

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>TO:</b>	<b>BDC Overview &amp; Scrutiny</b>	<b>REPORT NUMBER: BOS/23/10</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Councillor David Busby, Leader of the Council</b>	<b>DATE OF MEETING: 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>
<b>OFFICER:</b>	<b>Mark Emms, Director of Operations</b>	

### PROPOSED 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 a 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 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 financially position the Council to be able to deliver its agreed parking strategy, without relying on subsidy from outside of the parking service.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The proposal adopts a full cost recovery approach to remove the current parking service subsidy from other council income sources, so that it is the motorist who pays for the cost of parking provision, as opposed to all taxpayers including those who may not use the service.
- 1.7 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 provider was considered and rejected by Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- 2.2 Not varying the charges was considered and rejected by Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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.
- 2.5 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. Models including an initial free period have been ruled out as they will not provide 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. Furthermore, free periods complicates off street enforcement, which can negatively impact on street enforcement resource.
- 2.6 Sunday and bank holiday charging have been considered as an option as this is commonplace in several of the benchmarked authorities. This option has been rejected as full cost recovery can be achieved without the need to introduce these charges.
- 2.7 It is not easy to separate resident 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 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.
- 2.8 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 – FOR THE BABERGH CABINET**

- 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 are implemented as soon as is practically possible as already agreed under annual fees and charges report.
- 3.3 Changes from Short Stay to Long Stay designations in 2 car parks as per 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 Suitable refund arrangements are put in place with Abbeycroft Leisure for users of the Councils' Leisure Centres (Sudbury and Hadleigh) and for Roys Sudbury store customers 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 four councils where 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.

#### **REASON FOR DECISION**

In order to deliver the approved parking strategy, move 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 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 and support of schemes by SCC).
- 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 put 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 or 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 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 be 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 bi-annually.
- 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 provide certainty of 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. 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.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Car Parks</b>	<b>Designation (* denotes proposed change)</b>	<b>Spaces</b>
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

### 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 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	Proposed 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 included 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 Councils general revenue budget nett 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 councils 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 to this point. 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	Strategic Risk Register SRR08BDC

			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.	
--	--	--	--	--

- 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
<b>Total responding to the survey</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>86</b>
Town and Parish Councils	66	15
Individual Town and Parish Councillors		50
Babergh District Councillors	32	12
Other recognised groups and organisations	25	9
<b>Other responses received via email</b>		<b>2</b>
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 10% of the respondents raised the need to consider/prioritise parking for residents including the mention of residents permits.
- 9.21 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

- 9.22 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.
- 9.23 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.
- 9.24 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.
- 9.25 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 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, surfacing (providing level access), lighting and bay markings and this will benefit all users.
- 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.

### **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 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	Separate
(e) Summary of ETHOS Advice	Attached
(f) EIA Screening Form	Attached
(g) Location Maps	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

Mark Emms – Director of Operations and Climate Change

Matt Smith – Parking Services Manager

Jack Burton – Finance Business Partner

Katherine Davies – Sustainable Travel Officer

## APPENDIX A

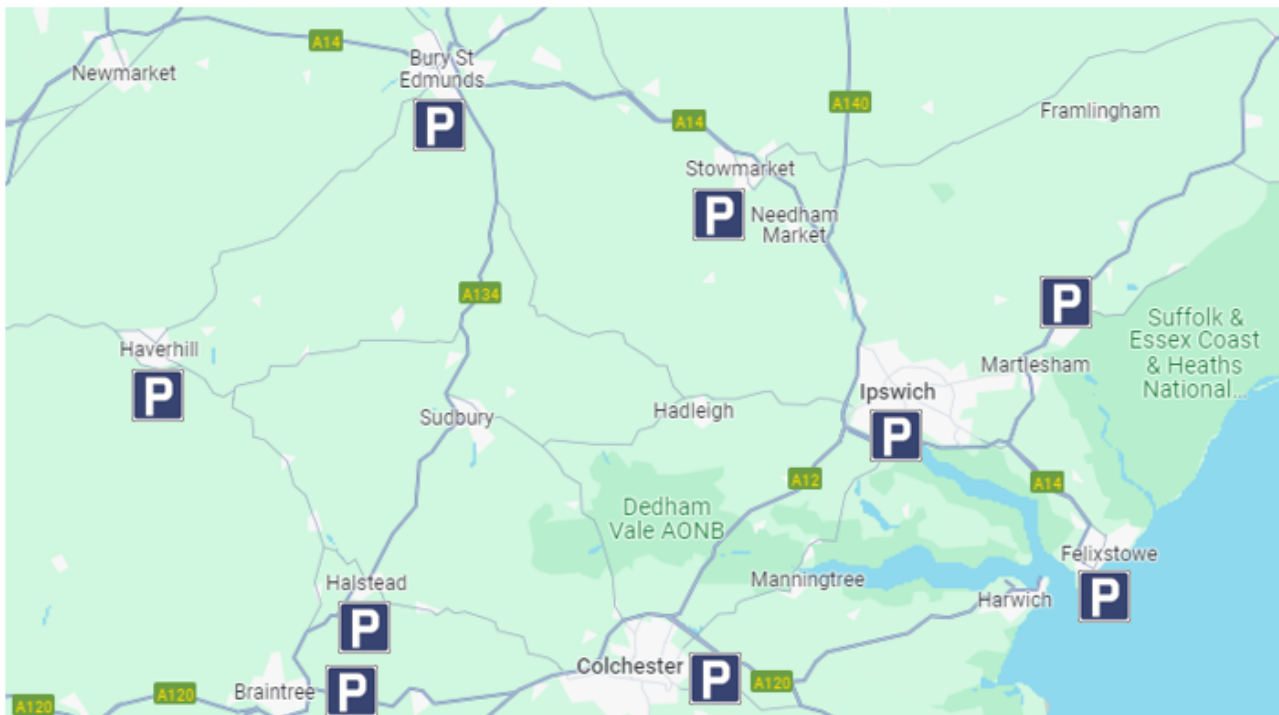
**Table 1** benchmarking of charging periods and tariffs currently in operation in nearby Local Authority managed car parks.

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>
<b>Babergh Car Parking</b>	<b>427,485</b>
<b>Employee Costs</b>	<b>39,947</b>
<b>Operational Costs</b>	<b>435,428</b>
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
<b>Enforcement Costs</b>	<b>24,330</b>
Civil Parking Enforcement Contributions to other Bodies	86,722
Civil Parking Enforcement General Fees & Charges	(62,392)
<b>Corporate Overhead &amp; Recharges</b>	<b>73,370</b>
C Parks General Corporate Recharges In	73,370
<b>Income</b>	<b>(145,590)</b>
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
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>571,784</b>	<b>880,698</b>	<b>939,087</b>	<b>1,024,127</b>	<b>1,008,188</b>	<b>1,194,280</b>	<b>1,325,057</b>	<b>1,014,040</b>	<b>1,207,153</b>	<b>1,338,316</b>
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)
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>(213,602)</b>	<b>(213,602)</b>	<b>(221,502)</b>	<b>(231,502)</b>	<b>(580,775)</b>	<b>(1,000,055)</b>	<b>(1,032,077)</b>	<b>(636,805)</b>	<b>(1,117,718)</b>	<b>(1,153,270)</b>
<b>Total Subsidy (Amount adrift from full cost recovery)</b>		<b>358,182</b>	<b>667,096</b>	<b>717,585</b>	<b>792,625</b>	<b>427,413</b>	<b>194,225</b>	<b>292,979</b>	<b>377,234</b>	<b>89,435</b>	<b>185,046</b>
<b>Babergh Council Budget Variance</b>		-	-	<b>50,489</b>	<b>75,040</b>	<b>(395,754)</b>	<b>(744,731)</b>	<b>(725,374)</b>	<b>(445,933)</b>	<b>(849,521)</b>	<b>(833,307)</b>
<b>Babergh Council Budget Variance (Cumulative)</b>					<b>125,530</b>			<b>(1,865,859)</b>			<b>(2,128,761)</b>

## **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, gully 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 to Leisure Centres and Roys: 100% returned to Roys patrons and 66% of Sudbury Leisure Centre as this is used for both patrons and general parking. Rebates in Hadleigh for the Leisure Centre and in Lavenham where there is a surgery.  
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.



## APPENDIX E



### 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

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

	<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><b>5. Why? (Give reasons why these changes are being introduced)</b></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><b>6. How will it be implemented? (Describe the decision making process, timescales, process for implementation)</b></p>	<p>This proposal builds on the councils approved car parking strategy <a href="#">Parking Strategy - Babergh District Council - Babergh &amp; Mid Suffolk District Councils - Working Together</a> which was subject to detailed district wide consultation questionnaire and roadshows carried out between August 2021 and June 2022.</p> <p>Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> January approved an engagement process with Town and Parish Councils, District Councillors and Recognised groups which has been carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 and incorporated into the proposal.</p> <p>This proposal is going to Overview and Scrutiny for examination and comment 18<sup>th</sup> March and then subject to amendments this is planned to go to Cabinet 9<sup>th</sup> 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><b>No</b> – whilst modest parking charges may not be universally supported by all users, varying charges and restrictions would have no negative impact on any grouping.</p> <p>We are specifically aware that users with physical mobility disability 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>

<b>8. Is there the possibility of discriminating unlawfully, directly or indirectly, against people from any protected characteristic?</b>	Yes  <b>No</b>
<b>9. Could there be an effect on relations between certain groups?</b>	Yes  <b>No</b>
<b>10. Does the policy explicitly involve, or focus on a particular equalities group, i.e. because they have particular needs?</b>	Yes  <b>No</b>
<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 disadvantages 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.

<b>Increasing Charges</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
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
<b>Decreasing Charges</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
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

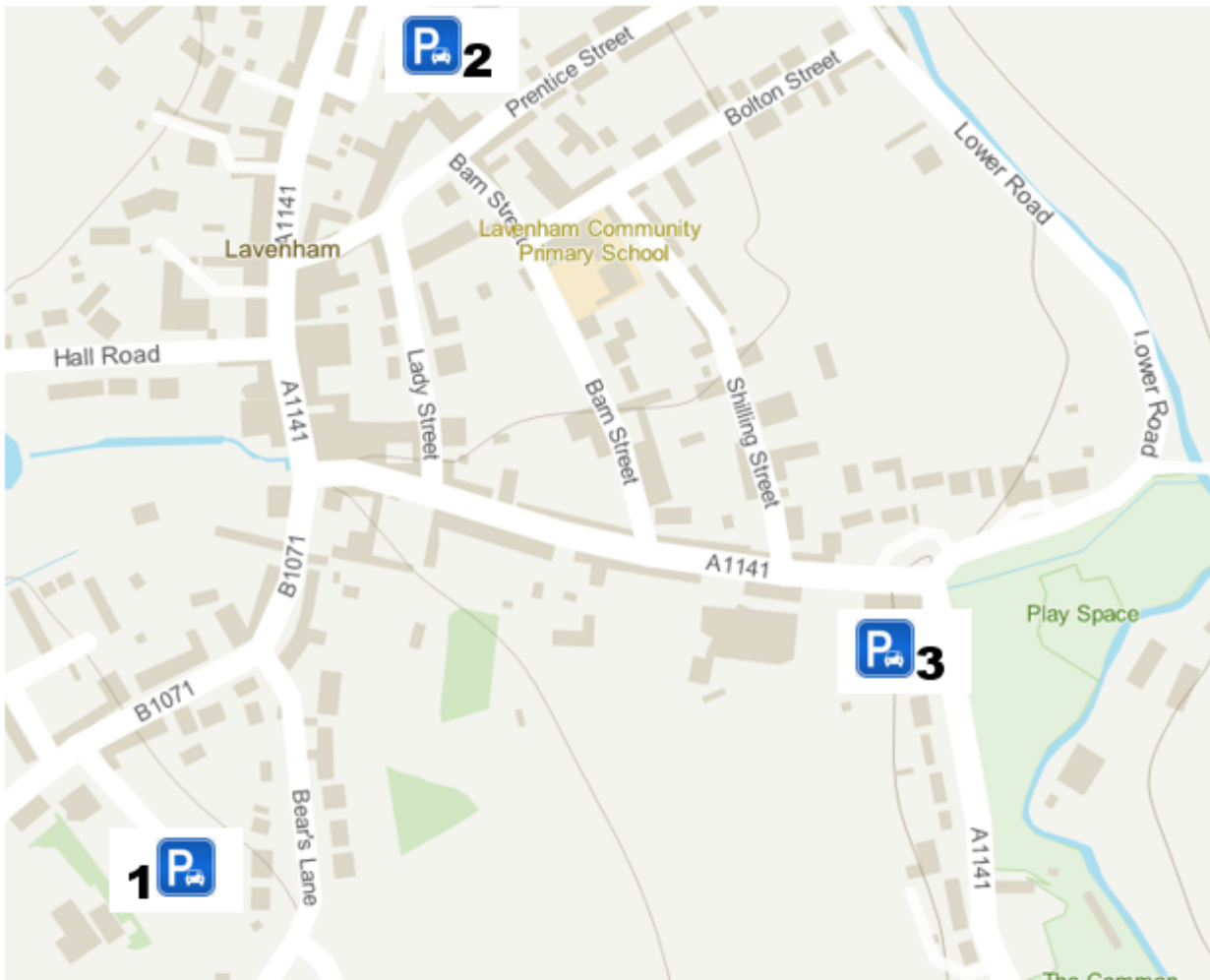




## SADBURY Car Park locations and current tariffs

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 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.