

HITCHIN AREA FORUM

4 July 2023

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: PROPOSED OFF-STREET CAR PARKING TARIFFS FOR 2023/24: CONSULTATION

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE & PROJECTS MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING & TRANSPORT: COUNCILLOR RUTH BROWN

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 That the Area Forum Members provide their comment on the proposed off-street car park tariffs for 2023/24 as set out in Tables 1 to 5 at Appendix A
- 1.2 To enable Forum Members to provide their comments on the proposed off-street car park tariffs to the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport.

2. STEPS TO DATE

- 2.1 As per the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport have been involved in discussions and selection of the proposed tariff increases for 2023/24.
- 2.2 The Executive Member and Deputy have requested that the Area Forums and key organisations (i.e. the Royston Town Council, Knebworth Parish Council, and the Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston BIDs), are informed and invited to offer their comments on the proposed tariff increases as set out in Appendix A in advance of a report being taken to Cabinet.
- 2.3 Consultation on the proposed off-street parking tariff increases will take place with the Area Forums and key organisations over June and July. Comments received will inform the Officers report to Cabinet in September for their consideration and agreement.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 3.1 The Council's approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021-26, sets an annual budget assumption that the Council should increase parking fees and charges annually by 2%. It makes it clear that parking charge levels are mainly set to manage demand and are reflective of the cost of alternative parking locations. The budget estimates for 2023/24 include the expectation that income from parking will increase by 2%. Any variance from this would be reported through the budget monitoring process.
- 3.2 Paragraph 5.6.30 of the Council's Constitution, states '*it is for cabinet to determine charges for car parking*'. Comments received from the Area Forums and key organisations will be

collated and reported to the Executive Member and Deputy and will inform the Officers report to Cabinet in September.

3.3 Parking Tariffs were last increased by Cabinet in September 2022 for 2022/23, which were implemented on 1st November 2022.

3.4 The proposals for 2022/23 included:

- Achieving most of the target through applying a 10p increase to the one hour tariff bands across all off-street car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Knebworth. (with the exception of Baldock, as Baldock only has a 3hr and all day tariff band)
- Retaining all other tariff bands as per the 2021/22 prices across all car parks.
- Not increasing the cost of Season Tickets or Business Permits due to a reduction in the take up of these permits with the change in employer habits with more people continuing to work from home and commuting into their office on certain days.
- Retaining the off-peak incentives after 3pm in Hitchin and Royston. In Hitchin this included a flat rate irrespective of whether visitors park for one or more hours after 3pm in the short stay and long stay car parks. In Royston the 'free after 3pm' incentive is currently subsidised by an annual contribution from Royston First BID, Royston Area Committee and County Councillor Hertfordshire Locality Budgets to the value of £11k on the total income estimate.

3.5 In order to enable local businesses to further recover from the pandemic it was previously agreed that the Council would delay the inflationary tariff increases for 2022/23 until later in the year. The same rationale has been applied to this financial year given the increases in energy prices and overall cost of living. Officers are therefore planning for implementation during the latter part of 2023/2024, with the proposed tariffs operational into 2024/25 (i.e. from November 2023 to Sept 2024).

3.6 The proposed 2% inflationary uplift for 2023/24 is estimated to increase annual income by £39,500. The actual impact on income from the changes to tariffs will depend on the level of demand for parking. Transaction data over the 12 month period April 2022 to the end of March 2023 has been analysed to estimate the impact of adjusting individual tariffs.

3.7 The following rationale has been applied when considering the proposed tariff increases for 2023/24:

- To continue to support the economic vitality of the town centres by encouraging people to stay longer by increasing the one hour tariff band by a nominal 10p, thereby further reducing the gap between the one hour and two hour tariffs, and by retaining the after 3pm off-peak incentive in all Hitchin and Royston car parks.
- To review and rationalize the 5p tariffs across all car parks in response to complaints received from the public about machines not always accepting 5p coins. The replacement of the machines, which is due to commence later this financial year, will rectify this issue (see para 3.8).
- To adopt a consistent approach across all car parks and harmonize tariffs where possible within each town whilst respecting their separate identities.

3.8 The longer term aim is to set car parking tariffs that support the achievement of modal shift away from private car use in seeking to reduce carbon emissions and supporting more sustainable initiatives as set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2021-2026). It

is also the Council's intention to introduce alternative methods of payment that will enable visitors to stay longer including moving towards more cashless payment options to help support the vitality of town centres. This work has commenced and will be implemented over the next 18 months.

- 3.9 Rounding the 5p tariffs up across all car parks in addition to the proposed 10p one hour tariff increase would increase the overall parking revenue by 2.4%. This is slightly more (equivalent to additional income of around £6,800) than the budget expectation of 2%, based on the current composition of demand for each tariff. This compares to an estimated 2.1% increase from applying the 10p one hour tariff increase across all car parks (around £1,200 additional income).
- 3.10 The proposed 2023/24 off-street tariff increases for the four towns and Knebworth are set out in Tables 1-5 at appendix A. In summary these proposals include:
- (i) Applying a further 10p increase to the one hour tariff bands across all Council operated off-street car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston including the after 3pm one hour tariff band in all Hitchin car parks.
 - (ii) Increasing the 0-2 hour tariff in the Lairage MSCP by 5p – i.e. from £1.25 to £1.30 to align with the one hour tariff band in the other long stay Hitchin car parks of Bancroft and Woodside.
 - (iii) Increasing the half hour tariff by 10p in Knebworth from 30p to 40p but retaining the one hour tariff.
 - (iv) Rationalizing all the 5p tariffs across all car parks to facilitate usage of the machines, has resulted in the majority of the tariffs increasing by 5p, with some reductions to the all day tariff in the Letchworth long stay car parks, the two and four hour tariff in the Letchworth Town Hall short stay car park, and to the three hour tariff in the Royston Princes Mews car park.
 - (v) In Knebworth, given the smaller size of the high street and in seeking to encourage visitors to stay longer to support the local businesses, the 5p tariff has been removed, thereby reducing the two, three and four hour tariffs by 5p.
 - (vi) Retaining the off-peak incentive after 3pm in Royston, where the subsidised full 'free after 3pm' policy in all Royston car parks will be retained until such time as this policy is reviewed, such as in light of the Hertfordshire County Council Sustainable Travel Town Initiative¹.
 - (vii) Retaining all other tariff bands as per the 2021/22 prices (unaltered in 2022/23) across all car parks.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Area Form notes the content of the report.
- 4.2 The Area Forum provide their comments on the proposed off-street car park tariffs for 2023/24 as set out in Tables 1 to 5 at [Appendix A](#)

¹ The HCC Sustainable Travel Town Initiative is a concept being promoted by HCC through their LTP4 which seeks to promote more active and sustainable modes of travel and includes implementing measures to reduce car travel.

- 4.3 Officers will collate and report all comments to the Executive Member and Deputy for Planning and Transport to be taken into consideration when preparing the report for Cabinet in September and making recommendations on the proposed off street parking tariffs for 2023/24.

5. **APPENDICES**

- 5.1 Appendix A: Proposed 2023/2024 Tariffs for NHC Off-Street Managed Car Parks

6. **CONTACT OFFICERS**

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7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy 2019 - 2031(adopted January 2019)
<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/parking/parking-strategy>
- 7.2 Appendix A – North Herts Council Climate Change Strategy: Proposed Actions 2021-2026 (adopted March 2021) [NHDC-294 NHDC Climate change Strategy 21-26 Appendix A.pdf \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

Proposed 2023/2024 Parking Tariffs for North Herts Council Off-Street Managed Car Parks

[Note: Purple font shows proposed tariff changes as set out in para 3.10 of the Attached Report: Hitchin Area Forum 4 July 2023: Proposed Off-Street Car Parking Tariffs for 2023/24 - consultation]

Table 1 – Hitchin

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
Bancroft	Standard tariffs	1	£1.20	£1.30
		2	£2.40	£2.40
		3	£3.10	£3.10
		Over 3hrs	£5.15	£5.20
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat Rate	£1.30	£1.40
Biggin Lane	Standard tariffs	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£2.60	£2.60
		3	£4.15	£4.20
		4	£5.70	£5.70
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat Rate	£1.50	£1.60
Christchurch	Standard tariffs	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£2.60	£2.60
		3	£4.15	£4.20
		4	£5.70	£5.70
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat rate	£1.50	£1.60
Lairage MSCP		0-2	£1.25	£1.30
		3	£2.30	£2.30
		Over 3 Hrs	£4.55	£4.60
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat Rate	£1.30	£1.40

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
Portmill East	Standard tariffs	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£2.60	£2.60
		3	£4.15	£4.20
		4	£5.70	£5.70
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat Rate	£1.50	£1.60
Portmill West	Standard tariffs	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£2.60	£2.60
		3	£4.15	£4.20
		4	£5.70	£5.70
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat rate	£1.50	£1.60
St Mary's Square	Standard tariffs	1	£1.40	£1.50
		2	£2.60	£2.60
		3	£4.15	£4.20
		4	£5.70	£5.70
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat rate	£1.50	£1.60
Woodside	Standard tariffs	1	£1.20	£1.30
		2	£2.40	£2.40
		3	£3.10	£3.10
		Over 3hrs	£5.15	£5.20
	Post 3pm Tariffs	Flat Rate	£1.30	£1.40

Table 2 - Letchworth

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
Hillshott	Standard tariffs	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£2.50	£2.50
		Over 3hrs	£5.05	£5.00

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
Garden Square MSCP Short Stay	Standard tariffs	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£2.50	£2.50
		4	£4.55	£4.60
Garden Square MSCP Long Stay	Standard tariffs	1	£0.80	£0.90
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£2.50	£2.50
		Over 3hs	£5.05	£5.00
Norton Common Bowling Club	Standard tariffs	2	£0.00	£0.00
		4	£1.75	£1.80
		5	£4.85	£4.90
Norton Common Swimming Pool	Standard tariffs	2	£0.00	£0.00
		4	£1.75	£1.80
		5	£4.85	£4.90
Letchworth Town Hall	Standard tariffs	1	£1.20	£1.30
		2	£2.05	£2.00
		3	£3.30	£3.30
		4	£5.05	£5.00

Table 3 Royston

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
Angel Pavement	Standard tariffs	1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£3.85	£3.90
	Post 3pm Tariffs	1	£0.00	£0.00
		2	£0.00	£0.00
		3	£0.00	£0.00

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
Civic Centre	Standard tariffs	1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£0.85	£0.90
		3	£1.15	£1.20
		Over 3hrs	£3.50	£3.50
	Post 3pm Tariffs	1	£0.00	£0.00
		2	£0.00	£0.00
		3	£0.00	£0.00
Market Place	Standard tariffs	1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£3.85	£3.90
	Post 3pm Tariffs	1	£0.00	£0.00
		2	£0.00	£0.00
		3	£0.00	£0.00
Princes Mews	Standard tariffs	1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£5.05	£5.00
		Over 3hrs	£7.65	£7.70
	Post 3pm Tariffs	1	£0.00	£0.00
		2	£0.00	£0.00
		3	£0.00	£0.00
Priory Gardens	Standard tariffs	1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£1.55	£1.60
		3	£3.85	£3.90
	Post 3pm Tariffs	1	£0.00	£0.00
		2	£0.00	£0.00
		3	£0.00	£0.00
The Warren	Standard tariffs	1	£0.70	£0.80
		2	£1.35	£1.40
		3	£1.85	£1.90
		3+	£3.95	£4.00
	Post 3pm Tariffs	1	£0.00	£0.00
		2	£0.00	£0.00
		3	£0.00	£0.00

Table 4 Baldock

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
The Twitchell	Standard tariffs	3	£1.25	£1.30
		3+	£1.65	£1.70

Table 5 Knebworth

Car Park		Duration / hours	2022/2023 Tariffs	2023/24 Proposed Tariff changes
St Martin's Road	Standard tariffs	30 mins	£0.35	£0.40
		1	£0.70	£0.70
		2	£1.55	£1.50
		3	£2.15	£2.10
		4	£4.35	£4.30