

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Appendix N4b

Budget Proposals 2017/18: Highway Fees and Charges incl. Parking		Head of Service: Mark Edwards Author: Mark Cole	2 March 2017 Version 3 (Council)
Proposal:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce new tariffs at our main Newbury car parks • To introduce new tariffs at our outer subsidiary Newbury car parks e.g. Northcroft Lane West • To introduce new tariffs at our other car parks e.g. Hungerford Church Street, Thatcham Kingsland Centre • To introduce on-street charging near Thatcham Railway Station • To delete a currently vacant part time Civil Enforcement Officer post • To increase the charge for various highway licenses by an average of 10% 		
Total Income 2016/17:	£3,584,600 (parking only) £524,960 (fees and charges)	Expected income 2017/18:	£3,784,600 (parking) £540,000 (fees and charges)
Initial expected income 2017/18:	£3,784,600 (parking) £540,000 (fees and charges)	Final recommendation to Council 2017/18:	To proceed with this proposal
Total budget 2016/17:	£2,160,570 parking only	Recommended officer saving 2017/18:	£12,000 (0.6%)
Initial proposed saving 2017/18:	£12,000 (0.6%)	Final recommendation to Council 2017/18:	To proceed with this proposal
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 54 responses were received. Of those that responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 identified themselves as users of the service • 45 as residents of West Berkshire • 6 as council employees • 5 as Parish/Town Councils • 8 as other, including Unison 		
Key issues raised:	<p>Of the 54 responses received, which included comments, 29 related to the proposed price increases at car parks, with 19 concerned that it will adversely affect retail/business.</p> <p>Nine comments related to the proposed on-street charging near Thatcham station and the potential displacement of parking</p>		

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	<p>into nearby residential roads.</p> <p>There were two comments opposing the deletion of the CEO post suggesting that enforcement should be increased and one comment in relation to the proposal to increase the charge for highway licenses by 10%.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage 1.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Don't introduce the parking charge increases or not by as much, end on-street charging, provide periods of free parking.	Unfortunately the council has little option but to increase parking charges as proposed due to the severe financial pressures that it faces. If there is no increase or if lower increases are made, and if on-street charges are removed or free periods introduced, then this will reduce the income that is being sought in order to continue to deliver traffic and transport, road safety and parking services. Although some increases in charges are significant in percentage terms the absolute increases are fairly marginal at 20p in Newbury and 10p in other car parks. The proposal for Hungerford is for higher increases, but this is because there were no increases last time and it brings it in line with the other areas of the district.	
	Give plenty of notice / provide information.	Information will be published on changes to parking tariffs on the councils website, in newspaper adverts and in notices displayed at the car parks or on-street areas affected if this proposal is approved.	
	Give cheaper parking for residents.	This would be difficult logistically because of all the variations on tariffs at the pay machines and would involve additional costs to the council to introduce and enforce. It would also result in loss of income that the council cannot afford to bear and at a time when it is looking to increase revenue.	
	Ensure that the inconvenience to residents of roads around Thatcham station is minimised and that additional parking restrictions are introduced to overcome existing difficulties.	It is not considered that the modest charges proposed would lead to significant increases in displacement of parking into adjacent residential roads. The existing parking issues mentioned will be investigated independently of this proposal, and if it proceeds, the impact of this proposal will be monitored and action taken if required. It must be recognised however that residents often do not want additional restrictions imposed because this means that they would also be unable to park.	

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Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Vary parking enforcement options, including more enforcement outside schools and use of cameras instead of civil enforcement officers.	With over 80 schools throughout the district it is impossible to provide anything more than occasional enforcement at them. The loss of this part time post will have marginal impact. Legislation does not permit the council to use camera enforcement instead of CEO's.	
	Reduce or remove parking charges in Newbury to promote business.	Lower or non existent parking charges would be popular with visitors and business owners but would severely damage the council's parking revenue.	
	Raise revenue from lorry parking.	The council has no lorry parking under its control.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Increase parking enforcement.	In order to raise significant additional income from enforcement it would be necessary to increase the number of CEO's considerably but the loss of this part time post would on the contrary have minimal impact on enforcement income. Income from parking charges is some ten times that from penalty charges so the proposal is the most economic way to meet the council's additional revenue target.	
	Increase parking fines.	Fines are set by the Department for Transport, so the council can't set higher fines itself.	
	Increase council tax more.	It is considered fair to charge people who wish to use services and facilities such as parking rather than passing these charges onto Council Tax payers. This would be an option for councillors to consider.	
	Reduce the number of councillors.	This is a possibility as part of the proposed boundary review, but would not generate income.	
	Government should be supporting councils.	Unfortunately due to the large financial deficit that the country has central government are imposing austerity cuts in funding to local authorities.	
	Sell the car parks to private companies.	Selling the car parks to private companies might realise a capital return in the short term but the council has to reduce revenue expenditure going forward.	

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	<p>Thattham Town Council said that it is difficult to comment on this proposal as there is no evidence of revenue currently generated or the additional income that parking increases will produce.</p>	<p>Whilst information that relates only to Thattham was not provided in WBC's consultation on this budget proposal, it did say that it was estimated that in total the budget proposal would generate approximately £215,000 of additional income and save £12,000 in expenditure. Further total income and total budget data comparing 2016/17 figures with expected 2017/18 figures is also provided at the start of this template.</p>	
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	<p>No suggestions were received on contributing in helping to alleviate the impact of these proposals. There was one person who is willing to constructively discuss ideas for parking, enforcement, traffic control and development if the council wishes to hear his thoughts.</p> <p>Another response suggested that Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) should implement a daily shuttle bus from Thattham FC and that the football club be allowed to charge rail users to park there all day. The council has no powers to get SSE to provide a shuttle bus and no jurisdiction over Thattham FC and this would not help the council to achieve its savings target.</p>		
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>Feedback from the consultation process has not resulted in any issue being raised which would prevent the council from proceeding with the proposal. The feedback has also not generated any viable counter-proposal which would mitigate the proposal.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the council progress with this proposal.</p>		

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