

Budget Proposals 2016-17 Phase 2: Car Parks

Consultation Summary Report

Why We Consulted?

From 3 November to 14 December 2015, we consulted on the need to make £10.8m of savings in 2016/17. £4.6m of these savings affected frontline services. The consultation generated over 2,500 responses and covered [47 individual budget proposals](#).

Shortly before Christmas, however, the Government began a [public consultation](#) on local government funding and proposed to reduce our funding by 44% (Revenue Support Grant). This announcement was totally unexpected, and we were faced with the challenge of finding an additional £7.6m of savings, whilst also considering increases in Council Tax.

In order to inform this process, we published a list of those proposals which would likely have a direct impact on service users, and sought the views from those affected and interested:

- to understand the likely impact
- to identify any measures to reduce their impact
- to explore any possible alternatives

Approach

All the proposals were published on the council's website on 15 February 2016 with feedback requested by 7 March 2016.

Respondents were directed to a [central index page](#), which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals.

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we had taken into account.

Feedback was then invited through an online form, and through a dedicated email address.

Each individual budget proposal was placed on our [Consultation Portal](#) which automatically notified those registered that an exercise had been launched. Members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 800 people) and local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations were also emailed directly, notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions.

Heads of Service made direct contact with those organisations affected by any of the budget proposals prior to them being made publicly available.

A press release was issued on the same date, and was further publicised through the council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The period in which we invited responses was reduced to three weeks in this case, instead of the usual six. This is because the funding announcement from government was both unexpected and very late in the financial year. It was not possible to extend the consultation period without negatively impacting the delivery of the 2016 council budget. In order to minimise the impact of this shorter timescale, we undertook extra activities to publicise the consultation in addition to our usual channels. This included making potential consultees

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aware of the impending exercise much earlier than normal via press releases and associated PR activities.

Proposal Background

Parking charges at council car parks in Newbury have been held at the same level since 2012, and even longer at some car parks in Thatcham, Theale and Pangbourne. After a period of four years it is appropriate to review our parking charges with the aim of using additional income to enable further important traffic management work to be undertaken whilst remaining competitive with other towns in the region.

Proposal Details

In addition to the proposed increase in parking charges in Phase One which included changes to the tariff at our Newbury car parks and a 35% increase in the price of season tickets, Phase Two proposes the following additional changes:

- Parking charges at car parks in Newbury will now apply seven days a week; there will be no separate Sunday charge.
- The evening / overnight charge at car parks in Newbury will increase from £1.00 to £2.00, seven days a week.
- An increase in West Berkshire residents parking permit charges from £25 to £30 and £50 to £70 respectively.
- An increase in visitors parking permits from 50p to £1.00 per day.
- New parking charges will apply at the following car parks:

Pangbourne Station Road

<u>Time</u>	<u>Current £</u>	<u>New £</u>
1	0.50	0.70
2	0.90	1.20
3	1.10	1.60
>3	5.40	5.50

Thatcham Station

<u>Time</u>	<u>Current £</u>	<u>New £</u>
Off-peak(after 10am)	1.60	2.00
Up to 24 hours	3.00	3.40

Pangbourne River Meadow

<u>Time</u>	<u>Current £</u>	<u>New £</u>
1	0.50	0.70
2	0.90	1.20
3	1.10	1.60
4	1.20	2.00
8	2.40	2.50
>8	5.40	5.50

Theale Main

<u>Time</u>	<u>Current £</u>	<u>New £</u>
2	0.50	0.70
>2	0.90	1.20

Thatcham Kingsland

<u>Time</u>	<u>Current £</u>	<u>New £</u>
1	0.50	0.70
2	0.80	1.20
3	1.00	1.60
>3	2.40	3.00

Theale West

<u>Time</u>	<u>Current £</u>	<u>New £</u>
1	0.40	0.70
2	0.70	1.20
>2	5.40	5.50

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Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 48 responses were received, 46 of which included comments. Of those who responded:

- 43 were from individuals
- Three were from groups/organisations
 - UNISON West Berkshire
 - Greens of Pangbourne
 - The Salvation Army
- Two were from Town/Parish Councils
 - Theale Parish Council
 - Tilehurst Parish Council

Three responses were from non-users of the service.

Summary of Main Points

Of the 46 responses received, which included comments, 27 related to the proposed price increases at car parks, with nine concerned that shoppers may go elsewhere or be deterred from visiting.

12 responses related to the proposed increases to daily tariffs in Newbury that were the subject of the Phase One consultation and which the council has already resolved to introduce.

There were five responses opposed to the Sunday charging proposal, with two concerned that this would affect churchgoers,

Eight were concerned that the elderly or those on tight budgets would be affected and two opposed the increase in resident/visitor permits.

Six responses were in support of the proposals.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Are you a user of the service?

40 said yes, three said no and five didn't respond.

2. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people?

The following comments were made:

- People will use alternative private car parks on Sundays.
- Short sighted and will reduce Sunday shoppers.
- Will deter shoppers/visitors.

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- Fair/appropriate to increase charges.
- Will deter car use.
- Will have a negative impact on council finances.
- Reduced high street spending.
- Will have a negative impact on short drop-in visitors.
- We need to encourage visitors.
- Negative impact on charity workers/volunteers.
- People expect to pay to park.
- Visitor permit increase will be detrimental to residents.
- Thatcham Station changes will encourage more roadside parking.

3. Do you feel that this proposal will affect particular individuals more than others, and if so, how do you think we might help with this?

Respondents highlighted negative impacts on the following particular individuals:

- Traders/businesses (9)
- Shoppers (2)
- Shop Workers/Commuters (3)
- The council's reputation (1)
- Non blue badge holders who need to park near the town centres (1)
- Shoppers with children who need to park near the town centre (2)
- Volunteers (1)
- Residents with high car ownership families (1)
- Churchgoers (2)
- Those on lower income/tight budgets (4)
- The elderly/mobility impaired (4)

Generally the comments were just opposing the changes, although five responses advocated free periods of parking, four higher charges and two alternative pricing.

4. Do you have any alternative charging proposals? If so, please provide details.

The following individual charging proposals were suggested:

- Increase outer Newbury charges to £1, £1.50, £2, £2.50 and £3 where we are proposing 70p, £1.20, £1.60, £2 and £2.50.
- Increase long stay charge to £6 instead of £5.50.
- £1 for evening, £2 for overnight.
- Charge even more.
- Keep charges low.
- Raise the £1.20 charge to £1.50 and round up higher charges to the nearest 50p or £.

5. Is there any way that you, or your organisation, can contribute in helping to alleviate the impact of this proposal? If so, please provide details of how you can help.

There were no suggestions.

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6. Any further comments?

The following individual comments were made:

- Increased Sunday charges not agreed.
- Sunday is not a normal trading day
- Businesses, churchgoers, families and less physically able will be penalised by the Sunday proposals.
- Consider the wider impacts before implementing.
- Don't increase parking charges further.
- Increasing car park charges seems reasonable.
- Library closures will increase trips to Newbury library. Provide those affected with free parking passes.
- Percentage increases at Kingsland car park in Thatcham are excessive.
- 30 minutes free.
- Charges are very reasonable.
- Any increase in car parking charges is detrimental to a village shopping centre. Consider dropping all parking charges.
- Excellent proposal compared to Reading parking charges as these prices are still low.
- Visitors are to be encouraged not put off by parking charges.
- Increase parking charges rather than take away library services.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Mark Edwards
Head of Service
Highways and Transport
11 March 2016

Please note: *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.

All the responses have been provided verbatim as an appendix to this report. Whilst this summary seeks to distil the key, substantive points made, it should also be read in conjunction with the more detailed verbatim comments to ensure a full, rounded perspective of the views and comments are considered.