

Cabinet Report

Report of Head of Development and Corporate Landlord

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To: CABINET

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Car park fees for 2024-25

Recommendations

- (a) Cabinet to agree the car parking fees for the financial year 2024-25.

In addition, if cabinet does agree to amend the fees and charges that require a change in the car parking fees or order, to:

- (b) authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic to prepare a Notice of Variation under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for publishing in the local newspaper and all affected car parks. (Or authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic to prepare and publish a draft order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984)
- (c) authorise the Head of Development and Corporate Landlord to oversee necessary communications and consultations and report back to Cabinet.

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides information to help cabinet decide if it chooses to amend the car park fees and charges in the Vale of White Horse District Council's three market towns of Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage.
2. Reviewing the car park fees and charges each year is in line with the council's car park policy as updated in 2022.

Corporate Objectives

3. The provision and pricing of car parking supports the Vale Council's Corporate Plan 2020/24 and strategic objective three (building healthy communities) by encouraging

the switch to more active sustainable travel options, improving air quality and supports objective four (building stable finances) by maximising income available to the council.

4. Reviewing how much we charge for car park fees also supports our Corporate Plan objective three, “action on the climate emergency”. Transport, including fossil fuel vehicles, makes up the largest share of the UK’s carbon emissions. Using mediums such as car park fees may have the ability to influence changes in transport behaviour, and support a move towards alternative, sustainable modes of transport such as active travel like walking, public transport and cycling.

Background

5. The new car park policy as agreed by cabinet in August 2022 included guidance from the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 which states that local authority parking enforcement should be self-financing, and we should aim for our parking income to at least meet the cost of managing and running our car parks.
6. The current fees and charges and the price of permits (and the previous years’ fees) are shown in Appendix 1 and a comparison of car park fees with other neighbouring car parks is shown in Appendix 2.
7. In February 2022 the cabinet agreed to make changes to the car park fees as below, which was implemented on 4 April 2022:
 - A. To reduce free parking from two hours to one hour and introduce a charge of £1.50 for up to two hours.
 - B. Increase all current fees by 40 pence.
 - C. To make permits non-transferable between car parks.
8. Officers estimated that the above changes would increase income by £218,000 per year. In reality the income from car park fees increased from £245,000 in 2021-22 to £503,000 in 2022-23, an increase of £258,000.
9. Last year in December 2022, cabinet agreed to increase permits by 10 percent. This was implemented on 4 April 2023.
10. Officers estimated that the increase in the cost of permits would increase the income by £7,000 per year. Year to date (up to period six) show parking season ticket income at £40,187 against half year budget of £35,268, so £4,919 above budget after six months.
11. Cabinet agreed to stop issuing any new residential permits from December 2020. All new applicants now pay the ‘normal’ permit price and no new resident permits are being issued. After 2024, only regular parking permits will be available. For those residents that had residential permits prior to this change it was agreed for existing residential permit holders to increase their permits by 10 percent each year for four years, so these residential permit holders would still get a lower rate, but no new residential permits would be issued. Residential permits are only renewed for those customers who had them before they were stopped in 2020.
12. Please see the table 1 below which shows the increase in cost in permits as already agreed from 1 April 2024.

Table 1. Change to residential parking permits up to 2024

Residential permit costs during phasing out period (Only available to those who had residential permits as of 30 November 2020)								
Town	Type of permit	Length of permit	Residential permits available at	Cost of residential permits Nov. 2020 (£)	Price from 1/12/20 initial increase by 25% (£)	Price from 1/04/22 plus 10% (£)	Price from 1/04/23 plus 10% (£)	Price from 1/04/24 plus 10% (£)
Abingdon	Monday to Sunday	Annual	Cattlemarket Charter Audlett Drive Abbey Close West St Helen Street	287	429	472	520	572
		Six Month		144	215	237	260	286
Abingdon	Monday to Sunday	Annual	Rye Farm / Hales Meadows	287	386	425	467	514
		Six Months		144	194	213	234	258
Faringdon	Monday to Saturday	Annual	Gloucester Street	119	178	196	216	237
Wantage	Monday to Saturday	Annual	Portway	119	178	196	216	237
Wantage	Monday to Saturday	Annual	Mill St / Limborough Road	143	232	256	281	309
		Six Month		72	123	135	149	163

13. The car park penalty charges are set by legislation which changed on 1 November 2022 when we introduced civil parking enforcement (CPE). The maximum penalty charges under CPE are now £70 which is lower than previously (£80). In addition, there are now two 'levels' (for example 'minor' infractions such as overstaying your time set at £50 reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days and some are higher for example if you park in a disabled bay without displaying a blue badge, set at £70 reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days). All charges are increased if the penalty charge remains unpaid after 28 days and the council issues a charge certificate and then there are further increase if the case is registered as a debt.
14. The purpose of having car park orders under Section 32 of the 1984 Road Traffic Regulations Act (RTRA) is for 'relieving or preventing congestion of traffic'. The council meets this requirement by having off-street carparks which are accessible and well used which means that people do not park on the highway which may cause traffic to be held up. Under the new civil parking regulations, the council has no legal powers to set parking fees at a higher level than that needed to achieve this but is able to set fees at a level to at least cover car park operating costs.

Car park account

15. Table 2 below estimates how the net cost of car parks will change over a five-year period up to 2026/27 if no changes are made. Reviewing the income and expenditure over the medium term allows cabinet to take a view of how income and expenditure are likely to change and see whether the account is predicted to run at a loss or with a surplus.
16. The actual turnout for 2022/23 shows a deficit in the car park account of £19,209.
17. Based on the first six months of income and expenditure in 2023/24, officers estimate the income from 'pay and display' fees will produce an estimated total of £500,884. Overall, there is therefore an estimated deficit of £93,458 this year which increases to £230,226 in 2026/27.
18. A ten per cent increase in residential permits prices (as previously agreed) will increase income by an estimated £1,199 in 2024/25 and then move onto standard permit rates so another 25 percent increase on 1 April 2025 which is £3,300.

Table 2. Car park income and expenditure over a five-year period.

	Actual	Estimated	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	2022/23	Outturn	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	£	£	£	£	£
Car park expenditure					
Employees	-	6,096.81	6,401.65	6,721.73	7,057.82
Contract costs (Saba)	243,293.12	281,596.00	295,675.80	310,459.59	325,982.57
Premises (repair and maint. elec.)	246,294.34	230,280.00	241,794.00	253,883.70	266,577.89
Supplies and services (banking)	39,003.20	44,400.00	46,620.00	48,951.00	51,398.55
Central and administrative	42,618.85	81,561.00	85,639.05	89,921.00	94,417.05
Depreciation	65,788.16	64,788.16	68,654.83	91,054.83	104,554.83
Total expenditure:	636,997.67	708,721.96	744,785.32	800,991.85	849,988.70
Car park income					
Enforcement	(39,410)	(40,545)	(40,545)	(40,545)	(40,545)
Season tickets	(74,957)	(70,835)	(72,034)	(75,334)	(75,334)
Pay and display	(503,421)	(500,884)	(500,884)	(500,884)	(500,884)
Other income	0	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)
Total income	(617,789)	(615,264)	(616,463)	(619,763)	(619,763)
Surplus (-) / deficit	19,209	93,458	128,322	181,229	230,226

Options for fees and charges

19. Based on the current usage and estimated income and expenditure shown in Table 2, considering the estimated deficit of £93,458 in 2023-24 and increasing in the medium term, officers propose a number of options in order to set the car park account to at least 'break even' in the medium term.

Table 3. Summary of options

Option	Description	Estimated change in revenue (pa)	Communications campaign recommended?	Can be dealt with by a Notice of Variation?
A	No change	£0	No	N/A
B	Remove the one-hour free parking and charge a nominal amount of 50p.	+£300,000	Yes	No, require formal consultation and a new Order
C	Extend Sunday parking charges to all car parks	+£40,000	Yes	No, require formal consultation and a new Order
D	A proposed differential pricing structure using a higher tier of charging for town centre car parks and a lower tier of charging for car parks on edge of town (maintain one hour free).	+£50,000	Yes	Yes
E1	Evening charging: - a flat fee of £1 from 6pm to 9pm or,	+£95,000	Yes	No, all options require formal consultation and a new Order
E2	- extend charging period until 9pm Monday to Saturday (currently 6pm)	+£160,000	Yes	
E3	- extend charging period until 7pm Monday to Saturday	+£53,000		

F	Half price permits for zero emission vehicles	Reduced by £5,000	Yes	No, require formal consultation and a new Order
G	Increase the cost of permits by 10%	+£6,800	Contact existing permit holders	Yes
H	Increase fees across the board by 10%.	+£50,000	Yes	Yes
I	Increase overnight parking for campervans to £10.00 per overnight stay.	De minimis	Yes	Yes

20. Option A. Make no change to the fees and continue to operate car parks at a deficit. This option would go against the agreed policy to provide parking at a cost which falls on the users and not the council taxpayer.
21. Option B. Remove the free parking and charge a nominal amount of 50p for up to one hour. This option would largely bring the account to a balanced state.
22. Option C. Extend Sunday parking charges to all car parks. Currently Sunday charging only applies to three car parks in Abingdon (Rye Farm, Hales Meadow and Abbey Close). There are a further five car parks in Abingdon, two car parks in Faringdon and in Wantage three car parks, a total of ten car parks where Sunday charging could be applied. This option would provide a marginal increase in income of £40,000 which would not be sufficient to 'break even'.
23. Option D. Creating 'higher rate' parking spaces closest to the major amenities, by increasing the fees in those car parks closest to the town centre only (Civic, Cattlemarket and West St Helen's St. and Abbey Close in Abingdon, Portway and Mill St car park in Wantage and Southampton St. car park in Faringdon).
24. At the same time, the fees in car parks situated on the edges of the town centre would decrease slightly (Audlett Drive, Rye Farm and Hales Meadow in Abingdon, Gloucester St in Faringdon and Limborough Rd. in Wantage). Please see table 4b below for proposed fees.
25. This option is estimated to increase income by £50,000 which would go some way to having a break-even account.
26. Options E1, E2 and E3. Officers do not have any formal usage figures for evening parking after 6pm but anecdotal evidence and informal observations suggest the usage is quite high up to 9pm, Monday to Saturday. The estimated increase in income (E1 £95,000/E2 £160,000/E3 £53,000) includes for the extra cost of additional enforcement 6pm to 9pm. The current charging times are Monday to Saturday 8am to 6pm in most car parks. If agreed the extended charging period would not apply on a Sunday to those car parks that charge (Rye Farm, Hales Meadow and Abbey close car parks charge 8am to 6pm on Sundays).

27. Option F. Half price permits for plug-in EVs. This will be in line with the Vale's actions on climate change to become carbon neutral within our operations by 2030.
28. Option G. Increase in cost of permits by 10 percent to be considered together with option H below.
29. Option H. Increase all fees across the board by ten percent. This increase in income of an estimated £50,000 would follow the economic pattern of increases in the economy measured against price indexes but not be sufficient to cover all the costs of running the car parks.
30. Option I. Parking for camper vans and overnight sleeping in Hales Meadow car park, Abingdon increase from £7.00 to £10.00 per night. The increase in income is marginal to this option.
31. A new order will be required for the main Vale car parks and a separate one for Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks as, although owned by the Vale, these car parks, for the purposes of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, come within the administration area for South Oxfordshire District Council.

Table 4a. A proposed differential pricing structure (town centre car parks in yellow and edge of town car parks in blue showing current fees)

Location/ Postcode	1 Hours	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	6 Hours	Over 6 Hours	Motor Home 24hr	Operational	
								Days	Times
Abingdon									
Abbey Close - OX143JE	Free	1.50	2.30	4.20	5.10	6.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Audlett Drive - OX14 3ND	Free	1.50	2.30	4.20	5.10	6.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Cattlemarket - OX14 3JE	Free	1.50	2.30	4.20	5.10	6.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Civic - OX14 3JH	Free	1.50	2.30	4.20	5.10	6.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Hales Meadow - OX14 3NN	Free	1.50	2.30	3.90	4.60	5.10	7.00	Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Rye Farm - OX14 3NN	Free	1.50	2.30	3.90	4.60	5.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
West St Helen Street - OX14 5BU	Free	1.50	2.30	4.20	5.10	6.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Charter Level 1 - 2 - OX14 3LZ	Free	1.50	2.30					Sat Only	08:00 - 18:00
Faringdon									
Gloucester Street - SN7 7HY	Free	1.50	1.80	3.20	3.40	3.60		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Southampton Street - SN7 7AZ	Free	Free	1.90					Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Wantage									
Limborough Road - OX12 9AJ	Free	1.50	2.10	3.70	4.10	4.60		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Mill Street - OX12 9AJ	Free	1.50	2.10	3.70	4.10	4.60		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00
Portway - OX12 9BU	Free	1.50	2.10	4.10	5.10	6.10		Mon - Sun	08:00 - 18:00

Table 4b. Officers propose a simplified fee structure as below:

Location/ Postcode	1 Hours	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	6 Hours	Over 6 hours	Motor homes	Operational	
								Days	Times
Town centre car parks	Free	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	6.00	N/A	As above	
Edge of town car parks	Free	1.50	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	10.00	As above	

32. Options E1, E2 and E3. Extend the charging period to raise income in the evening from 6pm to 9pm – a flat fee of £1 after 6pm or, extend the charging period until 9pm Monday to Saturday and keep current charging regime or, incremental increase in the charging period by one hour each year (until 7pm in 2024/25, until 8pm in 2025/26 and until 9pm in 2026/27). Depending on the option, Officers estimate the net increase in income of between £95,000, £160,000 and £53,000 per year (including enforcement

costs). This estimate is based on usage during the day as evening usage information is not available.

- 33. Option F. Half price permits for zero emission vehicles. The total income from permits in 2022/23 was £74,957. Officers estimate relatively slow uptake in the first year reducing the income £5,000.
- 34. Option G. Increase the cost of permits in line with inflation i.e. 9.1 percent in August 2023, rounded up. Officers estimate the increase in income will be £6,800 pa.
- 35. Option H. Increase all fees by the current price index of nine percent (rounded up). This would increase income by an estimated £50,000 per year as shown in table 5 below.

Table 5. Proposed increases of all fees by price index

	Current price	Proposed increase by 9% (rounded up)
Up to one hour	Free	Free
Up to 2 hours	£1.50	£1.70
Up to 3 hours	£2.30	£2.60
Up to 4 hours	£3.90	£4.30
Up to 6 hours	£4.60	£5.10
Over 6 hours	£5.10	£5.60

Economic development implications

- 36. Research undertaken by the Institute of Place Management on behalf of the High Streets Taskforce list car parking as one of 237 'Vital and Viable' factors that influence the success of high streets. This research (last updated in November 2021) lists car parking as the 45th most influential factor. (Car parking for the purpose of the study refers to the number or availability of parking spaces, parking costs, maximum parking duration, the location of parking spaces, and the diversity of parking supply).
- 37. Seen alongside 236 other influential factors, it should be understood that although parking is regarded as highly influential, it should not be viewed in isolation as a factor that will dictate the success of the high street economy.
- 38. Guidance on Parking Provision in Town and City Centres published in the study “Re-Think! Parking on the High Street (2013) suggests that the “value” of car parking is more important than the cost. Value in this respect includes both the location and proximity of parking to attractions. Relevant to Vale’s market towns, the report suggests that “smaller locations, with relatively fewer attractions (retail and otherwise) need to carefully consider their parking provision and fees”.
- 39. Option A. No increase in fees could demonstrate support for local businesses.

40. Remaining options from B to H. Any increases in fees could negatively affect footfall to Vale town centres and is likely to cause concern within the business community as they're impacted by the current economic climate and cost of living crisis. Businesses in the Vale's market towns have struggled in recent years with the growth of nearby shopping centres in Oxford and Didcot and internet shopping. Many businesses will think it will discourage local people to make short visits to town centres if the cost of parking is increased.
41. Increasing fees in town centre car parks and thereby encouraging parking at edge of town sites could be seen as having both negative and positive aspects for the economy of our market towns. Reduced congestion and pollution can be positive for perceptions of place, creating a more attractive experience for residents and visitors alike. It may also benefit occupiers on arterial routes into towns via increased passing footfall. Conversely, increasing the distance between attractions and parking is unlikely to be positively received by local retailers, and may disadvantage (or otherwise alienate) residents who are less able to walk longer distances to retail centres including those with young children, those with underlying health conditions that do not qualify for a disabled parking badge, or those with personal safety concerns from accessing and supporting local businesses.
42. For option I, the council parking contractor report very good take up of the bays for camper vans in Hales Meadow car park in Abingdon. Officers have also had good feedback from users as the type of offer of casual parking for camper vans in a location close to the town centre is quite rare in Oxfordshire.
43. Appendix 2 compares car park fees and charges to neighbouring local authorities and shows that current fees remain competitive, even after the increase.
44. Over the last three years, Vale Chambers of Commerce, business groups and individual businesses continually assert that the Vale needs free parking like Witney. They believe that Witney town centre thrives due to the free parking and residents will travel to Witney instead of Abingdon/Faringdon/Wantage if the free parking in the Vale is removed. To date no firm evidence has been gathered or provided.
45. Planning Policy have commissioned a town centres and retail study to help inform the new joint local plan. This report is in progress and will undertake a health check of Vale's market towns, while this study won't examine the impact of parking charges on the town centres, information on accessibility and pedestrian flows will be included within the final reports, detailing public transport and active travel links to our town centres that could present an opportunity for future marketing.
46. Current indications are that leisure and hospitality service providers are occupying a higher proportion of local town centre premises, that may indicate longer parking stays are likely as the focus of the high street changes from retail to more experience led occupancy.

Climate and ecological impact implications

47. Option A. Continuing to offer a period of free parking of one hour may encourage increased vehicle turnover in the town centres and impact negatively on the air quality.
48. Options B to I. Vale of White Horse District Council has agreed a target to work towards being carbon neutral within our operations by 2030, with an aim for a 75

percent reduction in our emissions by 2025, and for the Vale to be a carbon neutral district by 2045.

49. Having reduced fees on the edge of towns may reduce congestion and air pollution in the centre of towns if more users choose to park in car parks on the edge of towns and walk into the town centres.
50. Option F. Clearly demonstrates the initiative to encourage the take up of electric vehicles and therefore reduce pollution from combustion engine vehicle emissions. Climate officers support low-cost parking for EV vehicles owners although it is unlikely to be a key motivator. Introducing reduced price permits for EV's shows positive commitment from the council to the strategic objectives and could be actively promoted through the Communications team.

Financial Implications

51. Refer to summary table 3 (paragraph 19) for estimated changes in total fee income for each option.
52. Any council decision that has financial implications must be made with the knowledge of the council's overarching financial position. For Vale, the position reflected in the council's medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as reported to full Council in February 2023 showed that the council was able to set a balanced budget for 2023/24, but that there is expected to be a budget gap in future years. However, there is great uncertainty over this caused by a lack of clarity from government.
53. The future funding gap is predicted to increase to over £7.8 million by 2027/28, based on current cautious officer estimates of future funding levels. Whilst it is anticipated that overall funding for the council will remain relatively unchanged in 2024/25, the lack of certainty on future local government funding from 2025/26 onwards means the level of funding, and the resulting estimated funding gap, could be significantly different from current officer estimates in either a positive or negative way. Every financial decision, particularly those involving medium-term funding commitments (i.e. those beyond 2024/25), needs to be cognisant of the potential for significant funding gaps in future years.
54. Under CPE the car park account should be clear and transparent and published to show the council is not making excess surplus income.
55. In line with legislation under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 para 55 (2), at the end of the financial year any deficit in the (car park) account shall be made good out of the general fund.
56. Any surplus income generated from these increases will need to be used in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Section 55 specific definitions (Highways, car parks, free public open spaces and recreational facilities).
57. Changes to the schedule can be made by placing Notices in the car parks and by advertising in local newspapers at a cost of £5,000 per Notice which can be met from existing car park budgets. A change to the Order will require advertising a draft Schedule to allow for feedback from the public and a further Notice for the making of the new Order.

58. If a simplified charging system is adopted, future amendments to the car park fees will be easier to manage and at less cost as the advert in the newspaper would be a lot smaller.

Legal Implications

59. A Notice Of Variation under the regulation covers tariff changes only and the Notice requires you to state what the charges are now and what the charges are going to be when the Notice comes into force. It is designed purely to allow for tariffs to be increased on a yearly basis without the need for going through the full making of an Order.

60. Any change other than a tariff change falls outside a Notice of Variation. These should not be dealt with by a Notice of Variation, because it is not a change to an existing tariff but rather the introduction of an additional charge. This would include the case when there is no charge.

61. **Option A** being no change to the current Order.

62. **Option B** is to remove the one-hour free parking and charge a nominal amount of 50p. When the two free hours was reduced to one free hour, this was dealt with by way of a Variation Order with advice that there could be a risk of challenge due to the negative public opinion that would be generated by such a measure. Whilst there was negative feedback, no legal challenge was received. However, Option B is introducing something that doesn't already exist i.e. a charge of 50p and therefore a new order will need to be made at significant cost and officer time.

63. **Option C** is to extend Sunday parking charges to all car parks for which it is agreed that a new car parking order will be required because if charges don't currently exist for those car parks then something different is being introduced.

64. **Option D** is a proposed differential pricing structure using a higher tier of charging for town centre car parks and a lower tier of charging for car parks on edge of town. If this was solely making tariff changes to the charges already payable then this could be dealt with by way of a variation order, but within the report, this option also takes away the current free hour for some car parks and so therefore a new order for this option will be required.

65. **Options E1, E2 and E3** are evening charges– a flat fee of £1 from 6pm to 9pm or extend current charging regime until 9pm or an incremental increase of one hour each year. A new order will be required to either introduce a change to the charging period or to introduce a fee that doesn't currently exist.

66. **Option F** is half price permits for zero emission vehicles. As this is introducing something new to the current Vale order, a new order will be required.

67. **Option G** - the increase the cost of permits by 10 percent can be dealt with by way of a variation order.

68. **Option H** – the fees increase across the board by ten percent can be dealt with by way of a variation order.

69. **Option I** – the increase in daily fees can be made by Notice.

70. Point to note: where a new order is required for Vale then a new order will be needed for the main Vale car parks and a separate one for Rye Farm and Hales Meadow car parks because although owned by the Vale, these car parks, for the purposes of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, come within the administration area for South Oxfordshire District Council.
71. The purpose of having car park orders under Section 32 of the 1984 Road Traffic Regulations Act (RTRA) is for 'relieving or preventing congestion of traffic'. Under the new civil parking regulations, the council has no legal powers to set parking fees at a higher level than that needed to achieve this. The council meets this requirement by having off-street car parks which are accessible and well used meaning that people do not park on the highway which may cause traffic congestion.
72. Statutory guidance under section 87 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 states the financial objectives of CPE are to run enforcement operations efficiently, effectively and economically. The Secretary of State will not expect local or national taxpayers to meet any deficit.

Communications Implications

73. Any of the options agreed will have an impact on users of the car park. Given the current economic climate, the need to be transparent and to provide background information to reasons for the changes, officers recommend a communications campaign to inform stakeholders.
74. Options B, C, D and E are major changes requiring formal consultation and support by communications officers. If agreed officers would aim to implement the changes by 1 June 2024.
75. Relatively simple changes to the fees (options F, G, H and I) can be done by Notice and implemented by 1 April 2024.
76. The outcome of any changes to be clearly communicated to the public by social media and on the council website.

Equality and Diversity

77. The council continues to offer parking at no charge for users displaying a 'blue badge'.
78. The council aims to meet the national standard of at least five percent of car park bays as extra wide bays dedicated to blue badge users.
79. Creating parking cheaper on the edge of town may be challenged by users with mobility issues. Reduced price parking on the edge of towns may be considered as discriminating against those less capable of walking into town centres. Whilst disabled parking is provided in all of our car parks, further equality impact assessment may be required to pursue this option.

Risks

80. Option A. By continuing to offer a period of free parking the Council could be criticised for not taking the opportunity to actively tackle climate issues by discouraging customers traveling by car. If the fees are not increased, the Council could be

criticised for not tackling the deficit of car parking account and going against its own policy. Funds from the general account will be required to balance the car park account.

81. Options B to I. Potential reputational damage to the Council from negative media coverage for the loss of the free period and increase in fees/change to charging periods. Also, the risk highlighted above if car parks are more expensive in the centre of towns and may be challenged by those less able bodied.
82. By increasing the fees, the Council could be criticised for not taking the opportunity to actively support businesses in town centres. Increasing parking fees may change people's habits and they could choose to shop elsewhere. This may impact on the businesses in the town and the car park revenue if the number of visitors to the towns reduces. There is also a risk that due to price elasticity of demand that any projected increase in revenue may be less than estimated.

Conclusion

83. The report has set out a range of options for Cabinet to consider in paragraphs 19 to 35. In setting the fees and charges for the financial year 2024-25, the options provide a range of interventions and there are implications to be considered. There is a balance to be struck between the revenue position, and the economic and climate implications of the options proposed.

Background Papers

- Car park policy 2022
- Car park usage surveys 2023

Appendix 1 Vale of White Horse District Council car park fees and charges and permit changes introduced in April 2022

CAR PARK	TYPE OF PARKING		PERIOD	CHARGES	
	Current Charging Period	New Charging Period		April 2021	New Charges introduced April 2022
Abbey Close Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sun 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sun 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.80	£4.20
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.70	£5.10
			Over 6 hours	£5.70	£6.10
	Permits Mon – Sun Non-transferable		Annual	£857.00	£857.00
			3 months	£256.00	£256.00
			1 month	£86.00	£86.00
	Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable		Annual	£715.00	£715.00
			3 months	£213.00	£213.00
			1 month	£72.00	£72.00
	Cosener's House Day permits 24 hours (in advance)			£6.38	£6.38
Civic Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.80	£4.20
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.70	£5.10
			Over 6 hours	£5.70	£6.10
Audlett Drive Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.80	£4.20
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.70	£5.10
			Over 6 hours	£5.70	£6.10
	Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable		Annual	£857.00	£857.00
			3 months	£256.00	£256.00
			1 month	£86.00	£86.00
	Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable		Annual	£715.00	£715.00
			3 months	£213.00	£213.00
1 month			£72.00	£72.00	

CAR PARK	TYPE OF PARKING		PERIOD	CHARGES	
	Current Charging Period	New Charging Period		April 2021	New Charges introduced April 2022

Charter M/S Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge	
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50	
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30	
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.80	£4.20	
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.70	£5.10	
			Over 6 hours	£5.70	£6.10	
	Permits Mon – Sun Non-transferable			Annual	£857.00	£857.00
				3 months	£256.00	£256.00
				1 month	£86.00	£86.00
	Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable			Annual	£715.00	£715.00
				3 months	£213.00	£213.00
				1 month	£72.00	£72.00
	Annual am or pm Non-transferable			6 days	£429.00	£429.00
				5 days	£358.00	£358.00
Vehicle Release Fee				£50	£50	
West St Helen St Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge	
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50	
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30	
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.80	£4.20	
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.70	£5.10	
			Over 6 hours	£5.70	£6.10	
	Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable			Annual	£857.00	£857.00
				3 months	£256.00	£256.00
				1 month	£86.00	£86.00
	Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable			Annual	£715.00	£715.00
				3 months	£213.00	£213.00
				1 month	£72.00	£72.00
	Cattle Market Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
				Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
Up to 3 hrs				£1.90	£2.30	
Up to 4 hrs				£3.80	£4.20	
Up to 6 hrs				£4.70	£5.10	
Over 6 hours				£5.70	£6.10	
Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable		Annual	£857.00	£857.00		

CAR PARK	TYPE OF PARKING		PERIOD	CHARGES		
	Current Charging Period	New Charging Period		April 2021	New Charges introduced April 2022	
			3 months	£256.00	£256.00	
			1 month	£86.00	£86.00	
			Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable	Annual	£715.00	£715.00
				3 months	£213.00	£213.00
				1 month	£72.00	£72.00

Hales Meadow Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sun 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sun 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.50	£3.90
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.20	£4.60
			Over 6 hours	£4.70	£5.10
	Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable	Annual	£684.00	£684.00	
		3 months	£209.00	£209.00	
		1 month	£67.00	£67.00	
	Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable	Annual	£572.00	£572.00	
		3 months	£173.00	£173.00	
		1 month	£57.00	£57.00	
	Market trader Permits	Annual	£85.00	£85.00	
Rye Farm Abingdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sun 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sun 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.90	£2.30
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.50	£3.90
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.20	£4.60
			Over 6 hours	£4.70	£5.10
	Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable	Annual	£684.00	£684.00	
		3 months	£209.00	£209.00	

CAR PARK	TYPE OF PARKING		PERIOD	CHARGES	
	Current Charging Period	New Charging Period		April 2021	New Charges introduced April 2022
			1 month	£67.00	£67.00
	Permits Mon-Fri (5 day) Non-transferable		Annual	£572.00	£572.00
			3 months	£173.00	£173.00
			1 month	£57.00	£57.00
Portway Wantage	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.70	£2.10
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.70	£4.10
			Up to 6 hrs	£4.70	£5.10
			Over 6 hours	£5.70	£6.10
			Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable		Annual
			3 months	£150.00	£150.00
			1 month	£51.00	£51.00
	Permits – School Term Non-transferable		Daily (10 min)	£12.00	£12.00
Limborough Rd A & B Wantage	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.70	£2.10
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.30	£3.70
			Up to 6 hrs	£3.70	£4.10
			Over 6 hours	£4.20	£4.50
			Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable		Annual
			3 months	£150.00	£150.00
			1 month	£51.00	£51.00
	Market trader Permits Non-transferable		Annual	£74.00	£74.00
Mill Street, Undercroft Wantage	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.70	£2.10
			Up to 4 hrs	£3.30	£3.70
			Up to 6 hrs	£3.70	£4.10
			Over 6 hours	£4.20	£4.60
			Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable		Annual
			3 months	£150.00	£150.00
			1 month	£51.00	£51.00
Southampton Street	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	No charge

CAR PARK	TYPE OF PARKING		PERIOD	CHARGES		
	Current Charging Period	New Charging Period		April 2021	New Charges introduced April 2022	
Faringdon			Up to 3 hrs	£1.50	£1.90	
Gloucester St Faringdon	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Pay and Display (Mon-Sat 8.00am to 6:00pm)	Up to 1 hr	No charge	No charge	
			Up to 2 hrs	No charge	£1.50	
			Up to 3 hrs	£1.40	£1.80	
			Up to 4 hrs	£2.80	£3.20	
			Up to 6 hrs	£3.00	£3.40	
			Over 6 hours	£3.20	£3.60	
	Permits Mon – Sun (7 days) Non-transferable			Annual	£356.00	£356.00
				3 months	£108.00	£108.00
				1 month	£36.00	£36.00
	Market trader Permits			Annual	£40.00	£40.00
	Permits – School Term			Daily (20 min)	£12.00	£12.00
General - On application	Daily rate for Skips		£25.00 plus vat (per space) 2 spaces required as stated in the terms & conditions			
	Wheelie Bins (per space)		Annual	£204.00 plus vat		
	Permit replacement			£12.00	£12.00	
	Permit Refunds (Admin cost)			£10.00	£10.00	
Excess Charges			Standard	£80.00	£80.00	
			If paid within 14 days	£40.00	£40.00	

Appendix 2 Comparison of car park fees and charges with local suppliers, October 2023

Place	Average Charging periods	up to 1 hour	up to 2 hours	up to 3 hours	up to 4 hours	up to 5 hours	up to 6 hours	Up to 7 hours	up to 8 hours	up to 10 hours	up to 12 hours
South Oxfordshire District Council	8am to 6pm Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm Sunday	Free	1.80	2.40		2.80				6.00	
Train Station, Henley (APCOA on behalf of First Great Western) (discounts apply if pay by 'phone)	All days any time			2.00	3.00		4.00				
Dry Leas (Henley rugby club)	7am-10pm Mon to Sunday										3.50
Mill Meadows (Henley Town Council) Mon-Fri Free after 7:00pm Sat and Sun and BHs	All days Free from 7pm to 9am	1.50/1.80	3.00/3.50		6.00/7.00	Over 4 hrs 8.00/9.00					
Wycombe DC (High Wycombe) Easton Street	7am – 8pm Mon – Sat - Sunday £1.00 all day Free from 8pm to 7am	1.10	2.10	2.60	3.10	3.60	4.10	Over 6 hr 9.10			
Wycombe DC (High Wycombe) Baker St	Car Park Closed										
Wycombe DC (Marlow) Riley Road	7am to 7pm Mon - Sun	90p	1.70	2.60	3.10		4.10				6.60

Woking Borough Council (Victoria Way, Brewery Road & Heathside Crescent)	6am - 6pm Charges on Sunday at reduced rate, 1 hr 1.60, 2 hrs 3.00 over 2 hrs 3.30	1.80	3.50	5.00	6.50		8.00	12.00			15.00 up to 24hr
Aylesbury Vale DC (Friarscroft – outer long stay)	6.30am - 8.30pm Mon – Sat										3.10 Mon – Sat 8am to 9pm 1.60 Sundays & BH
Banbury (Market PI, ultra short stay)	8am - 6pm Mon –sat (Sundays & B/H 1hr – 1.10, over 1 hr 1.60)	1.60 (1.10 up to 30 mins)									
West Oxfordshire DC (Marriotts Walk multi-storey, Witney)	7am – 1am Mon -Sat 9am -1am Sunday	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Levels one to six have a max stay of four hours, Level seven and eight have a maximum stay of nine hours
West Oxfordshire DC (Woodford Way)	All day - Mon -Sun	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	Free	
Cherwell DC (Claremont)	Mon – Sun 8am to 6pm Free after 6pm	1.10 Sundays 1.10	2.20 or Sunday 1.60 over 1hr	3.00							
Cherwell DC (Cattle Market)	8am - 6pm Mon -Sun. Free parking after 6pm Mon - Sun	1.10 Sunday 1.10	2.20 or Sunday 1.60 over 1hr	3.00	3.80						5.00 – Day rate
Newbury Central KFC car park	Mon to Sun. 8am to 6pm	1.50	2.70	3.90	5.20		7.20		8.70		12.00

Waitrose Wallingford	Mon – Fri 8am – 9pm Sat – 8am - 8pm Sun 10am – 4pm	£1.00 £10 spend in Waitrose)	Max Stay 2hrs								
Didcot Gateway	Open 24hrs		2.50	4.50	5.60						7.20 up to 24hrs
Orchard Centre Didcot	Mon – Sat 7am – 7pm Free Parking on Sunday		Free	1.70	2.50	4.80 – Max 5 hrs stay					
Sainsburys Wantage	Mon – Sat 8am – 6pm Free any other time	Free	1.50	2.10	3.70	3.70	4.10				Max 4.50