought in there will still not be enough, many residents are forced to park overnight in the car parks. Unless you bring this in in every street people who know the area will find a street to park in to avoid the charges."

(District Councillor)

"Priority to residents should be given for on street parking including resident permits."

(Other group/organisation)

40

“On-street parking in this village [Lavenham] is needed by residents who do not have private parking opportunity attached to their properties. This presents a large proportion of residents in the centre of the village. Many of those residents are at home during the day. Provision on-street is also needed for shoppers day time.”

(Other group/organisation)

“The on-street parking enforcement is causing car owners to leave Hadleigh. There is no parking for many people living in the town.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

**Need to consider businesses / business deliveries (4 mentions / 5%)
AND provision of on-street parking for Blue Badge users and residents with mobility issues (3 mentions / 3%)**

“Councillors believe the introduction of any on-street parking restrictions particularly in Lavenham would be problematical for shops, pubs, restaurants and other businesses and discourage passing trade.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Not enough provision for Blue Badge holders for on-street parking in Sudbury and Lavenham town centres.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“We run a meal delivery service to some of the most vulnerable members of the community and so it is important that we are able to stop on residential streets with ease to make the deliveries. For some staff that live in Sudbury, residents permits are important, but balance is needed to ensure access for us to make these crucial deliveries. Is there a permit scheme for short stop delivery purposes?”

(Other group/organisation)

Local area issues

Additionally, several respondents highlighted specific local area issues:

“...other areas of Sudbury take the full impact of restrictions which are implemented - this is usually a default of workers in Sudbury (or train users) needing to find non-charging places to park their vehicles all day without charge. This causes the town areas to be full of daily vehicles thus reducing space for visiting, spending, tourist and residential vehicles.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Charging for parking in Sudbury, will have an adverse effect on Long Melford, known in Long Melford for many years as the LM Park & Ride, three or four cars park in our street then drive to Sudbury Railway Station where they pay one fee to park whilst commuting to London, people may well do similar to this and catch Public transport into Sudbury, thereby congesting our High street with no benefit to our High street traders.”

(District Councillor)

“Market Hill’s on-street parking is at times closed for events and we understand that this may soon be closed daily during the summer months which will significantly impact the availability of on-street parking. Closure of parking on Market Hill will particularly impact short visits to town centre shops and place greater reliance on the nearby car parks. Updated parking surveys would be sensible to determine whether there has been a change in car park usage since the initial surveys were carried out which we understand was during Covid.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Bridge Street car park should be retained and developed.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“...[Lavenham] residents frequently park overnight in the car parks, likely because there is no space on the streets at the time residents return to their homes. Multi-vehicle ownership associated with individual dwellings has to be noted. In some streets, vehicle ownership is greater than on-street spaces.”

(Other group/organisation)

Question 4: Sustainable transport

Q4. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Parking Strategy identified that many of our car parks are already approaching capacity and the demand on parking spaces will only increase without better access to sustainable transport solutions. This includes improving public transport, cycling, and walking facilities.

What comments would you like to make regarding sustainable transport, and what improvements would encourage and enable travel without the need for parking (therefore helping to manage the demand on our car parks)

Seventy-two respondents (84%) provided a response about sustainable transport. Percentages are shown based on all 86 survey respondents.

Some comments were coded under more than one theme. Percentages therefore add up to more than 100%.

Comments highlighted several transport-related issues and opportunities, including:

- That public transport / bus travel is limited and/or needs improvement (47 mentions / 55%).
- A lack of cycle paths / need for more cycle paths and/or that cycling on the roads is too dangerous (21 mentions / 24%).⁴
- Improvements to pedestrian routes / lack of safe walking routes (10 mentions / 12%).
- A need for bike parking facilities (6 mentions / 7%).

A number of respondents (12 mentions / 14%) stated that increasing sustainable transport options is unlikely to get people out of their cars, the culture change required is too great or public transport unlikely to ever improve enough.

Table 6 displays the full range of responses received to this question, coded by theme.

The remainder of this section includes illustrative quotes related to the most frequently mentioned themes.

⁴ Each of these were mentioned by the following number of respondents, with 5 respondents mentioning both: A lack of cycle paths / need for more cycle paths (15 mentions / 17%); Cycling on the roads is too dangerous (11 mentions / 13%).

Table 6: Q4. Sustainable transport – coded responses

	Count	%
Comments on sustainable transport issues and opportunities		
Public transport / bus travel is limited and/or needs improvement	47	55%
Lack of cycle paths / need more cycle paths	15	17%
Cycling on roads is too dangerous	11	13%
Improve pedestrian routes / lack of safe walking routes	10	12%
Bike parking facilities are needed	6	7%
Introduce 20mph schemes	4	5%
Free car parking or providing more spaces encourages car usage / charges may discourage car usage	4	5%
Reduce / divert lorries	2	2%
Bike / e-bike hire and loans	2	2%
Comments related to the viability of sustainable transport uptake		
Increasing sustainable transport options unlikely to get people out of their cars / culture change required is too great / public transport unlikely to ever improve enough	12	14%
Car travel is essential in a rural district	5	6%
Impractical to carry shopping any distance / carry shopping on the bus	3	3%
Other comments		
Sustainable transport is a separate issue from parking charges	2	2%
Other comment	14	16%
<i>No comment / left blank</i>	12	14%
TOTAL	86	

NOTE: some comments were coded under multiple themes, therefore percentages add up to more than 100%.

Sustainable transport issues and opportunities

Public transport / bus travel is limited and/or needs improvement (47 mentions / 55%)

“Improvement required in level of public transport, particularly in more rural areas.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Improving village transport if you don't want people to use car parks. More buses and regular services which link up with buses to bigger towns.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Public transport to and from outside villages is scarce or non-existent. It is absurd to suggest that people from those villages might walk or cycle to the town.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Sustainable, regular and efficient transport services to and from satellite villages around Hadleigh don't exist. Private vehicles are essential for visiting Hadleigh.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“To provide regular and accessible public transport within the Babergh area, this is unfortunately an issue that is raised regularly within our village and neighbouring local villages between Hadleigh and Manningtree.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Poor local bus service to some outlying villages mean car transport to Sudbury is essential.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“When I first moved to Cornard I could catch a bus at the top of my road every ten minutes, now it would mean a ten minute walk to get to the nearest bus stop, crossing my fingers to hope it turns up. For those people who need to go to the top of North Street this involves another lengthy walk the Sudbury end.”

(District Councillor)

Lack of cycle paths / need more cycle paths (15 mentions / 17%)

AND Cycling on roads is too dangerous (11 mentions / 13%)

AND Improve pedestrian routes / lack of safe walking routes (10 mentions / 12%)

“The state of road surfaces, distance to travel and the volume of traffic makes cycling and walking hazardous and does not allow parents with young children to make these journeys.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“It seems many users of the car parks on Hadleigh and Sudbury come a short distance within the town. Hopefully car park charges will encourage those who are mobile to walk or cycle instead. Free car parking does nothing to encourage active travel. Bike lanes and safe footpaths are key.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Sustainable transport alternatives are not likely to be viable in Sudbury for many people in the foreseeable future. The roads feeding into Sudbury are too narrow and carry too much heavy traffic to be safe for cyclists. Most people, and especially children, will not consider cycling a safe method of travelling into Sudbury from the surrounding villages. Without safe cycle routes that are separated from the road traffic, there is not much likelihood of cycling becoming a credible alternative method of commuting into Sudbury.”

(Town/Parish Council)

“Better footpaths would encourage more walking especially from the new developments being built at Weavers Meadow in Hadleigh. To walk down Lady Lane into town pedestrians have to crisscross the road to stay on a pavement. There should be safe, attractive, sign posted walking and cycling options from these new developments all the way into the town centre which seem to be lacking at the moment.”

(District Councillor)

Bike parking facilities are needed (6 mentions / 7%)

“Secure bike parking facilities might encourage more people to cycle, particularly in good weather; however, the lack of anywhere safe and secure to leave bikes is a real issue particularly for owners of desirable bikes, especially e-assist bikes, which may be worth several thousand pounds. CCTV cameras at bike parking stands may help, but the real solution is secure bike compounds, such as can be found in central Cambridge next to a cycle shop.”

(Town/Parish Council)

The viability of sustainable transport uptake

Increasing sustainable transport options unlikely to get people out of their cars / culture change required is too great / public transport unlikely to ever improve enough (12 mentions / 14%)

“Increasing sustainable forms of transport is unlikely to have a great effect on the numbers of vehicles using the car parks even though there are charges levied.

The cost of bus fares is unlikely to change the attitudes of drivers to use these buses. Town centre parking is used by many shoppers who need the convenience of their cars for transporting their shopping.”

(Individual Town/Parish Councillor)

“Most of the Hadleigh trade is drawn from the surrounding villages where a complete vacuum in public transport exists. Whilst it is a laudable proposal to swap car traffic for public transport, that is surely even more out of reach than leaving the parking subsidised.

An increase in cycling and walking provision would of course be a positive step but in reality incremental in terms of relief of motor traffic.”

(Other group/organisation)

“Public transport is poor and would have to be hugely improved to have an impact on car use. Unfortunately Babergh does not have the power or funds to do this.”

(District Councillor)

“Sustainable transport can only be provided if there is a demand throughout the day, as it would not be a viable business case and it would not be long before the council would be having to go back to the public to raise taxes to pay for the transport.

The typical example is London. Transport for London is increasing rates to pay towards the transport system. There has to be at least a 40% travel demand throughout each day to be able to run a public service.”

(Other group/organisation)

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Background Information and Frequently Asked Questions

Parking tariffs in Babergh

Babergh District Council is proposing to vary parking charges in Sudbury, Hadleigh, Lavenham and Chelmondiston.

Subsidising the current three-hour free parking cost the Council approximately £425K this year, and that is set to rise further. The Council faces significant budget pressures in the next financial year and over the medium term and can no longer afford the subsidy if it is to continue delivering other essential services to residents and communities.

Our proposal is to introduce modest, revised tariffs in council-run car parks which are as low as possible compared to other authorities, so we can continue to attract visitors, ensure shoppers and workers have access to the right spaces in the right places, and increase space turnover.

This webpage outlines the background to the proposal, details of an engagement exercise we are carrying out, and answers to some frequently asked questions. Further background about the proposals can also be found in [a media release issued on 15 December 2023](#).

How much will you charge to park?

We already charge to park at Pin Mill Car Park in Chelmondiston, and for over three hours in Hadleigh and Sudbury. We are conducting extensive research throughout East Anglia to ascertain the average cost to park in towns and villages of a similar size to those in Babergh. We are committed to ensuring that the new charges that would be introduced to our car parks would be in line with other towns and villages of similar size in East Anglia.

How will you discourage shoppers from choosing to shop in larger towns in the area, such as Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, or Colchester?

We are committed to keeping the cost of parking in our car parks lower than those charged in larger towns so that our towns and villages remain an attractive destination.

What solutions are available to prevent motorists from using other free car parks instead of Council-owned car parks, such as health centres, businesses and Residents Only car parks?

There are several solutions available to the operators of free car parks that are close to the Council's car parks. These include:

- Incorporating the car park into the Council's 'Off Street Parking Places Order' so that we can enforce the car park on the operator's behalf. Permits could be issued to authorised users.
- Car park operators can choose to enlist the service of a private enforcement service. These private services will often provide a fee-free service, using parking ticket income to cover their costs.

What will the Council do to stop motorists from parking on-street to avoid paying to use a car park?

We will work with Suffolk County Council to ensure that the on-street parking is relevant and appropriate for the needs of residents. We are committed to improving the facilities within our car parks to make them the preferred destination for motorists, by making them a safe, convenient, and pleasant place to park.

Will the introduction of car park charges affect on-street enforcement?

Chargeable parking is easier to enforce than free parking. With competitive parking rates in operation, we will be able to encourage a greater frequency of Civil Enforcement Officer visits to our car parks. This increased officer presence makes our car parks a safer place to park with increased patrols and means that the surrounding streets will also be more regularly patrolled which is currently a common complaint.

Will charging to park discourage visitors to our town centre?

There is little evidence to suggest that charging a competitive fee to park will prevent motorists from visiting a town or village. Babergh is in a minority of districts where parking is free for up to three hours.

Will tourists be discouraged from visiting our town or village if they must pay for parking?

In general, tourists are fully prepared to pay to park when visiting an area of interest. We are committed to ensuring that the fees charged in our car parks are competitive and may still be below what tourists would normally expect to pay when visiting a place of interest.

What do other towns in the region charge for parking?

The average cost of parking in towns with a population of around 20,000 people East Anglia is £1 per hour. Short stay car parking is payable in towns such as Stowmarket, Newmarket, Felixstowe, Haverhill, and Woodbridge. We will ensure that the cost of parking in Babergh is competitive with these destinations. Full tariff information for other council's car parks in the region are available their websites:

- [Mid Suffolk's car parks](#)
- [East Suffolk's car parks](#)
- [Ipswich's car parks](#)
- [Huntingdonshire's car parks](#)
- [Saffron Walden's car parks](#)

Will Blue Badge holders have to pay to park?

Blue Badge holders will continue to be entitled to park up to three hours for free.

Will there be any discounts available for town centre employees and residents?

We already offer car park season tickets which are available to anyone who regularly uses our car parks. Season tickets are currently available for three months or 12 months and offer a considerable discount when compared to paying daily. Season tickets are also convenient as the motorist doesn't have the inconvenience of having to pay to park each day. Season tickets are now fully digital and can be managed online.

Who are you currently engaging with about the changes?

In January, Babergh's Cabinet agreed to carry out an engagement exercise with town and parish councils and other recognised groups to find the best solutions for local communities. We have opened a survey aimed specifically at town and parish councillors as representatives of their local communities. It can also be completed by clerks and other recognised groups. It will build on previous feedback captured from residents and other stakeholders during [our Parking Strategy](#) consultation in 2022.

What will you do with the feedback?

The deadline for responses to the survey is Sunday 3 March 2024 and we will publish the results of this engagement on our website. The feedback will be reflected in proposals to be examined by our Overview and Scrutiny Committee before going to Cabinet for a final decision.

What are you asking in the survey?

These are the questions people are invited to answer:

Parking tariffs

The Council is proposing to vary the tariffs in our car parks to help tackle the financial deficit that we are facing to lessen the cuts or savings we will have to make to other services. At present, the free parking that is provided in our car parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham is subsidised by all council tax payers in the district.

We are committed to ensuring that the charges that would be introduced would remain as low as possible and in line with towns and villages of similar sizes across the East Anglia region.

What comments would you like to make regarding this proposal?

Car parking provision

The Council published its Parking Strategy in 2022, which outlines both on-street and off-street parking provision for the next 20 years. You can access more information about [our Parking Strategy](#) on our website.

The Strategy looks at the improvement and maintenance of our parking provision to ensure that we have the right level of parking provision in the right places.

Do you have any comments on our current car park provision and facilities?

On-Street parking

In 2020, Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced to the Babergh District, with Ipswich Borough Council and West Suffolk Council sharing the on-street parking enforcement duties. This has had a positive effect in many areas.

We understand that varying the tariffs in our car parks could impact on-street parking, but it could also mean that we could encourage more enforcement where required.

What comments would you like to make regarding on-street parking and parking enforcement?

Sustainable Transport

The Parking Strategy identified that many of our car parks are already approaching capacity and the demand on parking spaces will only increase without better access to sustainable transport solutions. This includes improving public transport, cycling, and walking facilities.

What comments or suggestions would you like to make regarding sustainable transport, and what improvements would encourage and enable travel without the need for parking (therefore helping to manage the demand on our car parks)?

APPENDIX B: Survey questionnaire

Babergh parking charges proposals: Your view

Introduction

We would like your feedback on Babergh District Council's plans to vary parking charges in Sudbury, Hadleigh, Lavenham and Chelmondiston.

Subsidising the current three-hour free parking in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham will cost the council approximately £425K this year, and those costs are set to rise further. We face significant budget pressures in the next financial year (2024/25) and can no longer afford the subsidy if we are to continue delivering other essential services to residents and communities.

We do not believe the success of town centres is defined by parking charges alone, but we do recognise there is concern about this proposal and there are challenges – which is why we want to engage with key stakeholders to minimise these and find solutions.

In January, Babergh's Cabinet agreed to carry out this engagement exercise.

This survey is aimed specifically at town and parish councils and district councillors as representatives of your local communities. It can be completed by clerks, district councillors and other recognised groups.

It will build on previous feedback captured from residents and other stakeholders during our Parking Strategy consultation in 2022.

The deadline for your responses is 3rd March 2024 and we will publish the results of this engagement on our website. You / your organisation will not be identified in any published reports unless you choose to give permission at the end of the survey for your responses to be attributable.

Your feedback will be reflected in proposals to be examined by our Overview and Scrutiny Committee before going to Cabinet for a final decision.

Thank you.

You can save your response at any point by clicking 'Save and Continue Later' at the bottom of the screen. You will be prompted to enter your email address so a link can be sent to you to allow you to return to your response.

Are you completing this survey...

- ... as a district councillor?
- ... as an individual town or parish councillor?
- ... on behalf of a town or parish council?
- ... on behalf of any other recognised group or organisation?

Please provide the following information

Your name _____

Email address _____

Name of council or group/organisation _____

Q1. PARKING TARIFFS

The Council is proposing to vary the tariffs in our car parks to help tackle the financial deficit that we are facing to lessen the cuts or savings we will have to make to other services. At present, the free parking that is provided in our car parks in Sudbury, Hadleigh and Lavenham is subsidised by all council tax payers in the district.

We are committed to ensure that the charges that would be introduced would remain as low as possible and are in line with towns and villages of a similar size across the East Anglian region.

What comments would you like to make regarding this proposal?

Q2. CAR PARKING PROVISION

The Council published its Parking Strategy in 2022, which outlines both on-street and offstreet parking provision for the next 20 years. More information about the Parking Strategy is available on our website at <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/w/parking-strategy>

The Strategy looks at the improvement and maintenance of our parking provision to ensure that we have the right level of parking provision in the right places.

Do you have any comments on our current car park provision and facilities?

Q3. ON-STREET PARKING

In 2020, Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced to the Babergh District, with Ipswich Borough Council and West Suffolk Council sharing the on-street parking enforcement duties. This has had a positive effect in many areas.

We understand that varying the tariffs in our car parks could impact on-street parking, but it could also mean that we could encourage more enforcement where required.

What comments would you like to make regarding on-street parking and parking enforcement?

Q4. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

The Parking Strategy identified that many of our car parks are already approaching capacity and the demand on parking spaces will only increase without better access to sustainable transport solutions. This includes improving public transport, cycling, and walking facilities.

What comments would you like to make regarding sustainable transport, and what improvements would encourage and enable travel without the need for parking (therefore helping to manage the demand on our car parks)?

You can choose to upload any supporting documentation below

DOCUMENT UPLOAD

You / your organisation will not be identified in any published reports unless you choose to give permission for your responses to be attributable

- Please treat my response as anonymous in any published reports
- I am happy for my response to be attributed in any published reports

Finally, would you be happy to be contacted by Babergh District Council to discuss any of the issues raised in your response?

- Yes
- No

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BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the King Edmund Chamber, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Monday, 18 March 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor: Mary McLaren (Chair)
John Whyman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Kathryn Grandon Leigh Jamieson
Margaret Maybury BA (Hons) Ch Laura Smith
Th

In attendance:

Councillor(s): Elisabeth Malvisi
Alison Owen

Officers: Interim Monitoring Officer (JR)
Director – Operations and Climate Change (ME)
Parking Services Manager (MS)
Finance Business Partner (JB)
Sustainable Travel Officer (KD)
Lead Officer for Overview and Scrutiny (AN)

Apologies:

Councillor(s): Brian Riley

20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

20.1 Councillor Maybury declared an Other Registrable Interest as the Chair of the Lavenham Traffic Working Party but confirmed that she had never voted on matters regarding the proposed car parking tariffs and had come to the meeting with an open mind. The Monitoring Officer advised that Councillor Maybury could partake in the meeting as a committee member.

21 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

21.1 None received.

22 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

22.1 None received.

23 QUESTIONS BY COUNCILLORS

23.1 None received.

24 BOS/23/10 PROPOSED CAR PARKING CHARGES AND ROAD TRAFFIC ORDERS

24.1 The Chair invited the Interim Monitoring Officer to set out the governance arrangements for the committee meeting.

24.2 The Interim Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that the recommendations as set out in the report were for the Cabinet to vote on, that the Committee's role was to scrutinise the engagement process and the research that had led to those proposed recommendations, and reminded Members to approach the item objectively and with an open mind.

24.3 The Chair invited the Leader of the Council and the Officers to introduce the item to the Committee.

24.4 Councillor Dave Busby, Leader of the Council, introduced the item to the Committee outlining before Members: the £6.7million budget deficit, the current costs of subsidising car parking at £400,000 a year, the need for full cost recovery, alternative options concerning outsourcing of car park management to town councils or selling/leasing the car parks to a third party for operation, and the reasons why these alternatives were not considered further.

24.5 The Director for Operations and Climate Change presented the item to the Committee outlining before Members: the decision made by Cabinet to go out to public consultation on car parking tariffs, the public engagement process undertaken, the feedback report constructed by the Strategic Policy team, the current net cost of subsidising car park charges, the two different tariff options proposed to the Cabinet, proposed reductions to all-day parking tariffs, differences in short and long stay tariffs, the reasons for ruling out a free parking period, proposed changes to parking restrictions, the proposed hiring of a parking projects officer to assist with the implementation of charges if agreed, and invited the Committee to provide feedback on the report.

24.6 Councillor Maybury queried why all car parks within Sudbury and Lavenham were not listed in the table as set out in Point 6.22. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that this table detailed the car parks that would be charged for and clarified that this did not include all car parks in key towns across the District.

24.7 Councillor Whyman questioned whether the processes for determining parking tariffs had been shared with neighbouring councils. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that the Parking Services Manager frequently attended a regional parking forum and engaged with officers from neighbouring authorities concerning parking issues and tariffs.

- 24.8 Councillor Whyman requested that the absolute net cost be clarified due to differing figures within the budget. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that the figure for national non-domestic rates (NNDR) payable, as listed in Appendix B as £297,428, was accurate and had been reviewed and confirmed by the manager of the business rates service.
- 24.9 Councillor Grandon queried if the split between short stay and long stay spaces available in Hadleigh was an appropriate proposal. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that an increase in long stay provision would help address pre-existing confusion within car parks in Hadleigh and that residents would benefit overall from the cheaper tariffs set out in the long stay proposal in comparison to the short stay tariffs.
- 24.10 Councillor Grandon raised concerns regarding the lack of a subsidised “free” parking period and the impact this could cause on school pick-ups and drop-offs in particular. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that these pre-existing issues existed across the District but that the retention of a free parking period was ruled out due to the significant financial impact it would have on the Council’s ability to deliver on its parking strategy and sustainable travel plans.
- 24.11 Councillor Smith queried if there would be possibility in the future to increase these tariffs, if implemented, and asked why a free parking period had not been considered given the proposals did not already achieve full cost recovery. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that the decision to increase charges in the future would be the prerogative of the Cabinet and that further proposals could be modelled to incorporate a free parking period but it would culminate in a significant dent to efforts to improve the budget position.
- 24.12 Councillor Smith questioned why the merchant fees were different between option A and B. The Finance Business Partner responded that this related to the transactional fees when paying parking charges, which would be covered by the Council, and that the higher costs for option B were due to the higher tariffs proposed.
- 24.13 Councillor Maybury questioned if the possibility of implementing a rebate scheme for users of the doctors surgery and village hall in Lavenham was considered. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that this had not been explored but that rebates were being offered within Sudbury and Hadleigh and similar provisions could be made in Lavenham.
- 24.14 Councillor Maybury requested more details on what aspects of sustainable travel would be funded using the costs recovered from implementing parking tariffs. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that strategies had been approved but deliverables were yet to be prioritised, and advised that little progress had been made towards sustainable travel goals and targets due to an inadequate pool of funding.

- 24.15 Councillor McLaren queried the additional costs of contracting Ethos to carry out consultancy work. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that he did not have those figures to hand but clarified for Members that Ethos carried out two engagement processes that fed into the approved Parking Strategy (2022-42).
- 24.16 Councillor Whyman queried the different costs for a parking charge depending on which method was used to pay the tariff. The Finance Business Partner clarified that this related to transactional fees, which Babergh District Council covered, with mobile transactions costing 10p, contactless payments 9p, and cash payments roughly 10p per transaction.
- 24.17 Councillor Whyman queried if automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) software was used in Council owned car parks and, if not, if this would be rolled out as part of enforcement improvements. The Parking Services Manager responded that ANPR was not currently used and was an option to implement in the near future but clarified that this could not be used for enforcement.
- 24.18 Councillor Jamieson questioned what support services entailed and why these figures had not been reported in the budgets for car parking. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that these increased figures were as a result of doing a full cost recovery review of the parking service. The Finance Business Partner clarified that the costs of support services included the cost of work that teams and individual officers from other areas of the Council contribute to the management of parking across the District as well as other corporate overheads.
- 24.19 Councillor Smith asked for clarification on Point 4.7 and whether the introduction of resident parking zones was subject to available funding from Babergh District Council or Suffolk County Council. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that there would be an expectation for Babergh to provide that funding if the scheme went ahead.
- 24.20 Councillor Maybury questioned if officers had incorporated the rural setting of the District and accounts of rural poverty into the equality impact assessment (EIA) for the proposed charges. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that an equalities screening had taken place, which highlighted no equalities issues, and was approved by the Strategic Policy team which meant there was no requirement to do a more intensive review due to no problems being flagged. The Director further clarified that the rural setting and rural poverty was not captured in this screening.
- 24.21 Councillor Maybury further questioned what analysis had been made for potential reduction in use of car parking facilities due to implementing charges and the potential financial impact of this. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that the income modelling carried out was transaction-based, that rebates and refunds had been removed from this modelling, and that a 20% drop in short stay and a 10% drop in long stay parking had been modelled and planned for accordingly.

24.22 Councillor Jamieson questioned what mitigating factors were being put in place should a significant reduction in car park use happen as a result of implementing parking tariffs. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that a drop-off had already been modelled against but that there was no evidence to suggest a reduction significant enough to cause a detrimental financial impact would occur.

A short break was taken between 10:50am and 11:10am.

24.23 The Chair invited other Councillors in attendance to pose questions to the Officers.

24.24 Councillor Owen questioned if more extensive dialogue had taken place with the Ward Members for Sudbury, Hadleigh, and Lavenham to better ascertain the nature of concerns from residents. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that meetings had taken place with Ward Members and the Town Councils about the proposed parking tariffs.

24.25 Councillor Owen queried if the issues raised within Sudbury Town Council's letter to Babergh District Council could be addressed. The Director of Operations and Climate Change read out Sudbury Town Council's letter to the committee and provided answers for all points raised. This response included information about: the petition process followed by the Council on 20th February, the lack of evidence to support a reduction in visitors to the high streets, comparisons to charges in nearby towns, the engagement process undertaken, and a breakdown of proposed operating costs.

24.26 Councillor Malvisi queried why details of Mill Lane car park in Long Melford were not included in the analysis set out in the report. The Parking Services Manager responded that the Councils were in the process of implementing a resident permit scheme for this car park which would go live on April 15th.

24.27 The Chair invited Committee Members to continue with their questioning to Officers.

24.28 Councillor Grandon raised that most volunteers based their shifts around the current free parking period and questioned if a rebate scheme could be organised to allow volunteers to continue giving their time for free. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that this was not included in these proposals and that the tariffs proposed were reasonable enough to hopefully not impact volunteer numbers or availability.

24.29 Councillor Smith questioned if the feedback gathered from the engagement survey was incorporated into the report and the proposals. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that this feedback was tied into all aspects of the report.

24.30 Councillor Grandon questioned if the funds brought in from car parking tariffs would be ringfenced. The Director for Operations and Climate Change responded that this money would be kept within the parking service to assist with maintenance of car parks and that any profits would be put towards delivering aspects of the parking strategy and the council's sustainable travel goals.

24.31 Members debated the item on the following issues:

- The equality impact assessment;
- Whether due consideration had been given to the rural setting of the District and the reliance on cars to travel;
- Sustainable travel goals;
- Provisions of a free parking period;
- Potential pre-determination from members of the Cabinet;
- The process followed when undertaking the car parking petition at Full Council in February 2024;
- The current budget deficit;
- Efforts to achieve full cost recovery;
- Potential impact on local businesses and the high street;
- The overall reduction in proposed all-day tariffs;
- Recognising the public as community stakeholders;
- Babergh's Parking Strategy 2022-42;

A short break was taken between 12:18pm and 12:46pm.

24.32 The Lead Officer for Overview and Scrutiny put forward the following recommendations based on questions and debate from Members:

- That the Director for Operations and Climate Change takes on board the comments made by the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- That Officers provide more detailed clarification on the amendments made to the information and proposals set out in the Cabinet report as a result of the consultation process.
- That Officers be requested to set out in the report to Cabinet a proposed range of tariffs that include a free parking period of 1 hour and its associated costs.
- That Officers further explore with Suffolk County Council the possibility of introducing on-street resident parking permits across the District, that more information on this type of scheme be included in the report to Cabinet, and investigate implementing an appropriate policy.

- That Officers review whether a rebate system could be implemented in Hadleigh, Sudbury, and Lavenham in car parks serving doctors surgeries and medical centres.
- That the Director for Operations and Climate Change continues to consider and create shared value for residents by enhancing the councils offer for non-contact, long term parking permits using intelligent parking control processes such that residents are recognised as community stakeholders.
- That Officers include more information and context about the rural setting of the districts, the current reliance on car use to travel, and the accessible parking provisions needed to adequately meet this need.
- That the Monitoring Officer be asked to investigate allegations of pre-determination raised by the Overview and Scrutiny committee in regard to members of the Cabinet.
- That Officers give further consideration to the issues raised concerning school pick-ups and drop-off as well as carers and medical staff visiting patients.
- That Officers are encouraged to retain the cash and card system for paying parking permits to avoid moving to a cashless system.
- That Cabinet are made aware of the committee's concerns regarding the process followed during the handling of the parking petition considered by Full Council on 20th February.

24.33 Councillor Grandon proposed the recommendations as read out by the Lead Officer for Overview and Scrutiny.

24.34 Councillor Jamieson seconded the proposal.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED:

- 1.1. That the Director for Operations and Climate Change takes on board the comments made by the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 1.2. That Officers provide more detailed clarification on the amendments made to the information and proposals set out in the Cabinet report as a result of the consultation process.**

- 1.3. That Officers be requested to set out in the report to Cabinet a proposed range of tariffs that include a free parking period of 1 hour and its associated costs.
- 1.4. That Officers further explore with Suffolk County Council the possibility of introducing on-street resident parking permits across the District, that more information on this type of scheme be included in the report to Cabinet, and investigate implementing an appropriate policy.
- 1.5. That Officers review whether a rebate system could be implemented in Hadleigh, Sudbury, and Lavenham in car parks serving doctors surgeries and medical centres.
- 1.6. That the Director for Operations and Climate Change continues to consider and create shared value for residents by enhancing the councils offer for non-contact, long term parking permits using intelligent parking control processes such that residents are recognised as community stakeholders.
- 1.7. That Officers include more information and context about the rural setting of the districts, the current reliance on car use to travel, and the accessible parking provisions needed to adequately meet this need.
- 1.8. That the Monitoring Officer be asked to investigate allegations of pre-determination raised by the Overview and Scrutiny committee in regard to members of the Cabinet.
- 1.9. That Officers give further consideration to the issues raised concerning school pick-ups and drop-off as well as carers and medical staff visiting patients.
- 1.10. That Officers are encouraged to retain the cash and card system for paying parking permits to avoid moving to a cashless system.
- 1.11. That Cabinet are made aware of the committee's concerns regarding the process followed during the handling of the parking petition considered by Full Council on 20th February.

The business of the meeting was concluded at 12:51pm.

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Chair

Agenda Item 9

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: Cabinet	REPORT NUMBER: BCa/23/49
FROM: Cllr Jessie Carter - Cabinet Member for Housing	DATE OF MEETING: 8 April 2024
OFFICER: Deborah Fenton – Director of Housing	KEY DECISION REF NO. CAB472

This report is open for public inspection. However, Appendix A referred to within the report are not open for public inspection as they contain exempt information by virtue of which the Council are likely to exclude the public during the discussion of the agenda item to which the report relates.

The description of the exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) is as follows: -

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

The author(s) confirm(s) that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information

JOB MANAGEMENT IT SYSTEM FOR BUILDING SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the purchase of the Totalmobile Connect job management IT system, to support transformation initiatives and other strategic objectives within the Building Services department (Housing Directorate)

2. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A detailed study undertaken in Building Services determined that current IT system in place were not fit for purpose and did not have the right capability to support overall service management and continuous improvement.
- 2.2 Building services set out several key objectives which placed heavy emphasis on customer satisfaction, enabling appointment booking at first point of contact, ensuring that customer commitments are fulfilled, increasing first time fix rates and reducing the need for secondary customer contact to chase repairs. These were reflected in a detailed specification of requirement which formed part of an Invitation to Tender (ITT process)
- 2.3 3 suitable suppliers were evaluated in detail (ROCC, Totalmobile and Propeller) through a comprehensive supplier evaluation process. Two further suppliers declined to bid due to maximum budget restrictions and ability to meet our functional requirements.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1	That Cabinet approves the appointment of Totalmobile Limited to supply and implement its comprehensive job management system, to help BMSDC implement its transformation / strategic objectives within Building Services. The decision is sought subject to satisfactory agreement of terms with Totalmobile.
REASON FOR DECISION	
Key Decision required due to the financial value of the contract.	

4. KEY INFORMATION

- 4.1 Key information is provided in appendix 1 of this report. This includes key objectives, detailed on the evaluation process undertaken, final evaluation scores, advantages of chosen supplier and product, commercial summary, next steps and risks.
- 4.2 Due to the level of investment required to ensure the success of this project, we will be ensuring that as part of the project development, we will be defining and tracking the benefits throughout the project as well as any potential financial savings.

5. LINKS TO OUR PLAN FOR BABERGH

- 5.1 This tool will help us with “Delivering good quality core council services” as detailed in our approach to deliver the Babergh Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital Expenditure	Total	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Annual subscription	£53,352	£17,784	£17,784	£17,784
Implementation Consultancy (Total Mobile)	£34,631	£34,631	N/A	N/A
Project Manager and Business Analyst Costs	£84,500	£84,500	N/A	N/A
Totals	£172,483	£136,915	£17,784	£17,784

- 6.1 These costs are budgeted for as part of our HRA capital spend. There will also be associated costs for internal staff resources required for the implementation of the project which will also be capitalised.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The supplier will draft a comprehensive agreement based on a 3-year contractual commitment. The agreement will reflect contract principles and conditions that have been agreed as part of the tendering process, which include service levels and various performance measures. BMSDCs shared legal service will be reviewing the agreement.

7.2 The system will also help us to be compliant with the new Safety and Quality consumer standard and the new requirements set out in Awaab's Law, enabling us more effective reporting for repairs, HHSRS issues, planned improvements and voids and of improved services to our customers.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 All risks and mitigation actions associated with the implementation will be captured early on by the project manager and reported to the project board through the project RAID log. There were also some initial risks identified as part of the project scoping exercise which you can see below along with some mitigations.

Key Risk Description	Likelihood 1-4	Impact 1-4	Key Mitigation Measures	Risk Register and Reference*
Failure to enter agreement with supplier	1	4	Contract principles agreed and accepted during ITT process	Project Risk Register 001
Failure of BMSDC to commit adequate resources to project and beyond	2	3	Interim Project Manager and Business Analyst being recruited to support delivery of the project.	Project Risk Register 002
Failure to achieve integration with other solutions	2	2	The new system can be run standalone if necessary. Due to integration costs, we will be looking at other in-house options for data transfer between the systems.	Project Risk Register 003
Failure to influence / change working practices	2	3	Ensure that there is an effective and comprehensive communications plan for key stakeholders.	Project Risk Register 004

**Name of risk register where risk is currently documented and being actively managed and it's reference number*

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The decision to look to procure this system has come from the Building Services Transformation Board.

9.2 Key stakeholders were involved in the procurement exercise.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

10.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This new dynamic scheduling system, if used properly, will enable us to make savings on operative distance travelled as it will be continually looking to allocate operative resources based on skill and location, so this will positively impact our environment.

12. APPENDICES

Title	Location
(a) Job and Compliance Management IT Solution Paper	Attached (Confidential)

13. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

13.1 None

14. REPORT AUTHORS

14.1 David White – Housing Transformation Manager

14.2 Deborah Fenton – Director of Housing

Agenda Item 11

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