

Monday, 8 April 2024



BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISIONS NOTICE

**DECISIONS BY THE BABERGH CABINET
CALL IN DEADLINE 5:00PM ON 15 APRIL 2024**

The following decisions have been taken by the Cabinet and will come into effect on 16th April 2024 unless the call-in procedure is activated. For clarity, where an item is 'to be noted', 'received' or recommended to Council for a decision, this is deemed not to be a formal Executive decision and so the call-in provisions will not apply.

BCa/23/48 CAR PARKING CHARGES AND ROAD TRAFFIC ORDERS

It was **RESOLVED**: -

- 1.1 Tariff Option A Table 6.7 for short and long stay, hourly and daily parking charges, is implemented as soon as is practically possible.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 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.

- 1.8 That delegated authority be given to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to make changes to the councils' off-street parking orders and put in place suitable resources to implement the recommendations, including any minor amendments resulting from any subsequent dialogue and agreements with Lavenham Council, in this report in compliance with all statutory obligations and law.
- 1.9 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.
- 1.10 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.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Outsourcing of car parks to an external private provider was considered and rejected by Cabinet 9th January 2024.

Not varying the charges was considered and rejected by Cabinet 9th January 2024.

A range of options have been considered from the engagement process and led to amendments being incorporated within this proposal;

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Any Declarations of Interests Declared: None

Any Dispensation Granted: None