

# CABINET

17 February 2026

## \*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

### TITLE OF REPORT: PROPOSED PARKING TARIFFS FOR 2026/27

REPORT OF: SERVICE DIRECTOR - PLACE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLANNING & TRANSPORT: COUNCILLOR DONNA WRIGHT

COUNCIL PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report requests that Cabinet agrees:

- (i) the proposed car parking tariffs in North Hertfordshire Council's off street car parks across the district and on-street charging bays in Royston town centre in order to effectively manage their use, and in accordance with the Council's fees and charges policy as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS);
- (ii) the proposal to increase the charges for season tickets in the Council's long stay car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston and business permits in St. Martins Road, Knebworth car park in accordance with the Council's fees and charges policy as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) given these were last increased in 2021; and
- (iii) the proposal to increase the charges for resident permits, visitor permits, business permits and visitor tickets for resident parking zones in accordance with the Council's fees and charges policy as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

1.2 Subject to approval of the recommendations, discussions will continue with relevant parties to further consider and agree any subsidy and incentive schemes for 2026/27 in the Council car parks on a break-even approach on request in accordance with the policy proposal agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 19 September 2023.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 To adopt the proposed off-street and on-street car park tariff increases for 2026/27 referred to as Option 3 in paragraphs 8.2.14 of this Report and as set out in:

- (i) Tables 1, 2 and 4 for Hitchin, Letchworth and Knebworth at Appendix A, and
- (ii) Tables 5a for Royston off-street car parks and 6a for Royston on-street parking bays in Market Hill at Appendix B

2.2	To increase the proposed charges for season tickets for each of its long stay car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston and business permits at St. Martins Road car park in Knebworth for 2026/27 as set out in Tables 7 and 8 at <u>Appendix A</u> .
2.3	To increase the charges for resident permits, visitor permits, business permits and visitor tickets for resident parking zones for 2026/27 as set out in Section 8.4 of this report.
2.4	That Cabinet delegate to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport all decisions necessary to give effect to the recommendations including the issuing of the Notice of Variation to the 2024 Off-Street Parking Traffic Regulation Orders and the 2023 On-Street Consolidation Order.
2.5	That Cabinet notes the 'direction of travel' with regard possible subsidy schemes arising from the proposed programme of tariffs and charges.

### 3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 To implement an increase in car parking tariffs, season tickets and permits within resident parking zones 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.

### 4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 See Section 8 of the report for:

- proposed changes to car parking tariffs within the Council car parks and on-street;
- proposed increases to season tickets in Council long stay car parks: and
- proposed increases to resident permits, visitor permits, business permits and visitor tickets for resident parking zones;

### 5. **CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

5.1 The Executive Member for Planning and Transport has been involved in discussions regarding the selection of tariffs, including proposals to increase season tickets in long stay car parks and permits within resident parking zones and kept informed on these matters. The Executive Member for Finance has also been kept informed.

5.2 The Community Forums for Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Southern Rural were informed on the proposed tariff changes in December by way of information notes and asked for their views. The Executive Member, and Strategic Infrastructure & Projects Manager attended the Forum meetings to present the proposals and receive comments. The Town Centre and BID Managers for each of the towns, Royston Town Council and Knebworth Parish Council were also consulted and invited to offer their views and comments on the proposed tariff changes.

5.3 A summary of the comments received from these organisations, the Community Forum meetings, are summarised at Section 8.2. All comments have been considered and discussed with the Executive Member and taken into account in finalising this report.

## **6. FORWARD PLAN**

6.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on 21 November 2025.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

7.1 The Council's approved Medium-Term Financial Strategy 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 last tariff increases were approved by Cabinet in March 2025 and implemented in June 2025 for 2025/26. This included a 4% inflationary increase across all tariff bands as the Council had not increased tariffs since 2023/24, enabling time for businesses to recover from the pandemic and to address subsequent economic pressures.

7.2 It is proposed to implement the new parking tariffs in line with the Council's budget setting process for the start of the financial year. The budget estimates for 2026/27 include the expectation that income from parking will increase by 2%. Any variance from this would be reported through the budget monitoring process.

7.3 Consideration has also been given in this report to increasing the cost of:

- (i) season tickets in the long stay car parks and business permits in the Knebworth car park by 2% inflation. The last increase was in 2021. See Section 8.3 below; and
- (ii) permits, visitor permits, business permits and visitor tickets in resident parking zones by 2% inflation. See section 8.4 below.

7.4 Paragraph 5.7.30 of the Council's Constitution, states '*it is for cabinet to determine charges for car parking*'. The proposals for car parking tariffs and season ticket increases are set out section 8 below.

## **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **8.1 Car Park Tariff Proposals**

8.1.1 The parking tariff proposals that were last increased by Cabinet in June 2025 included:

- An inflationary uplift of all tariffs in Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Knebworth and Royston car parks, including the on-street parking bays in Market Hill in Royston, by 4% rounded to the nearest 10p, except for the free 0-2 hour tariff at Norton Common car parks.
- Retaining the after 3pm off-peak incentive in all Hitchin car parks increased by 4% and the after 3pm incentive in Royston with the introduction of a flat rate tariff of 50p. This post 3pm scheme in Royston was subsequently agreed to be subsidised by the Royston Town Council and the Royston BID as free parking.
- Introducing a similar off-peak incentive in Letchworth, by proposing a flat rate tariff after 3 pm. This has been well received and has resulted in some increase in footfall into the town centre.
- A subsidy agreement was also reached with the Knebworth Parish Council in subsidising the 30 min tariff band as free on a break even basis in accordance with the Council's agreed policy to consider and agree requests for subsidised parking within the council operated car parks. (Cabinet Decision 19 September 2023).

8.1.2 A 2% uplift for 2026/27 is estimated to increase annual income by £39.1k. This is the baseline position against which tariff options have been considered. This 2% increase is below the general level of inflation, as the Council is aware of the increase in the cost of living on residents and seeks to support local businesses and visitors to its town centres and to Knebworth where possible. The actual impact on income from the changes to tariffs will depend on the level of demand for parking. Transaction data from September 2024 to August 2025 has been analysed to estimate the impact of adjusting individual tariffs.

8.1.3 Two proposed tariff options were initially considered and are summarised below, with a third proposed Option developed following discussion with the Royston Town Council and Royston BID.

8.1.4 In developing options, the broad aims are:

- to be consistent across all car parks,
- to harmonise tariffs where possible within each town whilst respecting their separate identities
- to consider and agree applications from any organisation wishing to implement subsidised and / or incentive parking schemes in any of the Council's car parks across the District
- to be practical and enforceable in operational terms (see, in particular, Option 2 / paragraph 8.1.12 below), and
- 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 Sustainability Strategy (2025-30)

8.1.5 The Council also introduced alternative methods of payment with the implementation of new parking machines across all its car parks in 2025 which enables visitors to stay longer to help support the vitality of the town centres.

8.1.6 Option 1 – this included:

- (i) Applying a 2 % inflationary increase to all tariffs across all council operated car parks in Baldock, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Knebworth rounded up to the nearest 10p with the exception of the free 0-2 hour tariff at the Norton Common car parks in Letchworth to facilitate users of the common and being out of centre car parks, and
- (ii) retaining the after 3pm off-peak incentive tariff in all Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston car parks increased by 2%.

8.1.7 This resulted in some of the 2hr, 3hr, 4hr and 4hr+ tariff bands across some car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston and Knebworth increasing by 10p and all other tariffs including the post 3pm flat rate tariffs remaining unaltered with no tariff increases in Baldock.

8.1.8 The tariffs in the Twitchell car park in Baldock will remain unaltered given the low tariff structure within the long stay car park.

8.1.9 This option falls short of the budgeted estimated 2% overall inflationary increase for 2026/27 by around £6,500.

8.1.10 Option 2 – This included:

- (i) As per Option 1 above *plus* proposing to increase the post 3pm flat rate tariff in Royston from 50p to £1.00 (including the on-street parking bays in Market Hill in Royston).

8.1.11 As stated in para 8.1.1, the Royston BID and Royston Town Council (RTC) presently subsidises the post 3pm, 50p tariff as free parking, this was in agreement with the Royston BID through a 'lump sum' and the RTC on an 'up to' basis subject to monitoring data demonstrating actual usage, whereby members of the public would be required to register their parking sessions after 3pm at the new machines. A subsidy contribution of £35k was agreed for 2025/26.

8.1.12 This arrangement has led to a number of operational challenges. Registration of post 3pm parking sessions is effectively voluntary, as enforcement for failing to register (or 'pay') a nil tariff cannot be reasonably pursued. This likely leads to significant under-registration of actual sessions, meaning the current subsidy arrangement cannot be effectively monitored or charged for. Officer's view was that a nominal transaction fee is required *after* application of any subsidy to enable more accurate monitoring and effective enforcement to take place.

8.1.13 Overall, this Option 2 could result in a slight surplus against the 2% benchmark of around £7,800.

8.1.14 Both Options were discussed with the Exec Members for Planning & Transport and for Finance, and it was agreed to discount the first option given its shortfall in not meeting the inflationary forecast for 2026/27, and to proceed with consulting on the second option (Option 2). The Community Forums, the Town Centre BID Managers, Royston Town Council and Kenworth Parish Council were all consulted on this proposed option as outlined in Tables 1 to 6 at [Appendix A](#). See summary of comments and considerations as section 8.2 below.

8.1.15 Option 3 – is a third option proposed at paragraphs 8.2.9 to 8.2.14 following consideration of the comments received and ongoing discussion with the RTC and Royston BID as summarised in section 8.2.

## 8.2 Summary of comments and considerations

8.2.1 The Proposed Parking Tariff Increases were presented at each Community Forum meetings during December, where:

- (i) Baldock and Villages Community Forum - noted the proposals with little discussion, given there were no proposed changes to the parking tariffs in the Twitchell car park 2026/27.
- (ii) Hitchin Community Forum - noted the proposals where the Chair asked for member views by 9 January, no further comments or views from members have been received.
- (iii) Southern Rural Community Forum - noted the proposals commenting that Southern Rural residents are more likely to use car parks than those living closer to town centres and that increases in parking charges would directly affect rural communities travelling into town centres.
- (iv) Letchworth Community Forum – noted the proposals and the need to increase cost of parking, no further comments or views from members have been received. .

(v) [\*Royston\*](#) and Villages Community Forum – noted the proposals and discussed the following points:

- Expressing concerns about removing ‘*free after 3pm parking*’ risks undermining efforts to bring people into town. While raising current costs may be acceptable, the free element is vital and business could lose custom after removing free parking.
- Businesses are already burdened with rising rates. Removing ‘*free after 3pm parking*’ would further impact them.
- People visit the town from surrounding villages and by removing ‘*free after 3pm parking*’ could result in people going elsewhere.
- Warning of unintended consequences where without ‘*free after 3pm parking*’, people may park in residential roads
- The rationale with 3-hour stays increasing, shorter stays remaining unchanged, and season tickets rising with £15 increase as proposed.
- Private offers are cheaper, yet the aim is to encourage longer stays.
- The ‘*free after 3pm parking*’ could be considered more about convenience rather than money, and while the BID and RTC subsidise the scheme, this does not cover lost income and that people may not realise the true cost of the scheme.
- The Deputy Chief Officer of Royston Town Council explained that discussions between RTC, BID, and NHC have been open and constructive in reviewing the proposed tariffs and considering other options.

Notes from each of the Community Forum Meetings are available of the Councils Website via the hyperlinks created in this report at 8.2.1 (i) to (v) above.

8.2.2 *Knebworth Parish Council* – were consulted and have made no comments on the proposed tariff increases at the time of writing this report.

The proposed tariff increases in Knebworth will result in the 4hr tariff increasing from £4.40 to £4.50. All other tariffs will remain unaltered. (See **Table 4** in [Appendix A](#).) Officers have asked if the Parish wish to continue with subsidising the 30 minute parking tariff as free parking in the St. Martins Road Car Park for 2026/27, on a break-even basis in accordance with the Council’s agreed policy. Any further update will be given at the meeting.

8.2.3 *Letchworth BID* – The tariff options were discussed with the BID manager and while the BID would rather not have the tariff increases, they understand the budget pressures within the Council and consider 10p to be a modest increase if this were to be implemented.

In Letchworth the proposed tariff increases are affecting the 3hr and post 3hr tariffs in the short and long stay car parks, all other tariffs and the flat rate tariff post 3pm will remain unaltered. These proposals are shown in **Table 2** in [Appendix A](#).

8.2.4 *Hitchin Bid* – while they have expressed their concern that tariff increases are never easy and have not commented as such on the proposed tariffs, they have requested if the Council could consider the following items as listed below in seeking to improve the usage of the Lairage multi-storey car park (MSCP).

- **Electronic signage** - Signage is desperately needed and at the September NHDC Hitchin Community Forum meeting it was reiterated that this would be coming soon, where electronic signage seemed like the best option.

- **Name change** – considering changing the name of the multi-story carpark to something more relatable such as **Hitchin Multi-Storey Car Park**. The BID think that would make a difference but do understand the historic significance of the word 'Lairage' relating to the past.
- **Cleaning the walkway canopies and general tidy up/cleaning** of the whole Multi Story Car park as it looks very run down and tired in some areas.

8.2.5 While these are outside the remit of this report, officers recognise the need to promote and encourage better use of the Lairage car park and are in discussion with the Bid and considering various budget options as a means of addressing these requests.

8.2.6 For Hitchin, the proposed increases will result in the 2hr, 3hr and 4hr tariffs in the short stay car parks and the 2hr, 3hr and all-day parking tariffs in the long stay car parks increasing by a modest 10p, with the exception of the Lairage MSCP where only the all day tariff will increase by 10p. All the 1hr and the flat rate tariffs after 3pm will remain unaltered across all car parks. These proposals are shown in **Table 1** in Appendix A.

8.2.7 *Royston BID and Royston Town Council* expressed strong concerns about the proposals, in particular to the increase in the post 3pm tariff from 50p to £1:00 and the negative perceived impact this could have on visitors to the town center and on local businesses. In light of the concerns raised and those comments made at the Royston Community Forum meeting, Officers and the Exec Member have held several discussions with the RTC and the BID in exploring other possible tariff options for the Royston car parks where the Council can continue to seek to meet its overall inflationary forecast for 2026/27, resolve the current operational challenges and continue to support any further subsidy options for 2026/27. It was agreed for the RTC and the BID to review the tariffs and to propose an option for officers to consider with the Exec Member and for officers to include their proposal in the report to Cabinet for their awareness and potential consideration.

8.2.8 The proposal is outlined at 8.2.9 below and shown in Appendix B for Royston Car Parks. It was agreed that both the RTC and the BID proceed with seeking agreement to their proposals at their respective committee and board meetings. (These being the RTC at their Town Council Meeting on 19 January and the Royston First BID Board Meeting on 28 January 2026)

8.2.9 The proposal includes:

- altering the current 1hr, 2hr, 3hr and all day tariffs by increasing the 1hr tariff by 10p and reducing the 2hr, 3hr and all day tariffs, thereby largely harmonising the charging regime to £1, £1.50, £2.50, for the 1hr, 2hr and 3hr tariffs across all car parks and on-street at Market Hill, with the exception of the Civic Centre car park , and reducing the all-day parking at the long stay car parks to £4.00 respectively, thereby offering a clearer tariff structure for visitors;
- proposing a flat rate tariff of £1 for up to 3hrs parking at the Civic centre to facilitate use of the car park for the surgery and town hall activities and provide greater opportunities for 'linked trips' with the town centre;
- retaining the proposed £1 post 3pm flat rate tariff; and
- giving consideration to alternative subsidy options.

8.2.10 The RTC and BID are not likely to continue to subsidise a free or reduced rate for parking after 3pm, given the likely increase in parking session registrations once there is a charge and do not consider an ongoing subsidy would be sustainable in the long term in meeting the Council policy of a tariff needing to be set in order to implement subsidy and incentive parking schemes on a break-even approach. Their preference is to pivot their subsidy offer to instead consider subsidising free parking for the month of December across all car parks to support local businesses in the lead up to the Christmas period.

8.2.11 Both organisations have informed the Council of the outcome of their meetings where:

- *The Royston Town Council draft minute* (103/26) states: ‘*The council RESOLVED to provide the following comments for response to NHDC: The council confirms that they prefer the tariff structure proposed by the RTC officers but that they remain unhappy about losing the free after 3 scheme. They also note that they are willing to continue exploring the suggestion from Royston BID of a December subsidy at a total subsidy cost of approximately £30k, pending further discussion.*
- *Royston BID* – advised that the board agreed to the new charges at their meeting on 28 January, and with regards to a subsidy for Q4, they would like to propose this is from November 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> December subject to RTC and NHC agreement.

8.2.12 Officers are supportive of this suggested option for Royston as it:

- largely harmonises the charging regime in accordance with the Councils approach as outlined in para 8.1.4 above, and rationalises the tariff structure to round pounds or 50p values across all car parks making it easier for the customer and could help to encourage more even footfall through the day in supporting local businesses by reducing the 2hr and 3hr tariffs;
- includes the £1 after 3pm flat rate tariff as originally proposed in Option 2 resolving the operational challenges outline in paragraph 8.1.12; and
- the proposed £1 flat rate tariff for up to three hours parking at the Civic Centre will continue to facilitate use of that car park for the surgery and town hall/community activities, potentially encourage linked trips with the town centre; and has some precedent elsewhere in the District where tariffs bridge across time bands (e.g. at Lairage MSCP for the 1- & 2-hour charge).

8.2.13 Overall, this suggested parking tariff option for Royston together with the Option 2 proposed tariff increases for Hitchin, Letchworth and Knebworth could result in a further surplus against the MTFS benchmark over Option 2 of approximately £6,000.

8.2.14 It is the officer recommendation that Cabinet approves Option 3 – which provides for a proposed tariff increase as outlined in **Tables 1, 2 and 4** for Hitchin, Letchworth and Knebworth respectively as per Appendix A (Option 2) and with Tables 5 and 6 being amended as shown in **Tables 5a and 6a** to reflect the RTC and BID proposals at Appendix B.

8.2.15 To this end, the Council will continue discussions with the BID and the RTC regarding a preferred subsidy option for 2026/27 i.e. possibly for the month of December as requested. Initial calculations on both sides suggest (without prejudice) this is likely to be affordable / acceptable.

### 8.3 Season Tickets

8.3.1 The Council had previously chosen not to increase the cost of Season Tickets or Business Permits since 2021 due to the reduction in the take up of these permits with the change in employer habits since the pandemic with more people continuing to work from home and commuting into their office on certain days as well as a means of supporting local businesses.

8.3.2 This trend has continued and has reduced more significantly in the last financial year. Following discussion with the Executive Members for Planning & Transport and for Finance, it is proposed to increase season tickets in the Council's long stay car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston and business permits in St. Martins Road car park in Knebworth for 2026/27 by 2% in accordance with the Council's MTFS. These proposals would equate to:

- £2 increase on a 1-month up to £15 increase on a 12-month season ticket in the long stay car parks; and
- £3 increase on a 6-month and £5 increase on a 12-month business permit in Knebworth car park.

8.3.3 Overall this 2% inflationary increase could achieve circa £2.9k in additional Season Ticket income. Business permits in Knebworth have remained fairly constant and have recently been increased from 8 to 10 permit places. This proposed increase would increase income from season tickets and business permits by approximately £3k for 2026/27, assuming demand remains unchanged. This proposed price increase is expected to maintain the use of the long-stay car parks by season ticket holders, as they will still be receiving a reasonable discount over full day pay-as-you-use charging.

8.3.4 The above proposed increases are set out in **Tables 7 and 8** in Appendix A.

### 8.4 Resident Parking Zones

8.4.1 Following discussion with the Executive Members for Planning & Transport and for Finance, it is proposed to increase resident, business or visitor permits and visitor ticket books for each of the Council's resident permit parking zones across the district for 2026/27 by 2% in accordance with the Council's MTFS. This is to align with other inflationary costs associated with administering the resident permit scheme; operating the Parking Enforcement Service; and the ongoing maintenance costs associated with respective on-street regulations, i.e. refreshing road markings and replacing signs. The proposed increases are set in the Table at 8.4.2 below rounded to the nearest £1.

#### 8.4.2 Resident Permit Parking Zones: Proposed increases for 2026/27

<b>Permit Type</b>	<b>Current Permit Prices in 2025/26</b>		<b>Proposed Permit Prices for 2026/27</b>	
	<b>6 months</b>	<b>12 months</b>	<b>6 months</b>	<b>12 months</b>
Resident Permit	£43	£86	£44	£88
Visitor Permit	£43	£86	£44	£88
Business Permit	£43	£86	£44	£88
Visitor Tickets	£12.50 per book		<b>£13.00 per book</b>	

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Under the Terms of Reference for Cabinet, paragraph 5.7.30 of the Council's Constitution states that the Cabinet should by way of resolution determine charges for car parking.
- 9.2 The proposed tariff changes and proposed increase in season tickets and business permits in the off street car parks, the resident, visitor and business permits and visitor tickets in residential parking zones will be required to be published as a Notice of Variation to the respective North Hertfordshire District Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Orders and to the North Hertfordshire District Council 2023 On-street Consolidate Order in the local papers in compliance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Such Notice of Variation will give a minimum of 21 days' notice of when the new parking tariffs and permit increases for the resident permit zones will be implemented. Site notices will be displayed in all affected car parks and on street. Section 14.6.10(b)(v) of the constitution delegates authority to the Director: Place for the creation of on and off street parking orders.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The budget forecast for 2026/27, includes estimated additional income from inflation to the Council of £39.1k for pay-as-you-use tariffs and £3k for season tickets.
- 10.2 The approach taken, and assumptions made in estimating the financial impact of the proposed pay-as-you-use tariff structure, as laid out in Tables 1 to 6 at Appendix A and revised Tables 5a and 6a for Royston Car parks at Appendix B, are explained in the body of this report. While the actual impact on parking activity from the proposed tariff structure is unknown, given the impact of the increases in the overall cost of living on our car parks, the income estimates derived are based on the usage figures from September 2024 to August 2025, including the voluntary post 3 pm vehicle registration figures at Royston car parks have been adjusted to reflect the income expectation in relation to parking charges within the approved budget for 2026/27.
- 10.3 The proposed 2% inflationary increase across all tariffs rounded to the nearest 10p, together with the 50p to £1 increase in the Royston post 3pm flat rate tariff could result in a further income stream of circa £7.8k under Option 2 (as set out in Appendix A) or circa £13.9k under Option 3 with the suggested tariff options for Royston car parks as set out in Appendix B (both on top of the assumed inflation, i.e. 2.4% vs 2.7%). Both Royston First BID and Royston Town Council and Knebworth Parish Council have expressed an interest in continuing subsidising parking tariffs within their areas.
- 10.4 The Royston Town Council and Royston BID have suggested subsidising free parking for the month of December across all car parks in Royston and have suggested a £30k subsidy in principle towards subsidising a free parking scheme in December 2026 based 2025 usage figures. This is subject to further discussions between all three parties and is an option the Council would consider under its agreed policy to implement subsidy and incentive parking schemes on a break-even approach.
- 10.5 The proposed tariff increases will not impact on the current subsidy agreement with Knebworth Parish Council should they wish to continue with subsidising the 30min free parking tariff option at St. Martins Road Car Park for 2026/27. This will be a contribution of circa £2,750 and will continue to be reviewed annually together with inflationary increases and usage data as visitors will be required to register their parking session.

- 10.6 There is a budget set-aside for the cost of implementing the proposed tariff increases including publishing the notices, advertising the increased car parking tariffs in the local press, amending tariff boards and making adjustments to the car park payment machines.
- 10.7 If approved, income from the amended tariff and charging structures will be monitored from actual transactions on an ongoing basis. Any significant variances will be reported through the Quarterly Budget Updates to Cabinet. The extent to which the 2% assumption in the MTFS is / isn't being achieved will feed into consideration of any further amendments to tariffs and charges for 2027/28.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.
- 11.2 The risks to car parking income have been considered as part of the assessment. The recommendations have been made whilst acknowledging that there is a financial risk that the review of tariff structure might not produce the estimated income and could result in downward trend in parking sales. The off-peak parking incentive will be monitored through the number of parking session registered under the alternative payment options available with the new parking machines, thereby providing the Council with a more reliable data base.
- 11.3 Car parking usage and income and the sale of Season tickets and permits within resident parking zones is continually monitored throughout the year, including as part of the regular revenue monitoring reports.
- 11.4 There is also a risk that there may be a negative public reaction to the agreed recommendations, which should be managed by the timely communication of any changes and the reasoning behind them.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no direct equality issues arising from this report. With the introduction of the new parking machines in 2025, there is a range of charging/payment options available to cater for the widest needs of local car park users, (such as cashless. Coin and post-payment options) together with the continued option for organisations to subsidise tariffs to support local businesses and visitors to the town centre. The realignment of the tariffs seeks to improve turnover and usage throughout the day thereby supporting the town centre businesses and benefit the economy of North Hertfordshire. The proposed increases for Season tickets in long stay car parks and resident permits, visitor permits, business permits or visitor tickets for resident parking zones is a nominal increase and allows for the ongoing management of such permit schemes and maintenance of resident permit zones.

### **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at Paragraph 12.

### **14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 The NHDC parking strategy seeks to minimise environmental impacts where possible in regard to on-street and off-street parking. As noted at paragraph 8.1.4 there may be further reduction in car travel to some of the towns with the implementation of the parking tariffs thereby encouraging people to use other forms of sustainable travel into the town centres, such as by walking, cycling and using public transport.

### **15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 There are no new human resource implications arising from the contents of this report. Officers will be responsible for implementing the new tariffs, undertaking the necessary amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders, and monitoring the potential impacts of the subsidy incentive schemes.

### **16. APPENDICES**

16.1 Appendix A: Option 2 - Proposed Parking Tariffs for 2026/27 in NHC car parks and on – street at Market Hill in Royston

16.2 Appendix B: Proposed Parking Tariffs in Royston for 2026/27 in NHC car parks and on– street at Market Hill in Royston

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## **18. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 18.1 North Hertfordshire District Council Parking Strategy 2019 - 2031(adopted January 2019)  
[Parking strategy | North Herts Council](#)
- 18.2 [Cabinet Report 19 Sept 2023](#) – Proposed Off-Street Parking Tariffs for 2023/24 Item Ref: 212
- 18.3 North Herts Council Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 [Sustainability strategy | North Herts Council](#)