

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Contract and Asset Management

REPORT NUMBER: K17

TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 13 May 2010

CAR PARKING ISSUES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise on the outcome of investigations into:

- The possibility of some form of discount for low paid workers employed within Sudbury and Hadleigh, but residing outside these town centres.
- Proposals for staff and Member contributions towards the value of parking at the Council HQ

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are requested to decide whether they wish to introduce a discount scheme for the Council's long term car parks.
- 2.2 That, if a discount scheme is to be implemented in the Council's car parks, then it be a season ticket scheme based in the terms and conditions laid out in para 5.7 of this report
- 2.3 That no charging for car parking at the Council's Corks Lane car parks be introduced in 2010/11

The Committee is asked to make a recommendation to full Council on the above matters.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The introduction of a season ticket scheme for our long stay car parks, based on the fees proposed, will reduce the net income projected in 2010.11 Budget by £10,250, equating to £20,500 in a full year.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 This report is most closely linked with the Council's Significant Business Risk No.9 – Management of Projects & Programmes.
- 4.2 Other key risks are set out below:

Risk Description	Likelihood	Seriousness or Impact	Mitigation Measures
<p>Discounted car parking: In providing discounts to low paid workers the Council is open to challenge in terms of maladministration and/or discrimination from other groups within the community e.g. workers who consider our definition of low pay to be incorrect, volunteer workers, commuters, residents and the unemployed.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for being classified as a low paid worker is open to abuse and fraud unless verification processes are extremely thorough</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Significant</p>	<p>Critical</p> <p>Critical</p>	<p>Try and develop a simpler discount scheme</p> <p>Ensure there are sufficient staff resources to undertake all the necessary verifications</p>
<p>Charging at HQ: Lack of agreement with Unison leading to possible claim for potential breach of employment conditions</p> <p>Inability to enforce</p> <p>Inability to charge on overspill car park under the control of others</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Significant</p> <p>Significant</p>	<p>Critical</p> <p>Critical</p> <p>Critical</p>	<p>Include this issue within future negotiations with Unison</p> <p>Instigate discussions with Unison</p> <p>Investigate legal position further and if appropriate negotiate with landowner</p>

5. KEY INFORMATION

Discounted long stay parking:

5.1 The approved proposals for long stay parking charges are as follows:

- Long stay car parking charges are being introduced in the Station car park (137 spaces) and the Station Road car park (299 spaces) in Sudbury, and part of Magdalen Road car park (99 spaces) in Hadleigh. **A total of 535 spaces.**
- It is also proposed to introduce charges in the Stonehouse Road car park in Hadleigh at a later date subject to negotiations with the South Suffolk Leisure.

- The other long stay car parks in Sudbury i.e. Ballingdon Street (14 spaces), Mill Lane (23 spaces), Quay Lane (19 spaces) and Stour Street (39 spaces) are not affected by charging.
- 5.2 Council, at its meeting on 23 February 2010, stated that “consideration be given to the possibility of some form of discount for workers in the town centres”.
- 5.3 This had been investigated by officers, with the conclusion that the introduction of such a scheme is fraught with difficulties, and open to abuse and fraud. These investigations and the officers conclusion has been discussed and reviewed with PLG in order Group Leaders could discuss the issues with their members.
- 5.4 Concerns arising from the introduction of a discount for low paid workers include the need to:
- Define what we consider to be low paid
 - Undertake some form of means test to establish income (or household income), level of benefits, supplementary income
 - Verify place of residence
 - Verify place of employment
 - Verify days of employment
 - Obtain vehicle registrations
- 5.5 A further consideration is that there are only 535 long stay spaces in total. It would not be practical to allow all these spaces to discounted, and there would be no guaranteed spaces in any event.
- 5.6 It is considered therefore that, if some form of discount is to be introduced, it should be a season ticket scheme open to all. This would be in line with the other Suffolk authorities, all of whom offer season tickets open to all but none of whom offer a scheme targeted at the low paid.
- 5.7 The proposed conditions for such a scheme would be:
- 25% of the total number of long stay spaces will be eligible i.e. 133 (25% is judged to be a balance between meeting the needs of the regular daily users, and meeting the needs of the less frequent users, whilst ensuring the loss of income is proportionate and affordable)
 - No specific spaces will be allocated
 - Parking will not be guaranteed
 - They will apply from Monday to Saturday (8.00am to 5.00pm)
 - It will be possible to pay monthly, quarterly or annually for the tickets
 - The respective fees will be calculated as a discount of the daily sum paid over a year i.e. 6 days @ £1.50 x 52 weeks = £468, or 5 days @ £1.50 x 52 weeks = £396.

- The following discounted fees are proposed:

Type of Season Ticket	Cost	Discount based on 5 days	Discount based on 6 days
Annual	£250	36%	47%
Quarterly	£70 (£280 pa)	28%	40%
Monthly	£25 (£300 pa)	23%	36%

- 5.8 It is considered that these reduced fees provide real discounts for frequent users of our long stay car parks.
- 5.9 The outcome will be projected income reduction of £10,250 in 2010/11 (based on the scheme being operational by the 1st October next), and therefore £20,500 in a full year.
- 5.10 Officers are confident that wardening of the proposed scheme can be accommodated within the resources allocated. The administration of the scheme will be undertaken within existing resources but the impact on workload and priorities will need to be carefully monitored.

Timetable

- 5.11 If the above scheme is to be introduced by October 2010 then a decision on whether to proceed with the scheme is required from full Council on 1 June 2010. This will then allow all necessary consultation to be undertaken and legal orders to be issued prior to commencement of the scheme.

Car Parking Charges at Corks Lane, Hadleigh

- 5.12 There are three car parks at Babergh's HQ:
- Bridge House, which has 98 spaces and is open to staff, Members and visitors (with 5 spaces reserved for our car sharing scheme)
 - The rear car park, which has 52 spaces and is open to designated staff and Members (although it is often used by visitors)
 - The unmade car park adjacent to the playground, which has 34 spaces and is open to staff, Members and visitors. This land is leased from Hadleigh Town Council, and is the subject of a Trust Deed.
- 5.13 Council, at its meeting on the 28th January, resolved that consideration be given to the introduction of car parking charges for staff and Members at the Corks Lane HQ.
- 5.14 As part of this consideration the arrangements in other Suffolk authorities were checked. The rural authorities i.e. Mid Suffolk, Forest Heath, Suffolk Coastal

and Waveney do not charge for their office car parks. The urban authorities i.e. Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds and Suffolk CC do charge, but provide subsidised transport as an alternative e.g. park & ride or shuttle buses.

5.15 It is again considered that there are considerable problems in introducing any charging regime:

- Unison have indicated in writing that there would be strong objections to any form of charging to staff in the current year 2010/11 as significant sacrifices have already been made in terms of pay and conditions. It is recognised that the issue of car parking will be picked up as part of the review of employment related budgets that has already begun for the year 2011/12. A copy of Unison's views is attached at Appendix 1. In addition, a majority of the Human Resources Task Group support Unison's position.
- The Human Resources Manager has indicated that the provision of free workplace parking may well be an implied benefit of the Council's employment contracts, and would therefore require a collective agreement for any change
- There is no legal form of enforcement unless employment contracts are changed, or some form of parking order is introduced
- The car park adjacent to the playground is the subject of a Trust Deed. Initial legal advice is that charging would therefore not be possible on this land.

5.16 On the basis of the above it is not considered practical for any scheme to be introduced in 2010/11

6. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 : Unison letter dated 19 April 2010 headed "Unison Consultation – Staff Car Parking".

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

None.

CONTACT: Ryan Jones, Head of Contract & Asset Management

EMAIL: ryan.jones@babergh.gov.uk

H:\DOCS\Committee\REPORTS\Strategy\2010\130510-CarParkingIssues.doc

Mrs P Rockall
Chief Executive
Babergh District Council
Corks Lane
Hadleigh
Suffolk
IP7 6SJ



Babergh Branch

19th April 2010

Dear Pat

Unison Consultation – Staff Car Parking

Unison has been consulted with respect to a draft paper produced by Ryan Jones, for PLG on the implementation of car parking charges. This paper discusses the potential for charging Babergh staff for parking at the Council Offices. Whilst Unison recognise the political sensitivity of this issue we consider that staff have already made considerable financial concessions this year with respect to cuts to contractual terms and conditions, following the Collective Bargaining Agreement ratified by the SJCC in February 2010. We have contributed more than £330,000 of savings for the 2010/11 budget which equates to an average cut in pay of approximately 4% for each individual. Unison took a pragmatic and constructive stance to this pay cut to protect jobs and services and to maintain good industrial relations. We consider that it would be unfair for the Council to now unilaterally impose additional costs on staff this financial year with respect to car parking in the light of the savings that have already been offered up voluntarily by Unison members.

As part of this year's collective bargaining process, both sides agreed to include discussion regarding the possible introduction of staff car park charging within a wider review of terms & conditions, including salary scales, to be conducted after the finalisation of the 2010/11 budget. Unison would like this review to be conducted at the earliest opportunity but we have been advised by HR that the timing of this review cannot yet be finalised as it is partly dependent on whether or not common pay scales need to be established as a consequence of the Babergh/Mid Suffolk merger proposals. Unison are fully prepared to honour this commitment to talks and we would hope that the Council would respect the spirit of this arrangement and not introduce parking charges for staff unilaterally in advance of these detailed discussions.

I trust that these views will be taken into consideration before a decision is taken regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely



Tom Ost

Chairman, Unison Babergh Branch