

## DRAFT MINUTES – CABINET – 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

N.B. The reports and papers associated with this item can be viewed here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 13th September, 2022, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/agenda/cabinet/2022-23/13th-september-2022-7-30-pm)

### AGENDA ITEM 13 – PROPOSED INCREASE IN PARKING TARIFFS

*Audio recording – 50 minutes 26 seconds*

The Executive Member for Planning and Transport presented the report entitled ‘Proposed Increase in Car Parking Tariffs 2022-23’ and provided Members with following updates:

- There was 2% budgeted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to be applied to car parking charges, in reality the detailed increases in the report amount to around 1.9%.
- It was felt that, with the increases in cost of living, rather than increasing tariffs across the board by 2%, there would be specific increases on 1-hour charges which had not been increased since 2019.
- Feedback had been circulated from stakeholders provided in a supplementary document.
- North Herts Council proposed that any ‘Free after 3pm’ schemes be ticketed to allow for data collection.
- The timeline for feedback was tight and it was not possible to report on this at the relevant Area Committees, but all of the Chairs of these committees had been consulted.
- Proposed amendments to the recommendations to make all 1-hour parking in Royston be charged at 70p and for St Martin’s Road car park in Knebworth be changed to 35p for 30 minutes and 70p for 1-hour parking.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed a further amendment regarding the Hitchin charges, which would make all long stay car parks charge £1.30 after 3pm and all short stay car parks charge £1.50 after 3pm.

Councillor Brown advised further that the aim of raising the 1-hour charge is that it would encourage people to stay longer and travel less.

Councillor Judi Billing advised that whilst it was not ideal that Area Committees were not consulted directly, but there were modern ways for the relevant Chair’s to make contact with their Members without the formal meeting.

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg noted that four of the five Area Committees were represented at the Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Ian Albert noted that increases in Car Parking Tariffs would never be welcomed, but these proposals have tried to be supportive and as limited as possible, for example there would be no increase in season ticket prices.

In response to a question from Councillor Judi Billing, the Executive Member advised that there was no requirement for tickets currently in the car parks running a ‘free after 3pm’ scheme. But the BID, District Council and County Council all funded this scheme and the data used to support it was significantly out of date. The BID had raised concerns about the enforceability of requiring a ticket to be ‘purchased’ after 3pm, but it was felt that while there were downsides to the scheme, overall the data collected would be beneficial.

Councillor Steve Jarvis commented that he was sympathetic to the proposals and most people would not pay more under these. It would be difficult to encourage people to take a free ticket

and therefore the data collected may not be accurate. A better proposal may be to run sample counts at the affected car parks to collect data.

Councillor Sean Prendergast agreed with the overall balance of the proposals, but also questioned the benefit of requiring a free ticket after 3pm.

Councillor Keith Hoskins advised that previously the Hitchin BID had brought in a 'free after 3pm' scheme, but were required to make payments to the Council for this. Therefore they undertook a count at specific car parks to establish usage, and this was conducted by local students.

The Chair noted that overwhelmingly the comments from Members were against the requirement for a free ticket after 3pm and therefore, with the unanimous consent of Members, this recommendation would be removed.

Members agreed unanimously to the amendments proposed by Councillor Brown regarding Royston and Knebworth car parking charges, and Councillor Albert regarding Hitchin.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed and Councillor Ian Albert seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Cabinet agreed to adopt the proposed off-street car park tariffs for 2022/23 as set out in Tables 1 to 7 at Appendix A, with the following amendments:
  - a. Princes Mews, Royston car park to be kept at 70p for 1 hour parking, in line with the increased price at other Royston car parks.
  - b. St Martin's Road, Knebworth car park to be 35p for 30 minutes and 70p for 1 hour parking.
  - c. In Hitchin, all Long Stay car parks to be £1.30 after 3pm and all Short Stay car parks to be £1.50 after 3pm.
- (2) That Cabinet agreed not to increase the charges for Season Tickets for each of its long stay car parks or business permits for its car park at St. Martins Road in Knebworth for 2022/23.
- (3) That Cabinet agreed not to increase the charges for resident permits, visitor permits, business permits or visitor tickets for resident permit zones for 2022/23.
- (4) That Cabinet agreed that the proposed tariff changes, as recommended in paragraphs 2.1 as amended above, are implemented as soon as practicable, and that officers in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport proceed with the implementation as required.
- (5) That Officers proceed with the necessary amendments to the Off- Street Parking Traffic Regulation Orders as required to implement changes recommended above, and that officers in consultation with the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport proceed with the implementation as required.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To implement an increase in car parking tariffs in order to effectively manage their use and in accordance with the Council's fees and charges policy as set out in its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). To set car parking tariffs that support the achievement of modal shift away from private car use and to help support the vitality of town centres.