

<b>Community Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	6 March 2024
<b>Report Title</b>	Parking Policy Report
<b>EMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins – Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
<b>Head of Service</b>	Martyn Cassell – Head of Leisure & Environment Philip Sutcliffe – Communications & Policy Manager
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Janet Dart – Policy & Engagement Officer
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To note the responses to the draft Parking Policy public consultation.</li> <li>2. To discuss and agree the Parking Policy member Working Group's recommended changes to the draft Parking Policy.</li> <li>3. To endorse and recommend that the draft Parking Policy be adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee</li> <li>4. Members are asked to agree that the time period for car parking tariffs to be charged will be 7 am to 10 pm with no charge between 10 pm and 7 am.</li> <li>5. Members agree to implement charging as described in 2.14 at three car parks currently free to use.</li> </ol>

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report presents the responses to the draft Parking Policy public consultation (Appendix I).
- 1.2 The report includes the recommended changes to the draft Parking Policy following the Parking Policy Member Working Group review of the public consultation responses. The changes are set out in the final draft of the Parking Policy (Appendix II). The Community Committee are invited to discuss the recommended changes.
- 1.3 The Community Committee are asked to endorse and recommend the draft Parking Policy be adopted by the Policy and Resources Committee.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 At the Community Committee meeting on 27 June 2023, the Committee agreed that a Parking Policy Member Working Group (PPMWG) be set up. The PPMWG discussed and agreed the proposed scope of the Parking Policy and worked with

officers to carry out a review of parking with a view to develop a draft policy to go out to public consultation.

2.2 The Community Committee agreed that the membership of the Working Group should be drawn from the Community Committee with one representative from each political group, plus the Chair. Following nominations from group leaders, the Working Group is made up of the following Members:

- Councillor Richard Palmer - Chair
- Councillor Elliott Jayes
- Councillor Pete Neal
- Councillor Hannah Perkin
- Councillor Terry Thompson
- Councillor Tony Winckless

2.3 The Parking Policy Working Group met to agree the scope of the review and officers took a report to Community Committee on 6 September 2023 when the following scope was agreed:

- Review of our existing tariff compared to others in Kent;
- Consider differential town centre and out of town centre parking charges;
- Consider if we should be charging in all car parks;
- Review evening parking – different models and tariffs;
- Consider if we should be charging for motorcycle parking;
- Consider if we should increase the times of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) to protect residential areas;
- Set policy for use of range of payment types – cash/card/telephone/Apps;
- Set out the principles we will follow for Enforcement and;
- Consider links to climate emergency (cleaner vehicles/active travel).

2.4 The PPMWG met to consider the following data to assist with reviewing the parking service with a view to making recommendations for the draft policy:

- Income from evening charges;
- the usage of all Swale Borough Council (SBC) car parks;
- a list of all free and chargeable car parks in Swale;
- benchmarking of non-SBC car parks in Swale; and
- the charging times and charges of car parks in other Kent districts.

2.5 The Chair of the PPMWG attended each of the four Area Committee meetings in September 2023 and presented the scope of the review and asked if the scope was right and if anything was missing. The PPMWG met to review the feedback before making their recommendations for the draft Parking Policy.

2.6 Members of the Working Group met with their political groups to seek their feedback on options for evening charges, motorcycle charging, differential charging and links to the climate emergency.

2.7 The PPMWG met on 2 October 2023 to review all feedback and make final decisions for recommendations to be included in the draft Parking Policy.

- 2.8 The Community Committee agreed on 31 October 2023 that the draft Parking Policy should go out to public consultation for 8 weeks. The consultation was publicised using a variety of methods. There were regular posts on social media. Business and voluntary organisations newsletters included items on the consultation and details about how to view and respond. Parish/town council clerks were emailed direct with a link to the consultation. Partner organisations were also emailed direct.
- 2.9 In total 17 people responded to the consultation, most respondents made multiple comments which are set out in Appendix I. Social media engagement included: Facebook Impressions – 3,247; Facebook Engagement – 486 (includes shares, link clicks, reactions and comments); Twitter (X) Impressions – 1220; and Twitter (X) Engagement – 35 (includes expanding tweets, clicking on profile and link clicks).
- 2.10 The PPMWG met on Monday 15 January 2024 to consider the responses. The PPMWG recommended the following changes to the draft Parking Policy:
- Under the Active Travel and Environmental issues, bullet 2 should be amended to read “*civil enforcement officers have a low carbon footprint*”;
  - The section on Motorcycle parking will be amended to state that “*there will be no charge for motorcycles to use the dedicated bays in some car parks.*”
  - The typing error on page 8, under Controlled parking zones, will be corrected to read “*This process can take around 12 months.*”; and
  - The typing error on page 13, under Appeals will be corrected to read “*Although discretion cannot be considered by a CEO upon an observation of illegal parking, ...*”
- 2.11 Now that a policy is to be approved, the process for deciding the time period that tariffs are charged will be as follows:
- Community Committee to debate changes; and
  - Should changes impact the agreed budgets then referral to Policy and Resources Committee will be required.
- 2.12 As a large number of the responses to the public consultation were concerning charges, these were fed into the PPMWG and have contributed to the recommendations in this report.

The PPMWG were concerned how people using the car parks for short periods in the evenings could be worse off with the proposal that went out to consultation for the 2024/25 budget which was for a fixed charge of £3 between 7 pm and 7 am. There was also a view of wanting to resolve the need for people parking in a short stay car park in early evening needing to return and move their car due to the maximum stay period of 4 hours.

To solve both of these issues, an alternative proposal was put forward to keep the current system of hourly charges but instead of ending at midnight, the charging

period should end at 10 pm. This proposal was voted on and as the majority were in agreement.

- 2.13 The Policy also highlights that free to use car parks will be consistently reviewed as user habits change. We may also consider using seasonal charges where a car park is well used at certain times and not at other times of the year.
- 2.14 The PPMWG reviewed the list of free car parks as part of their work. Three car parks are recommended to have pay and display charges added. Library, Queenborough and Park Road Queenborough to operate on the standard tariff set out in fees and charges and the time periods mentioned earlier. Little Oyster in Minster is proposed to start charging the standard tariff, in the time period discussed above but between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> October each year.

### **3 Proposals**

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the responses to the draft Parking Policy public consultation.
- 5.2 Members are asked to discuss and approve the recommended changes to the draft Parking Policy.
- 5.3 Members are asked to endorse and recommend that the Parking Policy be adopted by the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 5.4 Members are asked to agree that the time period for car parking tariffs to be charged will be 7 am to 10 pm with no charge between 10 pm and 7 am.
- 5.5 Members agree to implement charging as described in 2.14 at three car parks currently free to use.

### **4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

- 4.1 No alternative options were considered other than the 'do nothing' option. This was rejected because currently there is no Parking Policy and Members have requested that a review takes place, within the agreed scope, and a Policy agreed to give residents the reassurance that Swale Borough Council operate a fair parking service.
- 4.2 Other parking time periods were considered such as maintaining the existing times of 6 am to midnight, or introducing a fixed evening charge of £3 between 7 pm and 7 am.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 SBC Members, Town and Parish Councillors and Members of the public were consulted at the September 2023 round of Area Committee meetings to seek feedback on what should be looked at as part of the Parking Policy review.

- 5.2 The PPMWG consulted with their political groups to seek their views on the options that were being considered.
- 5.3 An 8-week public consultation on the final draft of the Parking Policy was launched on 1 November 2023 and closed on 2 January 2024.

## 6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	None identified at this stage. The Corporate Plan is currently being updated and if any implications are identified, the Community Committee will be advised.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The income received from car parking is a key element of the Council's budget and any decisions need to consider the Council's medium term financial strategy. Any implications may need to be reported to Policy and Resources followed by Full Council.</p> <p>The recommended time period change would impact the revenue budget by an estimated £25k in 2024/25.</p> <p>The proposal put forward in the Budget Consultation of a fixed evening fee was estimated to impact the revenue budget by £17k in 2024/25.</p> <p>Maintaining the existing tariff time period would have no impact on the estimated revenue budget for 2024/25.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Decisions will need to ensure we meet statutory legislation and guidance as set out in the Road Traffic Act 1984 and Traffic Management Act 2004.
Crime and Disorder	<p>During the policy development stage, due consideration was given to the community safety of residents.</p> <p>This year's changes to parking charges have resulted in some cases of displacement and concerns were raised by the Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>The proposal in paragraph 2.12 gives residents the choice of more car parks, providing safer options for evening parking.</p>
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Decisions will need to support the climate emergency agenda aiming to improve air quality by reducing congestion.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young	Consideration was given to parking outside schools to ensure the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

People and Vulnerable Adults	
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out during the Policy Development stage (see Appendix III).
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

## **7 Appendices**

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

*Appendix I – Parking Policy public consultation – representations, response and recommendations table*

*Appendix II – Draft Parking Policy*

*Appendix III – Parking Policy Equality Impact Assessment*

## **8 Background Papers**

None.