




Sevenoaks
DISTRICT COUNCIL
Despatched: 23.12.13

CABINET
09 January 2014 at 7.00 pm
Conference Room, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

AGENDA

Membership:

Chairman: Cllr. Fleming Vice-Chairman: Cllr. Ms. Lowe
Cllrs. Bosley, Hogarth and Ramsay

	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Contact</u>
Apologies for Absence		
1. Minutes To agree the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 December 2013, as a correct record	(Pages 1 - 6)	
2. Declarations of interest Any interests not already registered		
3. Questions from Members (maximum 15 minutes)		
4. Matters referred from Council None		
5. Matters referred from the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee (Paragraph 5.20 of Part 4 (Executive) of the Constitution) None		
6. Recommendations from the Cabinet Advisory Committees None		
7. Annual Review of Parking Charges for 2014/15 	(Pages 7 - 44)	Gary Connor Tel: 01732 227310
8. Draft Budget 2014/15 - Verbal Update		Adrian Rowbotham Tel: 01732 227153

9. **Calculation of Council Tax Base and other Tax Setting Issues**

(Pages 45 - 52)

Roy Parsons
Tel: 01732 227204



Indicates a Key Decision



indicates a matter to be referred to Council

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing this agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public.)

To assist in the speedy and efficient despatch of business, Members wishing to obtain factual information on items included on the Agenda are asked to enquire of the appropriate Contact Officer named on a report prior to the day of the meeting.

Should you require a copy of this agenda or any of the reports listed on it in another format please do not hesitate to contact the Democratic Services Team as set out below.

For any other queries concerning this agenda or the meeting please contact:

The Democratic Services Team (01732 227241)

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2013 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Fleming (Chairman)

Cllrs. Bosley, Ms. Lowe and Ramsay

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Hogarth

Cllrs. Brookbank, Dickins, Eyre, Gaywood, Mrs. Hunter and Searles were also present.

40. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 7 November 2013, be approved and signed as a correct record.

41. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest

42. Questions from Members

There were no questions from Members.

43. Matters referred from Council

There were no matters referred from Council.

44. Matters referred from the Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committee (Paragraph 5.20 of Part 4 (Executive) of the Constitution)

There were no references from the Audit Committee or Scrutiny Committee.

45. Recommendations from the Cabinet Advisory Committees

- a) Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan (*Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 46.

- b) Pest Control Review – Outcome (*Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 47.

- c) Financial Prospects and Review of Service Plans (*Strategy & Performance Advisory Committee – 8 October 2013*), (*Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee – 15 October 2013*), (*Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee – 24 October 2013*), (*Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 48.

- d) Climate Local Sevenoaks (*Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 50.

- e) Proposed Designation of Sevenoaks Weald Conservation Area (*Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee – 19 November 2013*)

This was considered at Minute 51.

46. Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Plan

Members considered the reference received from the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee. The Health & Communities Manager advised that the report had already been considered by the Health Action Teams, Health Liaison Board and the Advisory Committee. The report advised that the Health & Social Care Act 2012 had set up a new Public Health Service called Public Health England. At the local level in Kent, responsibility for the public health function had been given to Kent County Council. District Councils in Kent had been asked to lead on the production of an action plan which could demonstrate how the County-wide objectives could be delivered locally. The Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan set out objectives and actions that would help to reduce health inequalities across the District. There would be quarterly meetings to work on the objectives and actions.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty and that it would have a positive impact in reducing health inequalities across the District.

Resolved: That the Sevenoaks District Health Inequalities Action Plan be agreed and adopted.

47. Pest Control Review - Outcome

Members considered the reference received from the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee. The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning and Environment presented the report which recommended exposing the pest control service to competitive tender in order to identify the most financially advantageous price of delivering the service. A Member addressed the Cabinet voicing his concerns that it was a service that was losing money and should be discontinued. The Chairman of the Local Planning & Environment Advisory Committee and Deputy Portfolio Holder advised that this issue had been well debated at the Advisory Committee and this way forward provided the opportunity to test the market. When the tender results came in there would be no obligation to accept and

the service could still be discontinued, however by that time the Council would have gained any income from the busier summer season. It was noted that the Council had no statutory duty to provide the service but the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 placed a duty on every local authority to take such steps as necessary to secure as far as practicable that their District is kept free from rats and mice especially with regards to its own property. Some Members were not sure what could be gained but at least going to tender would provide a good comparative exercise.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty and that a decision to cease delivery of the service or contracting out to a private company may have a detrimental affect on residents receiving means tested benefits as discounts currently offered may not be available. Steps that could be taken to mitigate this would be a requirement within the tender process to require the 'contractor' to provide a discount on pest control treatments to families on means tested benefits and provision for this subsidy within future council budgets as a growth item.

Resolved: That the pest control service be exposed to competitive tender, for a three year contract and that the results of the tender be reported to the Planning and Environment Advisory Committee for consideration.

48. Draft Budget 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources advised that the first stage of the budget process had been the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy' report presented to Cabinet in September and this report set out progress made in preparing the 2014/15 budget since then. All five Advisory Committees had been asked to provide Cabinet with their growth and savings recommendations which were included in the report. Members considered the references received from the Advisory Committees. He reminded Members that the 4 year savings plan started in 2011/12 and contained savings of £4.2m and in the last ten years, over £10m of savings have been made. The Financial Prospects report showed a shortfall of £667,000 over the 10 years. By making the two changes to assumptions contained in the report, and including the growth and savings recommended by the Advisory Committees, a balanced 10-year budget was left. There was still uncertainty around the Government Support figures as these were not expected until later in December. Therefore, a further report would be presented to Cabinet in January which would hopefully contain a more complete picture.

The Chief Finance Officer report that as agreed in September this council is continuing to use the 10-year budget strategy, which was now in its 4th year. This remained unusual in local government as many local authorities were still only looking at the short term as they saw budgeting for 3, 5 or 10 years ahead as being past their financial cliff edge. Grant Thornton, the external auditors, were about to publish their Financial Resilience Report on Local Government, this document would include the council's 10-year budget as a good practice case study.

He reported that the savings item that had caused the most debate was SCIA8, deletion of the Parking Civil Enforcement post. Further information had now been provided to the Chairman and relevant members who were now happy. The two changes to assumptions since the Financial Prospects report were: the Government would be reducing the

Government Support in 2014/15 by a further 1% resulting in a 7.5% reduction from the current year; and interest receipts had also been reviewed taking into account the latest information.

For information he advised that the Government had announced their Autumn Statement that day. The Chancellor had mentioned that local government would be protected from further cuts, but there were no details on how this would work. Business Rates increases were to be capped at 2% instead of being linked to RPI, and there were also changes to Business Rate reliefs. Again there were no further details as to how this would impact Business Rates Retention income. Also the New Homes Bonus would no longer be top sliced to fund the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

The report currently showed a balanced 10-year budget and this would be updated with the settlement figure and changes to any other assumptions should additional information become available, at the meeting in January 2014

The Chairman of Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee advised that Kent County Council (KCC) was providing one year transitional relief of about £15,000 on the recycling credits that would help with the loss of the recycling at Sainsburys.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Advisory Committee recommendations and comments be noted.

49. Performance Report

Members considered a report summarising the overall performance within each Portfolio Holder's area of responsibility against indicators and targets agreed by Cabinet in July 2013.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

50. Climate Local Sevenoaks

The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning & Environment referred Members to the recommendations from the Advisory Committee. The Housing Policy Manager advised Members on the background of Climate Local, which was a Local Government Association (LGA) initiative to drive, inspire and support local authority action on a changing climate. The initiative supported 'mitigation' measures (address the root causes by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and 'adaptation' measures (lower the risks posed by the consequences of climatic changes). Climate Local superseded the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, which had been previously adopted by the District Council. In response to this, Kent County Council (KCC) and its public sector partners, which included all Kent district/borough councils, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, and Kent and Medway NHS Trust, had jointly developed Climate Local Kent which was subsequently supported by the Kent Forum.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Council, that *Climate Local Sevenoaks* Option A, be approved and adopted as District Council policy.

51. Weald Conservation Area Designation and Management Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning & Environment presented the report which sought support for a new Conservation Area at Sevenoaks Weald and the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Resolved: That:

- a) a new Conservation Area be designated for Sevenoaks Weald; and
- b) the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

52. Treasury Management Mid-Year Update

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources presented the report which was one of a number that were recommended for submission to Members before, during and after the financial year in order to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It constituted the mid-year update, concentrating on activity in the first six months of the financial year.

Investment returns continue to be low and the prospects for any increase in Bank Rate in the near future appeared very limited. In order to maintain investment returns, the report looked at various options to increase yield in the forthcoming financial year. These options were discussed at the last meeting of the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee ahead of the Investment Strategy being set for 2014/15 and some of the ideas were being brought forward to consider with the Strategy.

Recovery of the Icelandic bank investment was on-going and at the current time four dividend payments had been received totalling approximately 54% of the investment and interest. The prospect was for 100% recovery over the coming years.

Resolved: That the Treasury Management Mid Year update for 2013/14 be approved.

53. Amendment to Local Planning & Environment Terms of Reference

Members considered a report that advised that since the formation the Local Planning and Environment Advisory Committee the Sevenoaks District Locality Board had ceased to exist making the reference to it within the terms of reference redundant. It was proposed to delete this reference to keep the terms of reference relevant and up to date.

Resolved: That the terms of reference be amended by the deletion of the line 'Two attendees appointed by the Sevenoaks Locality Board' as outlined within the report.

54. Membership of Cabinet Advisory Committees

Members considered the report which proposed Cllr. Mrs Sargent to fill the vacancy that had arisen on the Finance and Resources Advisory Committee since its formation in May 2013.

Resolved: That Councillor Mrs Sargeant be appointed to the vacancy on Finance and Resources Advisory Committee.

IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

This notice was published on 9 December 2013. The decisions contained in minutes 47, 48, 49, 51, 52, 53 and 54 take effect immediately. The decision contained in minute 46 takes effect on 16 December 2013.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.40 PM

CHAIRMAN

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARKING CHARGES FOR 2014/15

Cabinet – 9 January 2014

Report of: Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services

Status: For decision

Also considered by: Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee 24 October 2013 and Cabinet 7 November 2013

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary: This report is the annual review of parking charges. It proposes options for increases in respect to car park and on-street parking charges to meet the income budget targets for 2014/15, and advises the outcome of public consultation requested by Cabinet on 7 November 2013.

This report supports the Key Aim of the effective management of Council resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. R Hogarth

Contact Officer(s) Gary Connor Ext.7310

Recommendation to Cabinet: It be RESOLVED that, taking into account the outcome of public consultation:

- (a) the proposed changes to car park charges for 2014/15 be confirmed, subject to consultation as noted in the report;
- (b) the proposed changes to on-street parking charges for 2014/15 be confirmed, subject to consultation as noted in the report;
- (c) it be confirmed whether amendment of the car park evening charge in Sevenoaks town centre should be considered;
- (d) it be confirmed whether the introduction of parking charges into the Council office car park on Saturdays should be considered;
- (e) it be confirmed whether Sunday charges should be considered;
- (f) the alignment of the on-street tariffs at Knockholt Station with the tariff structure for Swanley be confirmed; and that
- (g) subject to the consideration of parking charge options for Westerham, the standardisation of the on-street tariffs for Westerham town with others in the district be confirmed.

Reason for recommendation: to meet the Council's budgets for parking for 2014/15.

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Introduction and Background

- 1 Through the Council's budget setting process, the budget plan increase for parking income from both car park and on-street parking for 2014/15 is set at 3.5%.
- 2 In addition to achieving the target increases for both of the parking accounts, and for guide purposes in connection with the budget setting process, the options provided indicate additional income that could be achieved.
- 3 Following consideration of the Annual Review of Parking Charges by Cabinet on 7 November 2013, the options as reported to Cabinet, along with a separate set of proposals for Westerham, which had been submitted for consideration by the Westerham Town Partnership, were put out for informal public consultation from 25 November to 15 December.

Background

- 4 Because car park ticket machines do not accept bronze coins, and because of the general lack of availability of 5p coins, parking tariffs are usually set to the nearest 10p. This practice is commonly adopted by local authorities. It should be noted that although a tariff increase of 10p may be relatively low in monetary terms, it can be high in percentage terms depending upon the scale of the charge, particularly in relation to lower tariffs.
- 5 For guide purposes, current car parking charges for neighbouring authorities are attached as Appendix A.
- 6 For information, in relation to parking in the vicinity of rail stations, the current day charge for the station car parks operated on behalf of Southeastern Trains is £6.50 at Sevenoaks, £6.00 at Swanley and £3.50 at Knockholt. Annual season ticket charges at Sevenoaks are £1,176 for Car Park 4 (off Morewood Close) and £1,411 for Car Park 1 (adjacent the station).

Car Park Proposals for 2014/15

- 7 Members are requested to also refer to the parking charge proposals for car parks submitted by the Westerham Town Partnership which feature later in this report.
- 8 The approved 10 year budget strategy assumes income will increase by 3.5% each year. For 2014/15, this would amount to £70,475.
- 9 The increase in income assumption also has to take into account increases in car park expenditure such as increased maintenance and operating costs.
- 10 There was a shortfall of £107,000 for 2012/13 on the car parks account of which approximately £92,000 related to pay and display income. Although the additional income from the increases approved at last year's review of parking charges, income which applies to the current year, is being achieved, the performance of the account is not sufficient to make up the shortfall from the previous year end. As at the end of November, there was a shortfall in car park income of £54,503. Pay and display income was £55,519 below target.

- 11 The development of the London Road area of the Blighs site to provide a new Marks & Spencer store commenced in June 2013. As a result, 49 spaces were lost from the “old” part of the Blighs car park and, to date, some 20 spaces have been lost in the Pembroke Road car park, but it is expected that the car park will soon have to be given up in its entirety to the residential element of the development. The loss of these parking areas will have an impact upon car park use and, of course, upon parking income in the town. The overall parking situation in the town centre is currently unsettled and whilst care has been taken to account for the likely effects of the development upon the estimations for 2014/15, predictions for parking income are consequently more difficult to make. Investment may need to be made to meet unmet demand for car parking in Sevenoaks town centre.
- 12 The Marks & Spencer development includes the provision of a VMS (variable message signing) system for the town centre. Electronic signs will be installed on the main approaches to the town which will indicate the number of spaces available in the town centre car parks. Thus people will be encouraged to make better use of available spaces in all car parks rather than queue and wait for a space in the most central car park.
- 13 It is hoped that the VMS system will be installed in time for the run up to Christmas, as it would, no doubt, be of benefit at such a busy time of year especially in view of the reduced amount of parking in the town. The system should assist in the assessment of parking behaviour and trends both before and subsequent to the opening of the new M&S store.
- 14 The reduction in long stay parking provision as a result of the development and the impact this will have, and indeed is already having, upon the Buckhurst 2 car park, needs to be carefully evaluated. Whilst the development proposals did not indicate likely issues with short stay provision as a result of the new store, it may be timely to review parking provision in the town with a view to identifying possible options to improve parking should this be considered of benefit to the viability of the town.
- 15 Proposals and options for car park charges are provided and attached as Appendix B. This comprises a table showing individual increases proposed and the resultant income for all options. Included on the second page of this appendix are the alternative proposals for Westerham car parks (details feature later in this report). All income figures quoted are net of VAT.
- 16 All of the options shown more or less achieve the budget target of 3.5%, but in slightly different ways.
- 17 The proposals within each option are not exclusive to that particular option, but can be interchanged or swapped with those in other options to provide a preferred set of proposals should Members so wish. However, care should be taken to maintain charging differentials, particularly between Blighs car park and the other short stay car parks in the town centre.
- 18 Included in Appendix B, as an example and a further possible option, is the income that could be derived from a flat 10p increase to all pay and display tariffs and a

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£10 increase to all season tickets. This could achieve an additional £74,000. This could, perhaps, be considered as Option 4 should Members so wish.

- 19 It should be noted that the achievement of the budget income target is difficult without applying significant increases to certain charges as put forward for consideration in the options provided.
- 20 In formulating the options, an attempt has been made to avoid the areas where increases were applied as a result of the previous review for the current budget year. Hence, there are no proposals in relation to the 1 hour/£1.00 charge in the Buckhurst 1, South Park and Suffolk Way car parks (item 1.5). The same argument has been applied to the charges in the Blighs car park, but the inclusion of some of the changes is unavoidable if the budget target is to be met.
- 21 Option 1 comprises an increase of 20p on all 2 hour, 3 hour and 4 hour tariffs and an increase of £20 for all season tickets in Sevenoaks town centre and Sevenoaks station car parks. In respect to the car parks at St Johns Hill, Sevenoaks, in Swanley and in Westerham, an increase of 10p is proposed to the shorter stay tariffs of 30 minutes, 1 hour and 2 hours, and an increase of 20p to the longer stay periods of 3 to 4 hours and all day.
- 22 In Option 2, the increases for the Buckhurst 2 car park have been reduced to 10p for all day parking and to £10 for season tickets, and no increases are proposed for the 30 minute and 1 hour periods in the Sevenoaks St Johns Hill, Swanley and Westerham car parks. However, this means that higher increases need to be applied elsewhere, as can be seen. It could be argued that the same consideration ought to be given to the long stay charges in these car parks, but they are currently significantly lower than the charge in Buckhurst 2.
- 23 In Option 3, by generally applying larger increases to the longer periods of stay, the car parks at Sevenoaks St Johns Hill, Swanley and Westerham can be less effected. Because of increased pressures upon long stay parking in the Buckhurst 2 car park and, consequently, the unpredictability of short stay use in the car park, any likely income from short stay in the car park has not been included in the overall income calculation. However, any increases approved in relation to the Buckhurst 1, South Park and Suffolk Way short stay car parks will automatically be applied to Buckhurst 2 as this will remain as joint short/long stay use.
- 24 The two-day ticket in the Bradbourne car park will be automatically adjusted so that it is twice the day ticket rate.
- 25 In relation to the Vicarage Hill car park in Westerham, because of its central location and close proximity to on-street parking areas, we have traditionally adopted the on-street tariff structure in the car park. It is not proposed to vary this policy.
- 26 The cost of altering ticket machines and signing has been taken into account in the budget figures provided.

Car Parks – 30 Minute Free Parking

- 27 The option of 30 minutes free parking has been raised and consequently the implications of providing this have been investigated as part of this review. Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide free parking during the day on an ad-hoc basis without it having a significant impact upon parking income.
- 28 If 30 minute free parking were to be provided, it would follow that those people currently parking for 30 minutes in the Blighs car park would not need to buy a ticket. There would be similar implications in respect to the other town centre car parks where, if it were to be assumed that, say, one third of people parking for 1 hour would take advantage of 30 minute free parking, the resultant loss of income could be in excess of £100,000.
- 29 In addition, from a parking management point of view, it would be difficult to effectively control such a scheme and ensure that the free parking concession was not abused.

Car Parks – Evening Charge

- 30 The evening charge was introduced in the Sevenoaks town centre car parks in 2004 and has not been amended since. Although Sevenoaks is one of a few Councils in Kent with an evening charge, they may be scope to consider a small increase. Alternatively, the evening charge could be replaced by an extension of the day-time tariff into the evening period. Ticket sales are approximately 54,000 annually, so even a small increase could achieve significant additional income.

Car Parks – Council Office Car Park

- 31 Members may be aware of the increasing popularity of the Council office car park which is available to the public free-of-charge and without time limitation on Saturdays. Whilst it is acknowledged that this provides a useful parking facility to supplement those in the town centre on Saturdays, it is believed that the car park is being increasingly used for long stay parking which effectively reduces availability for short stay shopping use, as originally intended.
- 32 The introduction of pay and display charges could be considered to better manage and control the use of the car park. If this were to be considered, we would need to be mindful of possible displacement onto the surrounding residential roads where there is free parking for up to two hours and care would need to be taken in setting the level of charges to reduce any likely impact.

Car Parks – Sunday Charges

- 33 The inclusion of Sunday charges had not been previously considered in any great detail and does not form part of the proposals within this report. However, asking people who park on Sundays to contribute towards the parking facilities they are using would be a means of raising further income. The evening charge was introduced on the basis that people who were using the car parks during the evening period were not contributing to the upkeep of the facility in the same way as those parking during the day. The same argument could be said to apply to the use of the car parks on Sundays.

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- 34 Survey data would need to be collected to enable an assessment to be undertaken, but it is understood that many of the car parks are well used on Sundays. The impact to surrounding residential areas would, of course, need to be taken into account.
- 35 Sunday charges are gradually becoming more the norm with many local authorities and this may be something that Members feel may warrant further investigation as a means of contributing to the budget and easing the burden upon the main areas of parking charges.

On-Street Proposals for 2014/15

- 36 Members are requested to also refer to the parking charge proposals for on-street parking submitted by the Westerham Town Partnership which feature later in this report.
- 37 The approved 10 year budget strategy assumes income will increase by 3.5% each year. For 2014/15, this would amount to £19,101.
- 38 Three options to achieve this are provided in Appendix C for consideration. Included on the second page of this appendix are the alternative proposals for Westerham on-street parking (details feature later in this report).
- 39 The outcome of last year's review was that an increase of 10p was applied to all the 30 minute tariffs. These have, therefore, been excluded from consideration in this year's review. Similarly, as the charging structure for residents' and business permits was amended in 2012, these are not considered as part of this review.
- 40 In Option 1, a 10p increase is applied to all 1 hour and 2 hour charges throughout.
- 41 Option 2 has a 20p increase to all 2 hour charges.
- 42 Option 3 mainly concentrates on the longer stay periods by proposing a 20p increase to the 4 hour and all day charges, although a 10p increase to the 2 hour charge is also included in order to achieve the target.
- 43 When the Knockholt station parking scheme, which is actually in Halstead parish, was introduced in October 2011, it was intended to align the charges with those for the Swanley area, but this was not recommended at last year's review because the scheme was subject to a review. This review has now been undertaken and there are no outstanding amendments pending to the scheme. Therefore, as part of this parking charge review, it is recommended that the Swanley charging structure is adopted for the Knockholt station area. This will have the benefit of overcoming issues with people currently using the pay by phone system to buy multiples of the 4 hour charge (60p) to obtain cheaper all day parking.
- 44 In last year's review it was suggested that the charging structure for the on-street pay and display areas in Westerham be standardised with others elsewhere in the district, however, Members were not minded to approve the proposal. It is recommended that this be reconsidered as part of this year's review.

Proposals by the Westerham Town Partnership

- 45 The Westerham Town Partnership has recently undertaken a comprehensive review of parking in Westerham. A Policy Document has been produced in which parking demands and challenges are identified, and proposals put forward to address the current parking needs of the town and those of the years ahead.
- 46 Copies of the [Policy Document](#) have been made available in the Members Room for Members' perusal.
- 47 A variety of proposals relating to issues such as parking provision, pricing policy, permit availability, parking enforcement, and improved signage and lighting are contained in the Document. Discussions are taking place with the Town Partnership to determining how best these can be taken forward. It has, however, been necessary to include elements of the proposals that relate to parking charges in with the District Council's Annual Review of Parking Charges in order for them to be evaluated and considered.
- 48 The alternative proposals for Westerham are shown on the second page of Appendices B and C. For the purposes of the public consultation these were referred to as Option 5 in respect to car parks and Option 4 in respect to on-street parking.
- 49 In essence, the Westerham Town Partnership proposals for parking charges are as follows:
- **in Darent car park (all day parking):** free parking for up to 3 hours; then 4 hours at £1.20 and all day parking at £3.10;
 - **in Quebec Avenue (all day parking) and Vicarage Hill (max. stay 2 hours) car parks:** the addition of a new 15 minute tariff which would be free-of-charge; tariffs revised as shown attached;
 - **in Croydon Road and Fullers Hill on-street parking areas (max. stay 2 hours):** the addition of a new 15 minute tariff which would be free-of-charge and addition of a new 3 hour tariff; tariffs revised as shown attached;
 - **in the Grange, the Green and Market Square (max. stay 2 hours) on-street parking areas:** the addition of a new 15 minute tariff which would be free-of-charge; tariffs revised as shown attached.
- 50 These changes to the tariff structures would necessitate amendment of the On-Street Traffic Order and the Council's Car Park Order. This would require formal consultation to be undertaken. Please refer to items 81 to 84 for further information.
- 51 To enable effective control and enforcement of the free parking periods, a "free" pay and display ticket would need to be taken from the ticket machines and displayed in the vehicle in the usual manner.
- 52 The impact of the proposals upon parking income has been assessed. It is estimated that the current level of car park income, e.g. for 2013/14, would

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reduce by £700 per year but that on-street parking income would increase by £29,400. However, certain assumptions have been made concerning the likely proportion of current users who would take advantage of the various free parking concessions. It is very difficult to forecast likely changes in parking behaviour with proposals incorporating elements of free parking. Because these are merely assumptions, it should be borne in mind that the actual impact upon parking income could easily vary significantly, either way, from the estimations made above.

- 53 The assessment undertaken by officers is attached as Appendix D. Comments received from the Westerham Town Partnership in response to the Council's concerns are included for information.
- 54 Noting the effect upon income for the current year 2013/14, and should the Westerham Town Partnership's parking charge proposals be adopted, the additional income for the Westerham car parks which is included in the main parking charge options would then not be achieved. This would adversely affect the bottom line total for each of the main options and the budget target for 2014/15 would not be achieved unless additional income is found from elsewhere. The actual total sums involved are: £5,100 in respect to Option 1, £5,800 in respect to Option 2, £1,500 in respect to Option 3 and £3,600 in respect to the example option.
- 55 However, should Members wish to adopt the Town Partnership's proposals, rather than seek to find replacement car park income from elsewhere in the main options, additional income could be produced by increasing some of the charges contained in the Westerham proposals and, hence, address the shortfall for 2014/15. This has been discussed with the Town Partnership and the suggestion has been agreed as a means of mitigating the loss of income in Westerham.
- 56 The following charges could be adjusted. For the Quebec and Darent car parks, by applying an additional 20p to the 4 hour charge and 30p to the all day charge on top of those suggested in the Westerham proposals, i.e. taking the 4 hour charge to £1.40 and the all day charge to £3.40, it is estimated that £3,400 of additional income could be produced. Increasing each tariff by a further 10p to £1.50 and £3.50 respectively, would give £4,700.
- 57 In respect to on-street parking, the level of additional income likely to accrue from the Town Partnership's proposals would exceed the budget target increase for 2014/15, assuming the assumptions made regarding the change of parking use are accurate. This additional income could be used to help fund some of the other priority proposals within the Policy Document, although this would be subject to future approval by Cabinet.
- 58 The expenditure of any surplus monies in the on-street parking account is subject to restrictions as set out by legislation and to conditions contained in the Council's Agency Agreement with the County Council.
- 59 Whilst acknowledging the purpose of the new charging proposals in supporting the economy of the town centre and relocating longer stay parking to the Darent car park, there are, nevertheless, concerns which should be drawn to the Members' attention:

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- The assumptions made in the Council's assessment regarding the change in parking use and the free parking periods are merely a "best guess" and, as indicated above, actual income levels could differ significantly.
 - Free parking can really only be managed if people are required to take a free ticket from one of the ticket machines. However, the ability will exist to extend the parking stay by simply taking further free tickets. This is considered to be a risk and could adversely affect the overall turnover of spaces and would impact upon income. It is not possible to quantify these effects.
 - It will not be possible to control the use of free parking tickets through parking enforcement. Provided a valid ticket is displayed in a vehicle at the time the enforcement visits take place, we would not be able to detect any abuse of the free parking concession unless multiple tickets happen to be left on display.
 - The Croydon Road and Fullers Hill on-street parking areas are currently maximum stay 2 hours. The inclusion of a new 3 hour parking period could lead to a reduction in turnover and availability of parking spaces, although the purpose for extending the period of stay is acknowledged.
 - The provision of free parking in Westerham would promote inconsistency and, it could be said, unfairness in parking charges across the district. Whilst some car parks in the district are provided free-of-charge, these are all located in small villages (Eynsford, Kemsing and Shoreham) where there is a general lack of community facilities. Hence, comparison of these to a town situation would, perhaps, be somewhat unreasonable. Charges do apply in Swanley but only Monday to Friday, and income is predominantly from rail commuter use. Parking in Swanley town centre is privately managed and has always been free of charge, although the situation is currently changing with the implementation of parking charges in some car parks.
 - The reasons for proposing free parking periods as part of the parking policy are appreciated and understood. However, Members should be mindful of setting a precedent in respect to the rest of the district should the Westerham proposals be approved.
 - The cost implications to the car parks and on-street parking accounts as noted above relate to the current financial year. Unless the tariff changes suggested above for the Darent and Quebec car parks are adopted, the effect upon the achievement of the budget target for 2014/15 will need to be taken into account in considering the main options.
- 60 To put parking income for Westerham into context with regard to the rest of the district, for last financial year 2012/13 pay and display income from Westerham car parks represented 2.6% of the total received and from on-street parking 18.4% of the total.
- 61 Should the proposals submitted by the Westerham Town Partnership be approved, it is suggested that this be on the basis of a trial period for one year and that the success or otherwise of the scheme be assessed as part of the Council's Annual Review of Parking Charges for 2015/16. Consideration could be given to the

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continuation of the scheme taking into account the resultant effect upon the parking facilities and parking income.

Public Consultation

- 62 At the request of Cabinet, at its meeting on 7 November 2013, the Council consulted with the community on all the parking charge options presented to Members.
- 63 The parking charge options were made available on the Council's web site and the public could express their views on their preferred choices, and make general comments, online from Monday 25 November to midnight on Sunday 15 December 2013.
- 64 The consultation was publicised via public notices put up in Council run car parks, a news release, social media and a webpage.
- 65 151 people took part in the consultation survey via the Council's website, where preferred options could be selected in respect to the various proposals for car parks and on-street parking. 73 also people made comments via the survey.
- 66 In addition to the comments made online, 8 sets of comments were also received by email and post. Notable respondents are: the Sevenoaks Town Council, the Westerham Town Council, the Westerham Society and the Oxted Chamber of Commerce.
- 67 All comments received are attached in Appendix E for Members' perusal.

Consultation Results

- 68 In response to which option was preferred for increasing charges in our car parks:
- Option 1: 18 responses
 - Option 2: 19 responses
 - Option 3: 38 responses
 - Option 4 (10p/£10 increases): 32 responses
- 69 Do you support the car park option proposed by the Westerham Town Partnership:
Yes: 81 No: 36
- 70 In response to which option was preferred for increasing charges for on-street parking:
- Option 1: 24 responses
 - Option 2: 31 responses
 - Option 3: 36 responses
- 71 Do you support the on-street option proposed by the Westerham Town Partnership: Yes: 53 No: 51

- 72 Should the Council consider increasing the evening charge in Sevenoaks town centre: Yes: 14 No: 116
- 73 Should the Council consider introducing a charge on Saturdays for the Council Office car park: Yes: 41 No: 90
- 74 Should the Council consider introducing charges on Sundays: Yes: 17 No: 120
- 75 Should the Council make the Knockholt on-street charges the same as the Swanley on-street charges: Yes: 37 No: 59
- 76 Should the Council standardise on-street changes in Westerham with other areas in the District: Yes: 35 No: 79

Respondents' Comments

- 77 A total of 73 comments were made by respondents covering a wide range of parking issues. In broad terms the bulk of the responses covered:
- Parking charges should be frozen or abolished (14 responses)
 - Concerns about the recent car parking charges introduced to a privately-run car park in Swanley (9 responses)
 - Support for Westerham Town Partnership's car park proposal for free parking up to three hours (9 responses)
 - Opposition to Westerham Town Partnership's car park proposal for free parking up to three hours (5 responses)
 - Opposition to evening charges in Sevenoaks (3 responses)
 - Existing car parking charges are reasonable (3 responses)

Survey Respondents' details

- 78 **Home location of respondents**
- Sevenoaks and surrounding area: 42 responses
 - Westerham and surrounding area: 54 responses
 - Swanley and surrounding area: 19 responses
 - Other areas: 18 responses
- 79 **Shopping destinations of respondents**
- Sevenoaks: 93 respondents
 - Swanley: 25 respondents
 - Westerham: 63 respondents
 - Other areas: 52 respondents
- 80 **Working locations of respondents**
- Sevenoaks: 34 respondents

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- Swanley: 9 respondents
- Westerham: 32 respondents
- Other areas: 43 respondents

Key Implications

Financial

- 81 Proposals to increase parking income are required to meet the Council's budget targets set in respect to car park and on-street parking. The financial implications are evident in the report and appendices.
- 82 The estimated figures are based upon current levels of patronage. The introduction of higher parking charges could lead to reduced patronage and, hence, the under-achievement of the income levels estimated in this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

- 83 There are set legal processes to be followed in respect to implementing new charges or other changes to off-street or on-street parking. The exact process that will need to be followed will depend upon what's approved.
- 84 Should the changes approved merely relate to varying existing parking charges, as in the case of the main Options reported to Cabinet on 7 November, i.e. without inclusion of the separate proposals submitted by the Westerham Town Partnership, the changes can be implemented by way publishing a Notice of Variation. This would advise that the charges would be amended to those shown and further public consultation would not be required.
- 85 However, should the changes approved include the proposed submitted by the Westerham Town Partnership, these could not be implemented by way of a Notice of Variation as the changes would involve adjustment of the tariff structures. In this case, Formal Public Consultation would be required in respect to both of the off-street and on-street proposals. Results of the Formal Consultation would then need to be considered by Cabinet. In addition, proposed changes to tariff structures and times of operation (if applicable) in respect to on-street parking would need to be considered separately by the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board (JTB).
- 86 In order to accommodate implementation at the beginning of April, Formal Consultation (should it be required) could be undertaken during January and February and results reported to Cabinet on 6 March and to JTB on 12 March. There would then be just enough time to complete the Order making process for introduction of the changes at the beginning of April. However, it should be noted that a later than normal request to the various ticket machine suppliers to provide new tariff programmes for the ticket machines may delay implementation beyond the start of April.

Equality Impacts

- 87 There is a low risk that any of the options presented will have an adverse impact on people with 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act. There are no apparent issues of direct relevance to parking charges as our car parks are open to use by anyone who chooses to do so. Free parking is generally available in roads just out from the town centres, although in some cases this might be limited to 2 hours. Free parking is offered for those with disabilities who hold a Blue Badge and this remains unaffected. Any issues will be monitored through complaints received.

Community Impact and Outcomes

- 88 The introduction of parking charge increases is likely to have an impact to some degree upon those people from the local community and visitors from outside the district who use the parking facilities, although it is impossible to quantify any likely resultant effect. Rather than pay any higher charges, people may instead decide to park for shorter periods, may lessen the frequency of their visits or may choose to go elsewhere.

Human Rights

- 89 There are no human rights issues or implications.

Conclusions

- 90 Proposals and options to meet the budget income targets are detailed in the appendices to this report. It is important that the proposals are considered making reference to the Parking Charges for Neighbouring Authorities, which are appended to this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Parking Charges for Neighbouring Authorities

Appendix B – Options for Car Park Charges

Appendix C – Options for On-Street Parking Charges

Appendix D – Assessment of the Westerham Proposals

Appendix E – Public Consultation Comments Received

Mr Richard Wilson
Chief Officer Environmental and Operations Services

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CURRENT PARKING CHARGES FOR NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES – AS AT OCTOBER 2013

(Charges shown relate to town centre car parks)

	Dartford ①	Gravesham	Maidstone ②	Orpington (L.B. of Bromley)	Oxted (Tandridge)	Sidcup (L.B. of Bexley)	Tonbridge & Malling ③	Tunbridge Wells ④	Sevenoaks
Charges apply:	8am – 6.30pm Mon - Sat	8am - 6pm Mon - Sat	8am – 6.30pm Mon - Sun	7.30am - 6.30pm Mon - Sat	7am–5pm Mon - Frid	8am - 6pm Mon - Sun	8am - 6pm Mon - Sat	8am - 6pm Mon - Sat and 10am - 5pm On Sundays	8.30am - 6.30pm Mon - Sat
Short Stay									
									(Blighs in brackets)
0 - 30 minutes	--	--	50p	--		--	50p	--	-- (70p)
0 - 1 hr	£1.00	80p	80p - 90p	30p	Up to 4 hours free parking except in one car park where the charge is £4.60 for parking before 10am.	50p - 90p	£1.00	£1.00 - £1.20	£1.00 (£1.30)
1 - 2 hrs	£1.00	£1.50	£1.60 - £2.00	30p		£1.00 - £1.20	£1.70	£1.70 - £2.20	£1.60 (£2.50)
2 - 3 hrs	£2.00	£1.50	£1.60 - £2.00	--		£1.30 - £1.60	£2.30	£2.40 - £3.20	£2.20 (£4.20)
3 - 4 hrs	£2.00	£2.00	£1.60 - £3.00	--		£1.30 - £1.60	£2.80 - £3.30	£3.20 - £4.20	£3.20 --
Evenings	£1.00	--	£1.50	--		--	--	--	£1.00
Long stay									
All day	£4.00	£3.00- £6.50	£6.00	n/a		£3.80 - £10.00	£4.90	£4.70 - £10.00	£4.20

① Dartford: one car park has 50p for up to 1 hour; the evening charge does not apply to all car parks

② Maidstone: charges apply 7 days a week; a £1.50 charge applies evenings and overnight.

③ Tonbridge & Malling: the 50p charge for 30 minutes is not available in all car parks.

④ Tunbridge Wells: charges apply 7 days a week (but from 10 to 5 on Sundays).

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CAR PARK TARIFFS				Example (option 4)		Proposed Increases			Estimated Income		
Item No.	Description	Charge Period	Current Charge	Income from 10p/£10 increase		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
1.0	SEVENOAKS TOWN CENTRE - Blighs										
1.1	Short stay	30 minute	70p	10p	£8,000						
1.2	" "	1 hour	£1.30	10p	£10,800						
1.3	" "	2 hours	£2.50	10p	£7,300	20p	20p	20p	£13,800	£13,800	£13,800
1.4	" "	3 hours	£4.20	10p	£1,500	20p	30p	30p	£2,800	£4,000	£4,000
	Buckhurst 1, South Park, Suffolk Way										
1.5	Short stay	1 hour	£1.00	10p	£14,000						
1.6	" "	2 hours	£1.60	10p	£7,900	20p	20p	20p	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000
1.7	" "	3 hours	£2.20	10p	£3,500	20p	20p	30p	£6,600	£6,600	£9,400
1.8	" "	4 hours	£3.20	10p	£1,700	20p	30p	30p	£3,200	£4,600	£4,600
	Buckhurst 2										
1.9	Long stay	all day	£4.20	10p	£3,500	20p	10p	20p	£6,600	£3,500	£6,600
1.10	Season tickets	year	£819	£10	£1,500	£20	£10	£20	£3,000	£1,500	£3,000
2.0	SEVENOAKS STATION										
2.1	Long stay	all day	£6.50	10p	£2,000	20p	20p	30p	£4,000	£4,000	£6,000
	Season tickets:										
2.2	Bradbourne	year	£1,060	£10	£1,500	£20	£20	£30	£3,000	£3,000	£4,500
2.3	Sennocke	year	£1,100	£10	£500	£20	£20	£30	£1,000	£1,000	£1,500
3.0	SEVENOAKS ST JOHNS HILL										
3.1	Short stay	30 minute	20p	10p	£2,000	10p			£2,000		
3.2	" "	1 hour	40p	10p	£1,000	10p			£1,000		
3.3	" "	2 hours	60p	10p	£800	10p	20p		£800	£1,500	
3.4	" "	3-4 hours	£1.00	10p	£500	20p	30p		£1,000	£1,400	
3.5	Long stay	all day	£2.90	10p	£300	20p	20p	20p	£600	£600	£600
4.0	SWANLEY										
4.1	Short stay	30 minute	20p	10p	£400	10p			£400		
4.2	" "	1 hour	40p	10p	£300	10p			£300		
4.3	" "	2 hours	60p	10p	£400	10p	20p		£400	£700	
4.4	" "	3-4 hours	£1.00	10p	£400	20p	30p		£700	£1,100	
4.5	Long stay	all day	£3.70	10p	£600	20p	20p	20p	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
5.0	WESTERHAM										
5.1	Short stay	30 minute	20p	10p	£200	10p			£200		
5.2	" "	1 hour	40p	10p	£700	10p			£700		
5.3	" "	2 hours	60p	10p	£1,000	10p	20p		£1,000	£1,900	
5.4	" "	3-4 hours	£1.00	10p	£900	20p	30p		£1,700	£2,400	
5.5	Long stay	all day	£2.90	10p	£800	20p	20p	20p	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
			Total:		£74,000			Total:	£72,300	£69,100	£71,500
			Percentage:		3.68%			Percentage:	3.59%	3.43%	3.55%

CAR PARK TARIFFS - WESTERHAM TOWN PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS - OPTION 5				Proposed new charges						
Item No.	Description	Charge Period	Current Charge							
DARENT CAR PARK										
	Short stay	30 minutes	20p		free					
	" "	1 hour	40p		free					
	" "	2 hours	60p		free					
	" "	3 hours	£1.00		free					
	" "	4 hours	£1.00		£1.20					
	Long stay	all day	£2.90		£3.10					
QUEBEC AVENUE CAR PARK										
	Short stay	15 minutes	new charge		free					
	" "	30 minutes	20p		20p					
	" "	1 hour	40p		50p					
	" "	2 hours	60p		70p					
	" "	4 hours	£1.00		£1.20					
	Long stay	all day	£2.90		£3.10					
VICARAGE HILL CAR PARK										
	Short stay	15 minutes	new charge		free					
	" "	30 minutes	10p		20p					
	" "	1 hour	50p		60p					
	" "	2 hours	£1.00		£1.50					

ON-STREET PARKING TARIFFS				Proposed Increases			Estimated Income			
Item No.	Description	Charge Period	Current Charge	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	
6.0	SEVENOAKS TOWN CENTRE (High Street, London Road, South Park)									
6.1	Short stay	30 minutes	20p							
6.2	" "	1 hour	60p	10p			£6,600			
6.3	" "	2 hours	£1.20	10p	20p	10p	£5,300	£10,600	£5,300	
7.0	SEVENOAKS TOWN COMMUTER AREAS (Plymouth Drive, Holly Bush Lane)									
7.1	Short stay	30 minutes	20p							
7.2	" "	1 hour	60p	10p			£100			
7.3	" "	2 hours	£1.20	10p	20p	10p	£100	£200	£100	
7.4	long stay	all day	£2.40			20p			£2,800	
8.0	SEVENOAKS RAIL COMMUTER and COURTS AREAS (St Botolphs, Morewood Close)									
8.1	Short stay	30 minutes	20p							
8.2	" "	1 hour	60p	10p			£300			
8.3	" "	2 hours	£1.20	10p	20p	10p	£300	£600	£300	
8.4	" "	4 hours	£2.20			20p			£1,200	
8.5	long stay	all day	£5.30			20p			£3,200	
9.0	SWANLEY (Azalea Drive, Goldsel Road)									
9.1	short stay	30 minutes	20p							
9.2	" "	1 hour	60p	10p			£50			
9.3	" "	2 hours	£1.20	10p	20p	10p	£50	£100	£50	
9.4	" "	4 hours	£2.20			20p			£100	
9.5	long stay	all day	£3.30			20p			£2,600	
10.0	WESTERHAM (The Green, Market Square, Fullers Hill, Croydon Road)									
10.0	short stay	30 minutes	20p							
10.1	" "	1 hour	50p	10p			£3,700			
10.2	" "	2 hours	£1.00	10p	20p	10p	£5,000	£10,000	£5,000	
11.0	KNOCKHOLT STATION									
11.1	short stay	4 hours	60p			20p			£150	
11.2	long stay	all day	£3.00			20p			£2,200	
							Total:	£21,500	£21,500	£20,650
							Percentage:	3.94%	3.94%	3.78%

ON-STREET PARKING TARIFFS - WESTERHAM TOWN PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS - OPTION 4				Proposed new charges							
Item No.	Description	Charge Period	Current Charge								
FULLERS HILL AND CROYDON ROAD											
	Short stay	15 minutes	new charge		free						
	" "	30 minutes	20p		20p						
	" "	1 hour	50p		60p						
	" "	2 hours	£1.00		£1.50						
	" "	3 hours	new charge		£2.50						
THE GREEN, THE GRANGE, MARKET SQUARE											
	Short stay	15 minutes	new charge		free						
	" "	30 minutes	20p		20p						
	" "	1 hour	50p		60p						
	" "	2 hours	£1.00		£1.50						

Assessment of Westerham Town Partnership Review Proposals

An assessment can only be made comparing the proposed tariff structures for the different areas with current levels of usage and income.

	Actual Income 2012/13	Estimated income for 2013/14	Effect of the WTP proposals	Difference to income
Car Parks				
Darent	£19,600	£27,900	Reduces income by 27.5%	Reduction £7,700
Quebec	£10,500	£11,800	Increases income by 8.7%	Increase £1,000
Vicarage Hill	£ 9,700	£14,300	Increases income by 42.3%	Increase £6,000
			Total:	Reduction £700
On-Street				
The Green	£14,100	£14,000	Increases total income by 32.1%	Increase £16,700
The Grange	£ 8,800	£10,800		
Market Square	£26,500	£27,500		
Croydon Road	£16,700	£16,300	Increases income by 48.4%	Increase £7,900
Fullers Hill	£ 8,800	£ 9,800	Increases income by 49.3%	Increase £4,800
			Total:	Increase £29,400

The following assumptions have been made in respect to the changes to the tariff structures:

- Re: Vicarage Hill car park, that 50% of current users of 30 minute tariff change to 15 minute free parking.
- Re: the Fullers Hill on-street, that 50% of current users of 30 minute tariff change to 15 minute free parking; that 25% of the current users of the 2 hour tariff change to 3 hours.
- Re: The Green, The Grange and Market Square on-street, that 50% of current users of 30 minute tariff change to 15 minute free parking.
- Re: Croydon Road on-street, that 50% of current users of 30 minute tariff change to 15 minute free parking; that 25% of the current users of the 2 hour tariff change to 3 hours.
- No allowance has been made for additional ticket sales as this is difficult to estimate for the changes proposed.

Important considerations

- The cost implications relate to the current financial year and the effect upon the Council's proposed options for 2014/15 will need to be considered in this regard.
- The provision of free parking periods will lead to enforcement problems. The only way this could possibly work would be for people to take a free ticket from the machine. We would not be able to record the periods that people may have been parked and so enforce the restrictions.

- Free parking will lead to people abusing the restrictions by taking second or third free parking tickets, which will be impossible to effectively enforce. This is likely to lead to a significant reduction in the use, availability and turnover of spaces.
- The proposal for 3 hours parking on-street in Croydon Road and Fullers Hill is not recommended as this could also lead to a reduction in the use, availability turnover of spaces.
- The times of operation for the restrictions in The Green, The Grange and Market Square are shown as different (8am -6pm) to others in the town(currently 8.30am – 6.30pm). In order to reduce confusion to the public, it is recommended that one time structure be adopted throughout.

Response from the Westerham Town Partnership

Thank you for your very swift, thorough and well considered assessment. We appreciate you have had very little time to consider the WTP proposals, and I am glad that in so doing, you have recognised the value of the time, depth of analysis and reasoning behind each suggestion we have made, and particular circumstances of Westerham, with its massive tourist influx, clustered retail economy, and restricted geography and space availability.

The main reason for the structure change is to drive traffic into the Darent car-park - this is in response to specific pressure factors in the centre. This pressure is evidenced by the proportion of fines revenue Westerham contributes. We comment on Richard and Gary's concerns as follows:

1. Precedent. There is nothing wrong in changing the precedent, provided harmonisation of process has been achieved. The WTP believes that each centre/district cannot be 'standardised' because each faces different economic and social pressures. Each district, if it wishes, should be able to put forward proposals which match the required income. If consultation is of excellent quality, then the process should achieve the right answer for each district, both for the community and for the revenue stream required. Each of Sevenoaks and Swanley should be free to suggest substantially higher centre charges if they wish to follow in Westerham's stead: this formula may or may not be right for them: they have existing pockets of free parking: this is not available in Westerham.

2. Fairness and consistency - the WTP agrees emphatically with the principle of a fair and consistent process. But to compare Swanley with Westerham, and their respective social and economic pressures, is like comparing chalk and cheese. Provided revenue stream required is fair, then tariffs are a matter of detail, to be adjusted according to local demand and the need to direct parking flow. In any event hugely different tariffs already exist across the district, achieving different outcomes.

3. Surplus income from on-street parking: it is not clear from Richard's comment who gets what income. Do we deduce that KCC benefits from on street parking and this can only be spent on tightly controlled things? Whereas SDC benefits from car-park revenue and it can be spent on whatever it likes? Charges should not be manipulated, against the interests of the community, in order to bias revenue stream towards car-park revenue, for the ends of SDC. Surplus cash (over and above SDC's anticipated revenue) should be

reinvested into relieving Westerham's problems, specifically additional space needs and the capital costs of extending the proposed overflow car-park.

4. Free 15 minute parking. Evidence from Shropshire DC (which introduced a much publicised 15 minute free at the instigation of its Leader in Spring 2013) is that this is not abused: for the reason that those wishing to stop for 15 minutes specifically do not wish to stay longer: their policy is called 'Pop and Shop'. Shropshire does not even issue 15 minute free tickets, as we are proposing. There is no evidence to support Gary's assertion that there will be a 'significant reduction in use, availability or turnover': on the contrary WTP (backed by Shropshire DC's findings) believes it will significantly increase these things. Going back for a free ticket every 15 minutes is highly unlikely to attract significant numbers of abusers, since it is a tedious exercise, and in any event the tickets would state 'no return within x time'. Enforcement would be the same as it is now.

5. Cost considerations: WTP recommends that some expense is undertaken on signage on parking meters, to inform about alternatives and provide some customer service. Since these need to change anyway, as do the meter functions themselves, presumably the added burden of WTP's proposals is insignificant: however these would indeed need to be evaluated.

6. 3 hours central parking. The reason for this proposed bias in Croydon Road and Fullers Hill is that a significant (statistically, not anecdotally) sample in our Retailers' survey asked for sufficient time to both shop and eat in the centre: it is widely felt that 2 hours max deters visitors, thus adversely affecting the economy. Croydon Road, according to the usage survey, is very rarely full, certainly in the weekdays, and it is felt that 3 hours max would not act as a block to turnover, but would support a greater 'spend' in the economy. The point is well taken for Fullers Hill, which incidentally has room to increase the spaces by up to 5. If the Darent (at the opposite end of town to Croydon Road) has 3 hours free we could argue that the 3 hour request has been catered for.

7. Time restriction harmonisation. In principle the WTP agrees to this, but wonder why they were introduced in this way? Later in the WTP Report, we propose a two tier Residents' permit, and there may be implications on traffic flow which originally lead to the different time restrictions. Does SDC know why these exist?

The WTP recommends an observation or trial period to see the effects of the WTP proposals. In this way working practices for Civil Enforcement Officers can be amended, without changing any Traffic Regulation Orders or taking this through formal council. If successful in stimulating the economy, there may well be a flagship policy to develop for SDC.

WTP trusts our proposals will be favourably considered at the forthcoming Cabinet meeting. We are happy to volunteer our management expertise to support implementation, during the consultation period, and to continue to monitor.

We look forward to hearing the results of the Cabinet meeting shortly, so that we may consider the way forward for the WTP. We would also like to consult on other parking issues explored in our Report, so we welcome another meeting shortly.

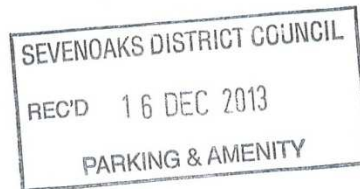
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Public Consultation Comments Received by Email and Post



Sevenoaks
TOWN COUNCIL

The Parking Services Manager
Sevenoaks District Council
P.O. Box 183
Argyle Road
Sevenoaks
Kent, TN13 1GN



13th December 2013

Re: Car Parking Charges within Sevenoaks Town Consultations (on and off street)

Dear Mr Connor

Sevenoaks Town Council considered the consultation for both on and off street parking charges for 2014 / 2015 at the Planning Committee meeting held on the 9th December 2013. Town Councillors wished to reject the premise of another increase in parking charges, as motivation for the increase appears to be for Sevenoaks District Council's budgetary reasons rather than concern for the wellbeing of residents, visitors and local businesses within the Town and District.

In para 2.3 of a recent central government consultation on local authority controlled parking it states:

"... the Government is aware of concerns that some local authorities appear not to be using their powers to meet the best interests of road users, communities and businesses in their area. There are concerns about over-zealous parking enforcement and high parking charges driving people out of Town Centres, pushing up the cost of living and making it harder for people to park responsibly and go about their everyday lives."

The Consultation goes on to announce the Government's intention to amend certain elements of local authority parking policy including *"re-emphasising that parking charges and fines cannot be used as a means to raise revenues"*

The message from Central Government is clear; that parking charges should not be increased to a level which would have a detrimental impact on the Town Centre's vitality in order to balance the local authority's budget. The Town Council would therefore request that Sevenoaks District Council reassesses its financial position and investigate other means to balance the 2014/2015 budget which do not involve a further increase in car parking charges.

Yours sincerely

Hugh D'Alton
Planning Committee Clerk
Sevenoaks Town Council

cc: Dr Pav Ramewal, Chief Executive, Sevenoaks District Council (by email)

Town Council Offices
Bradbourn Vale Road
Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QG
Tel: 01732 459953 Fax: 01732 742577

Email: council@sevenoakstown.gov.uk
Website: www.sevenoakstown.gov.uk

Town Clerk



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Westerham Town Council Reply to Car Parking charges for 2014/15 Consultation

1. SDC seek to increase charges by 10% whilst being restricted by Government to less than 2% in respect of their domestic rate increases.

Government's restriction is, amongst other things, for the purpose of controlling costs emanating from the State that have to be borne by the public at a time of considerable economic hardship.

Under these economic circumstances and the lead from Government, there is no justification for a 10% increase which will impact on both business and domestic budgets.

SDC should be assisting both business and domestic communities by a freeze on any increase or at worst, no more than the 2% restriction already applying.

2. It is evident from the detailed survey carried out by the Westerham Town Partnership, (WTP), and the excessive fines history from SDC statistics, that the current tariffs are a barrier to trade in the retail community.

3. Westerham Town Council support the WTP analysis and therefore the principle of free and revised charge periods as set out in OPTION 5.

4. OPTION 5 reflects SDC's desired percentage cost increase, which we object to under point 1 above.

Adjusting the charges to reflect a nil or two percent overall increase is without difficulty and is the recommendation of WTC.

5. Sunday charges.

These would be a disaster in congesting unticketed areas given the weekend attraction as a tourist location and the large and growing junior sporting activity on Sunday at King Georges Field.

Town Clerk Westerham Town Council

The Westerham Society
10th December 2013

RE: Westerham Parking Charges Consultation

May I introduce myself as the Chairman of the Westerham Society. The Society is a very long established heritage and community group focused on the history and future development of Westerham. We work very closely with the Westerham Town Council, the Westerham Town Partnership and the National Trust, along with many other groups and individuals.

We have seen the paper, prepared by the Westerham Town Partnership, in relation to proposed changes to the car parking charges in Westerham.

We would like to go on record as fully supporting the proposals outlined in the paper. It is our belief that a significant review of current charges needs to be implemented.

Westerham is a significant town in the West Kent area and attracts numerous visitors to both itself and the surrounding countryside and other towns/villages. We must recognise that the vast majority of such visitors will come by car and Westerham must be an attractive and economic destination.

The proposals in the Town Partnership proposal outline the many excellent reasons as to why the parking charges, and availability of parking, need urgent attention.

In any event, we would add our objection to an increase in parking charges during these hard economic times.

I am available to discuss, should you wish.

Yours Sincerely Chairman

I write as Chair of Oxted Chamber of Commerce, who were in the forefront of the campaign to prevent Surrey County Council from imposing blanket on street parking charges in all small towns and villages throughout the county.

In the case of Oxted, we carried out a comprehensive impact assessment as to the damage that parking charges would do to the vitality of the town and the results of that assessment were supported by an overwhelming majority of residents and businesses.

We also conducted market research amongst local businesses, shoppers and visitors to the town to see how they felt about SCC's proposals.

Business owners (many of whom are owner managed independents) were worried that shoppers would leave the town in favour of free parking in out of town centres such as Bluewater.

Many businesses were already struggling to survive in the economic downturn and were fearful for their future, also given the level of rents and business rates.

Although shoppers wanted to support their local shops, many felt that parking charges would be a major factor when considering a shopping destination.

Oxted Chamber of Commerce has always fought for free parking and we have been supported by Tandridge District Council who have realised the importance of attracting people to the town.

Oxted now offers free on street parking in designated areas, time limited to one hour.

Free off street parking in TDC owned car parks, time limited to four hours. Unlimited at weekends.

TDC have also made available 60 long term parking spaces in their car parks for the sole use local businesses and their staff. Permits for these spaces are issued to Chamber members for an annual fee. This contributes approximately £26,000 per annum towards the cost of parking services.

I no longer come to Sevenoaks because of the parking charges. Last time I visited I was appalled at the number of vacant retail units. I also know the previous owners of two business in Sevenoaks who were forced to close because their customers were no longer coming to the town because of parking costs.

I urge you to consider the consequences of any increase in parking charges. The survival of our small towns depends on it.

Chair **OXTED CHAMBER of COMMERCE**

We are commenting on the notices in the car parks in Sevenoaks relating to proposed fee increases next year.

We have huge concerns. Whilst we appreciate the need to increase usable revenue, it is surely VERY short sighted to raise your income this way. Do you really want to continue to send people to out-of- town shopping centres and kill off the centre of our lovely town? The number of complaints we hear from people putting vast amounts of cash into the machines must surely give you a clue. There has recently been a slight upsurge of new businesses setting up in the town - please give them and other new businesses a chance.

One very important thing. Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Environment made it clear that Councils should not try to raise their revenue through higher car park charges.

Please would you forward our comments to the January meeting.

Car Park Views Sought: Having just been made aware of consultation regarding the above- 4/12 - it appears that this has been ongoing since November. My complaints are as follows:

1. Why such a short consultation window?
2. Why haven't we been advised in writing individually?
3. Having seen the proposed car park charges and the Survey, I am lost at your logic. How can I comment on the proposed charges when the survey is completely unworkable. How can comment on an area in which you do not live?

Page 1 asks my preferred option on car park charges in Sevenoaks, Swanley and Westerham. However, whoever drew up this document hasn't a clue on what they are doing because this document is written in such a way to mislead the Constituent thus members are quite likely to complete this document without realising the implications! How can i complete it when it doesn't break down the options per town? And why such a difference in prices? One can understand that if you live in an affluent area, it may be acceptable to pay more however this isn't the case.

Another point to note is that why are you penalising those that are working? Isn't it bad enough to have inflated costs when travelling to London et al by train but to inflate costs at the stations as well is being greedy! These station car parks are not manned. They do not need excessive maintenance. The costs are not warranted.

Whilst I accept that you may wish to help recoup losses of the Iceland and Norwegian debarcle and that you may wish to jump on the Cushman Wakefield bandwagon, I do think that you are underestimating your constituents feelings. By increasing town car park charges you are forcing people into the large shopping centres. Do you want to make these towns ghost towns or is that the object? Pushing through a 'silent' planning application in order to build houses in these towns thus maintaining the quota as set by the Government?

I have lived in Westerham for many years, and have therefore seen the evolution of the Town and its growing traffic problems over the past half century.

I strongly support the Westerham Town Partnership's proposals, resulting from their recent survey, which seem to me to provide a balanced view of the current situation together with their parking charging proposals. I agree with their view that if local shops are to flourish, vital to encouraging tourism with all the wealth their combined activities create, a more visitor friendly regime is necessary. Otherwise Sevenoaks Council is in danger of killing off the goose which lays the golden egg.

I have therefore voted in favour of Option 5 in your survey questionnaire.

I am writing to give you my views on your proposed parking increases, as requested by your notices on the pay machines in the car parks in Sevenoaks. I have completed the survey on your website

I live in Sevenoaks - TN13

My argument that by keep increasing the parking fees, people will not use the town but use the out of town supermarkets and stores, thus leading to a decline in the economic activity in the town, with more shops closing and the sites either being taken over by charity shops etc. or left empty and ugly - like broken teeth in spoiling a happy smile.

I volunteer frequently at both The Stag and Sevenoaks Library, so I do play my part in keeping local community costs down. Surely we need to encourage people to use our local facilities, both for business and for leisure and 'knowledge exchange' - not deter them by increasing charges at car parks next to these facilities. People do make comments to me both at the Stag and in the Library about the cost of parking in Sevenoaks, so I can assure you that members of the public feel they are already paying enough to use these facilities.

So please don't put the parking costs up - rather do all you can to encourage people to come to our lovely town and to make the most of all it has to offer.

Website Parking Survey Comments

- I feel very strongly that we need to allow visitors to come and browse the shops in Westerham, perhaps stop for coffee and lunch and they should not be charged ridiculous amounts for parking. For instance, Oxted High St, Surrey, and off the smaller roads has free parking for 2 hours, they have a car park which currently charges in the week before 9.30am and after that up to 3 hours for free. The weekend, no charge for up to 3 hours. Oxted High Street is always busy, the shops have a good revenue. I believe Westerham needs to take a leaf out of their book and encourage people to use Westerham, as it has a good range of useful and unusual shops. Surely up to 3 hours everywhere should be free, there onwards is another matter. I do understand that if you are an employee etc working in Westerham then they should have a season ticket offering them a substituted parking fee (this would be located in the King George Playing Fields/Darent).
- I tend not to agree with any parking charges. Am annoyed that the swanley shopping cents car park is now charging fees. I know these car parks are run privately, but just wanted to mention it. It will stop people coming to swanley to shop. As the centre has more tenants now, surely they can't be pleased that they will lose business and might leave?
- I am mostly concerned with Westerham parking facilities. I see little point in allowing just the first 15 minutes free parking. You would be hard pressed to get in and out of one shop or post office say and back to your vehicle in 15 minutes. Generally speaking I find Darent car parking reasonably priced but by making it cheaper or giving periods free might ease up spaces within the town centre for people who cannot walk up from Darent. There is no way elderly people or those with disabilities could climb up through the churchyard and the lighting, or lack of it, is not good. Businesses in Westerham need support. I have seen people dash out of shops to get back to their vehicles for fear of over zealous parking attendants. Yes parking attendants should use a bit more discretion, a 5 or 10 minute grace.
- In an area whichever depends on visitors and those travelling in for its economy, it is vital that parking charges should support economic development, rather than being a revenue source for the District Council. A few miles over the board into Surrey, parking in Oxted is free up to 4 hours. This is a big attraction to shoppers. The District Council needs to look at these competing areas and understand the deleterious effect their parking charge proposals would have on business. I fully support the Westerham option
- "Swanley Centre has now started charging for parking. Sevenoaks DC would provide a huge level of assistance to Swanley's traders by introducing a 30 minute free period. Not a good idea to increase the evening charge in Sevenoaks. Bromley is MUCH better as a town centre and only charges £1."
- "i fully support the alternative proposal for westerham....as a resident but living one mile outside I probably have to visit westerham for a quick shop or quick visit to either post office or bank three times a day and it is very stressful wondering if one is going to come out to find an over eager parking warden about to produce a ticket after only a couple of minutes.such a situation actually occurred at 08.31 one saturday morning when in the local butchers and my request for just two minutes was met with a reach for the fine padI had to rush out and drive off and return later to the butchers. This proposal will surely help avoid such distressing events and be a positive help to local traders."

- over night parking should be permitted in carparks. As a resident of Westerham (Quebec Square) if I have family to stay overnight they are unable to park.
- The new parking charges in the car parks by the back of Asda are ridiculous. I agree there should be a charge for people using the site past say 1 hour but we need to encourage people to shop in Swanley and charging them to park is not going to do this. Also both doctors surgeries are there and you should not have to pay to park to see your doctor. Short stay (60 mins) should be free in Doctors car parks every day except Wednesday due to the market. On a Wednesday the doctors should be able to issue short stay permits to patients only.
- I don't understand why Westerham has been given what appears to be special treatment. It is an affluent area and should be kept in line with similar inflationary charges as Sevenoaks.
- I accept charges have to increase but why on earth is Westerham being offered free parking. This is extremely unfair to the other areas
- Every area needs an independent parking regime which help support its local economy. There is no point in frightening people away, it just ruins the local economy and is totally demotivating for all local enterprises.
- The parking meters should give change, especially as the charges are all odd amounts rather than rounded to the nearest coin. ie 50p or £1.
- Westerham needs to be treated as a special case as parking is the lifeblood of the village and parking is a very sensitive subject and if there are any increases it can affect the footfall of the town! Remember that people always have a choice of where they shop and that may end up being somewhere like Bluewater where parking is FREE!
- The present evening charge results in indiscriminate on-street parking and parking in St Nicholas Church car park which is heavily used by church activities.
- I am a resident of Westerham and am particularly concerned that the parking charges adversely effect trade of retailers in the town. There should be more areas free of charge for a short period, particularly close to the shops.
- Get rid of CCTV cameras so that you are able to lower parking charges. Parking charges prevent people coming into the town, especially in the evening. CCTV cameras do nothing to prevent crime.
- "The charge in the evening deters me from going into Sevenoaks for a meal or the cinema as it increases the cost of a night out. I prefer out of town options. I think that Sevenoaks parking is expensive and puts off people going in to Sevenoaks for shopping."
- Darent car park is inconvenient and usage needs to be encouraged with an expanded overflow ares.
- We would like 3 or 4 hours parking in Westerham so we could have a meal and then look at the shops, currently you cannot manage both! The parking wardens always seem to be in Westerham watching the meters so even if you are 2 mins late you get a ticket, doesn't encourage people to visit Westerham.

- I believe the charges are already high enough and should not be increased further. People will end up being put off coming to these places and go to where the parking is free
- I think that it is key that you retain free Sunday parking. The town centre car parks are used by many church goers and allow those less able church goers to make use of the small on-site church parking facilities. I also think that short term parking fees of up to 1 hour should not increase at all as these fees are often paid by people popping into town for one thing and probably only staying 15 mins.
- As a resident and permit holder in the centre of Westerham I am tired of the business owners lobbying both district and parish councils to favour parking arrangements for 'their' customers, and then abusing any extension to parking time or reduced costs by using the spaces for themselves and staff who are too lazy to use the main town car parks. On a daily basis I witness meter feeding and non-payment of parking charges as they watch for the enforcement officers. This is a particular problem in the Fullers Hill car park - I assume it is the case throughout the town. Perhaps the council could consider permits for businesses and workers in the town to park in the main car parks which would encourage them to adopt the habit of parking and walking the short distance to work (as many of us do in other towns), leaving the on-street parking and smaller car parks with a decent turnover to suit both residents and genuine customers.
- I am a student studying with an apprenticeship. I travel to Sevenoaks four times a week to work at an accounts. I am on an apprenticeship wage which is roughly £150 a week, if the prices continue to rise, I will not be able to afford to come and work over here. I love Sevenoaks town and prefer it to where I live (Maidstone), I feel you will deter people from coming to the town by rising the prices. Not all of us are affluent and can only just afford £4.20 a day on top of petrol to travel here.
- Weekend parking in Azalea Drive Swanley should be free otherwise people who want to use Swanley station will be parking in residential roads, parking up on pavements immediately outside front doors and in private parking areas which will cause problems for residents.
- I rarely shop or go out in Sevenoaks because the parking is so expensive. Other towns present better value. Sevenoaks needs to make itself more attractive, or it will continue to lose out.
- I think the individual town councils should take control of parking. General parking charges are too high and there is a need to make it easier for people visiting the smaller towns such as Westerham for longer. Parking problems and charges are crippling our towns
- Why have the council introduced charges in the Swanley centre behind the post office no consultation was given about these charges it was just introduced one Monday morning nobody had any notice that this was going to happen why was this.
- Appalling plan, please stop killing Sevenoaks with parking charges. Start trying to make it an appealing place to use, otherwise it will become a dead commuter town and we will all go to out of town shopping centres to visit shops and cafes. It's not just the cost, but the inconvenience of paying each time you want to pop into the post office to pick a letter, or buy some stationery. The more annoying you make it the more I forget the town centre exists and use Amazon, or drive to a retail park somewhere else.

- "Beavan place in Swanley is very underused by locals or commuters. Increasing 'all day parking' by 20p to £3.90 will not make much of a difference. If commuters are wise they will all flock to parking in Swanley town centre. They are now charging '£3 all day'. This is much cheaper than the £6 charged by the station and the £3.70 the council currently charges for parking in Goldsell road. It looks as if the owners of the shopping area want to close all the shops down (Asda excluded) and turn it all into a commuter car park. Are the council doing anything about this?"
- If all day parking is increased it will surely mean even more people will use the Town Centre car park which is less expensive. Rather than look at parking charge reviews time would be more effectively spent doing whatever is needed to revoke the charges put in without consultation and predictably are causing problems especially for the two surgeries. Blue badge holders also have to pay. The firm operating the car park on behalf of the centres management company purport to belong to a recognised British parking association which is incorrect. How did this happen?
- "Alter the NEW car park charges for town centre car parks in Swanley. Allow 2 hours FREE, 4 hours small charge, All day at higher charge (for station and employees). - Since the new charges have been added these car parks are hardly used - all it is doing is making the other car parks busier and leaving a lot of empty space in the chargeable ones for people travelling by train."
- The more you up the price of parking the more people will go to Bluewater etc. Car owners are not cash cows!!
- Please consider the local traders who need people to come to keep them in business.
- As a business owner in Westerham I think we need to encourage people to come into Westerham and not increase the parking.
- I oppose any increase and in fact desire a decrease in your parking charges so as to encourage visitors to your shopping areas which is surely a greater benefit to Sevenoaks bank balance than encouraging people to go to Bluewater from which you receive no benefit. A Loss of shops = a loss of business rates to you.
- I feel the charges for Westerham are reasonable
- No further comments
- Bartlett Road in Westerham needs resident permit parking
- Far from seeking to increase parking charges in the Westerham area, these should be completely abolished. The council's cynical money-grubbing approach to taxing local residents and motorists is disgraceful.
- "It is frustrating (and disingenuous) that the machines do not give change. Public transport into Sevenoaks , particularly bus is so poor (starts too late finishes too early) that using a car is the only option."
- Listen to the Westerham Town partnership and go with their parking charge plan please.

- WE HAVE JUST MOVED FROM POYNTON, CHESHIRE, WHERE THE COUNCIL HAVE REMOVED ALL PARKING CHARGES, SO THEY CAN COMPETE WITH LOCAL FREE SUPERMARKET PARKING. THE LOCAL SHOP KEEPERS HAVE SO FAR REGISTERED AN INCREASE IN BUSINESS OF OVER 100%, WITH MANY SHOPPERS COMING IN FROM OTHER AREAS WHICH CHARGE FOR PARKING. COME ON SEVENOAKS AND AREA, WAKE UP, DON'T LOSE OUT TO THE SUPERMARKETS!
- It would be very beneficial to both traders and residents, to introduce a free period of parking in the town. A 15/30 minute pop in time in the centre of town is great to allow people to nip into the convenience shops, currently the lack of parking & requirement to park for just 5 minutes deters people. As a resident quite close to the town centre I would also like to deter visitors parking outside residents houses which is causing lots of problems, especially for local works who park all day. I was unaware of the very reasonable offer for the annual pass for the car park and this should be advertised more. We have a beautiful town and we encourage tourists to visit to support our local traders and appreciate all that Westerham has to offer, the parking should be something that attracts people, not puts them off.
- Westerham parking needs to be reviewed as not supporting traders and small business, it also needs more parking.
- Why do there have to be any increases at all?
- Would also like to see the Long stay car park made solely for people wishing to park long term only and not allow short term parking in there as well or the other alternative is to make all the car parks long and short stay as well.
- If you wish Sevenoaks to survive as a place to go for shopping or other 'High Street' like activity then parking must be free. Car is the only viable means of getting to the town. If the car parks were not charged then no rates could be charged, maintenance could cease, no expensive machines would be needed or people to see if a ticket had been bought.
- "A lot of the charm of Sevenoaks is the smaller 'independent' shops that have character and are useful, like Patmores, Hardware Centre, Shoe shops, Art shops, Butchers, Robert Dyas, florists, clothes shops, jewellers, chemists and others. Gradually this type of shop is being eroded from our town centre and being infilled with bigger stores and restaurants. This could have a 'good' side to it if this brought more visitors into the town and kept local people shopping there also, to support the shops. However, whoever you talk to whether it is the local shop keepers or local people, there is always one gripe - that is the parking in Sevenoaks. There is just not enough and now there is the added threat of increased prices. Has anyone seriously tried to provide more car parks - even make some existing ones two storey e.g. near the Leisure Centre? Surely if the parking space is doubled, yes it would cost to build initially but then it must provide double the income eventually.
- Regarding Swanley, special consideration should be given taking into account the recent introduction of parking charges imposed without consultation with SDC/STC, managed by a third party operator County Car Parks from 7th November of:- 50p for the first hour, £2 up to 3 hours, £3 to park all day. If SDC impose an increase now, its rather like jumping on the bandwagon and adding to the financial ramifications already experienced by OAP's, workers and general public of reduced circumstances. I think Swanley should be excluded from

'current' potential parking increases until their legal enquiries into the rights of privately introduced charges have been clarified!

- Cut costs rather than increase charges. Too many staff???
- "They impediment of charges to rural perusal and usage could seriously off set economic recovery and effect commercial regeneration Sunday parking charges are penal and effect social participation Swanley is suffering economic hardship and could do with assistance to shoppers who in effect are penalised and will vote with their feet if difficulties are placed on them. - result fewer shops paying no rates followed by degregation and higher social amd economic civil costs."
- "Please continue to allow annual season card holders for Sevenoaks Leisure Centre to reclaim their parking (up to 2 hours) when they use the facilities. On street parking charges should be extended to all roads surrounding Sevenoaks station that are being used by commuters to park free."
- THERE IS ONE SECTION THAT APPEARS TO BE MISSED THI IS THE PARKING AREA IN FRONT OF SACKVILLE PLACE, THIS HAS NOT BEEN REINSTATED SINCE BUILDING FINISHED AND IS A LOSS OF INCOME TO THE COUNCIL.
- "The parking charges must be killing the town and the shops. I drive to Bluewater where you can shop for as long as you like without a time limit, thus spending much more money in the shops. I cannot tell you how many times I would have spent a lot more money in Sevenoaks if my parking hadn't run out and it's so extortionate that, on principal, I won't put in a great deal of money and I very often don't have enough change anyway. I can't believe the exorbitant parking charges aren't counter productive. The poor shop keepers."
- Please consider re-instating the full discount for parking for leisure centre users. The leisure centre is often poorly used and paying to use it and paying to park outside it is a further disincentive.It runs against many of the aims of the council to improve the health of the residents.
- When considering charging for parking in the council office on Saturday, please consider the number of vehicles which do not have to go into the main congested areas of Sevenoaks.
- If anything parking charges should be scrapped. If the only justification is that it pays for CCTV - then do away with CCTV.
- Rather than increasing car parking charges every year, SDC should prepare options that would show the impact of providing free short stay parking in the centre of Sevenoaks, Westerham and Swanley. These options should make it clear what savings would need to made in other areas of expenditure or what increases in Council Tax or other charges would be necessary to compensate for the loss of short stay car park revenue. Councillors could then consult with residents and vote for their preferred option.
- By allowing the onstreet parking to be three hours it will hopefully decrease the demand on the Darent carpark. Also by introducing carparking fees on the sunday, this should encourage the clubs and societies which use the Darent at the minute to look elsewhere, or contribute and not block up the carpark to people looking to shop and visit the town.

- "I have left many questions unanswered because I do not think you should increase the parking charges at all - so agree with none of the options. My argument that by keep increasing the parking fees, people will not use the town but use the out of town supermarkets and stores, thus leading to a decline in the economic activity in the town, with more shops closing etc being taken over by charity shops etc. I volunteer at both The Stag and Sevenoaks libraries, and we need to encourage people to use these facilities - not deter them by making them pay even more for parking.
- None.
- I feel any further increases on parking charges will have a detrimental affect on the high street with more potential customers opting for retail parks etc where parking is free.
- Parking in Westerham was neve a problem until charging was employed. The pressure and misuse this has placed on private carparking is enormous.
- Sevenoaks appears to take the brunt of the parking charges for other areas. I live just outside Sevenoaks in Weald and have reduced the amount of times I shop in the town because of the parking charges. For instance, I used to use the butcher on a regular basis but am know more likely to pick up my meat in Tescos. Traders in Sevenoaks need to attract more shoppers to keep the town viable. Sevenoaks appears top be doing the exact opposite of what the government suggest to attract shoppers to the town. Free up parking spaces near to the station in roads that now sit empty (bar yellow lines) - install parking meters and make some sort of charge for parking. These roads can and should be used for commuter parking if properly controlled (marked out bays and small charge). Other roads in town are now resident only and sit half empty during the day. Allow free short stay parking. Short stay means residents will find spaces and shoppers more likely to 'pop' into the town for a short visit.
- "There is another option, and that is not increasing prices at all, but finding other ways of dealing with costs. It is senseless to penalise customers of town centre businesses for spending money in town. First, it is extremely disappointing that Cllr Gary Williamson has not disclosed (that I could see) his total conflict of interest on parking charges in the town centre as he, apparently, receives free parking along side his shop. Quite what a red Mazda MX5 has to do with delivering meat I do not know; but if the argument is for his van then other traders in town are at a disadvantage as they do not receive free parking. He should either stand down or pay the same as every other business for parking in town. Only then will his contribution be fair. Second, too many parking bays are closed at any one time, e.g. South Park, by the Bus Station meaning that places are at a premium. Additionally places are lost in Blighs whilst M&S is built, and on the road opposite. That should be addressed urgently. Third, I think all parking for up to 90 minutes should be free and beyond that it can start at £1 and increase per hour; that should allow enough time for most people to conduct their business and leave without a tax on shopping"
- It is already very difficult to park in Westerham so everything should be done to encourage visitors to keep local businesses thriving. If parking charges are increased this may have a very detrimental effect on these businesses, and Westerham would lose a vital part of what makes it an interesting and lively place to live.
- I rarely use Sevenoaks town centre for shopping due to the cost of parking.

- The far end of St Marys Road, Apple Orchard area has no restriction on parking. Commuters for the Railway Station park on these narrow roads and pavements all day, sometimes all week obstructing residents access. Double yellow line are in place just before the bend but allows four vehicles to park which is dangerous, having to reverse is no fun on a bend. Parking restriction would be nice.with the shopping centre now charging for parking (not ASDA) these problem stated can only get worse, people park on double yellow line now .
- "I don't see why Westerham should get special treatment for parking. Standard charges across the district would be helpful then you would know what change to have. Charges generally do not seem to be too bad compare to other arears such as Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells,"
- I believe that the car park charges in Sevenoaks are very reasonable compared to other towns in Kent such as Tunbridge Wells. The fact that the car parks are all busy would suggest that visitors do not mind paying these charges. As a resident of Sevenoaks I do not understand why Westerham should have special treatment regarding car park charges. This survey is not very easy to following."
- Sevenoaks District Council proclaims that it support local businesses. I now choose not to go into Sevenoaks unless I have to. I can park free at other cinemas, so do not need to support Stag and for longer shopping expeditions I can park free at Bluewater. Evening charges are an insult to businesses desperate for trade and to levy them on a Sunday as well would be the death knell.
- All parking should be free after 6.30 pm. Parking charges should not be imposed just to raise revenue. After 6.30 pm there is no shortage of parking and no need to ration it by price. The only effect of evening parking charges – which Sevenoaks is the only district in Kent to levy – is to discourage evening visitors to the town centre and depress demand for the cinema and local restaurants. Parking wardens could safely leave work at 6.30 and this would save money.
- I feel strongly that for people who work in Westerham and therefore use a long term car park all day, £2.90 is quite expensive already - it's more or less a half hour of working just to pay for the car park!

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CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE AND OTHER TAX SETTING ISSUES

Cabinet – 9 January 2014

Report of the: Chief Finance Officer

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Council – 18 February 2014

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary:

This report sets out details of the calculation of the District’s tax base for council tax setting purposes. These figures are used to determine tax rates for each of the council tax bands once the Council’s budget requirement is known. The report also advises Members of the timetable for setting the 2014/15 council tax.

This report supports the Key Aim of efficient management of the Council’s resources.

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Ramsay

Contact Officer Roy Parsons. Principal Accountant – Ext 7204

Recommendation to Cabinet: That it be recommended to Council that:

- (a) the report of the Chief Finance Officer for the calculation of the Council’s tax base for the year 2014/15 be approved;
- (b) pursuant to the report of the Chief Finance Officer and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as its council tax base for the whole area for the year 2014/15 shall be 47,629.02;
- (c) pursuant to the report of the Chief Finance Officer and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by the Sevenoaks District Council as the council tax base for 2014/15 for the calculation of local precepts shall be:

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Tax Base</u>
Ash-cum-Ridley	2,379.72
Brasted	741.77
Chevening	1,433.20

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Chiddingstone	577.53
Cowden	409.91
Crockenhill	625.29
Dunton Green	855.57
Edenbridge	3,383.75
Eynsford	899.56
Farningham	600.77
Fawkham	276.45
Halstead	743.16
Hartley	2,455.79
Hever	588.95
Hextable	1,621.77
Horton Kirby & South Darent	1,253.76
Kemsing	1,791.17
Knockholt	610.99
Leigh	781.09
Otford	1,663.77
Penshurst	810.88
Riverhead	1,204.11
Seal	1,167.07
Sevenoaks Town	8,926.87
Sevenoaks Weald	606.62
Shoreham	976.02
Sundridge	901.54
Swanley	5,165.78
Westerham	1,932.18
West Kingsdown	2,243.98

- (d) any expenses incurred by the Council in performing in part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by a parish or community council or the chairman of a parish meeting shall not be treated as special expenses for the purposes of section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Reason for recommendations: As part of the tax setting process for 2014/15, the Council needs to formally approve the tax base at individual town and parish level as well as for the District as a whole.

Introduction

- 1 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under powers of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, specify formulae for calculating the council tax base which must be set between 1 December and 31 January.
- 2 The council tax base is a measure of the number of dwellings to which council tax is chargeable in an area or part of an area. It is used for the purposes of calculating a billing authority's and other precepting authorities' band D council tax.
- 3 Under the regulations, the council tax base is the aggregate of the relevant amounts calculated for each valuation band multiplied by the Council's estimated collection rate for the year.
- 4 The Council is required to calculate a tax base figure for the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) for Revenue Support Grant (RSG) purposes. This is based on the valuation list as at 9th September 2013 and occupancy information at 7th October 2013. The tax base for tax setting purposes is based on information available in December 2013. In addition, other factors may be taken into account to reflect likely changes to the tax base during 2014/15. These factors include:-
 - An allowance for changes in the amount of disabled relief
 - An allowance for changes in the number of exempt properties
 - An estimate of the number of new properties liable to council tax
 - An estimate of the number of properties ceasing to be liable to council tax
 - An allowance for changes in the number of single person discounts
 - An allowance for the effect of appeals by taxpayers on the banding of their properties
- 5 It has always been the practice to assume that these items will be self-balancing and hence no adjustment to the overall tax base was made other than the usual allowance for non-collection. Over the last few years the tax base has been rising due to new properties being built. However, the rate of increase is not significant enough to warrant a change from the self-balancing assumption.

Changes to the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme

- 6 The 2013/14 tax base includes adjustments for the effects of localising council tax support. The result is that the tax base has dropped significantly because they are now treated as a discount from the council tax rather than a benefit deduction.
- 7 From 2014/15, people of working age in receipt of CTS will have to pay a minimum of 18.5% of the council tax, rather than 8.5% in the current financial year. As a result, the tax base for 2014/15 has increased by more than would otherwise have been expected. Details appear in the following two paragraphs.

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Detailed Tax Base Calculations

- 8 The current year's tax base calculation assumes a 99.3% collection rate (reduced from 99.5% in 2012/13), which also allows for some movement in the items mentioned in Paragraph 4. The impact of the current economic downturn on the future collection rate has been assessed along with the likely effect of the changes to council tax support and it is considered prudent to maintain the assumed collection rate at 99.3% for 2014/15.
- 9 The second column of the table below sets out the number of band D equivalents based on the valuation list and occupancy information at 1st December 2013 for each parish, together with a summary for the District. The figures are then subjected to the collection rate adjustment in column 3 to arrive at the tax base for council tax setting purposes appearing in column 4. The corresponding figures for 2013/14 appear in column 5.

(1) Parish	(2) Band D Equivalents	(3) Collection Rate Multipliers	(4) Tax base 2014/15	(5) Tax base 2013/14
Ash-cum-Ridley	2,396.50	0.993	2,379.72	2,342.51
Brasted	747.00	0.993	741.77	729.63
Chevening	1,443.30	0.993	1,433.20	1,427.85
Chiddingstone	581.60	0.993	577.53	570.29
Cowden	412.80	0.993	409.91	398.28
Crockenhill	629.70	0.993	625.29	623.31
Dunton Green	861.60	0.993	855.57	806.71
Edenbridge	3,407.60	0.993	3,383.75	3,320.50
Eynsford	905.90	0.993	899.56	893.09
Farningham	605.00	0.993	600.77	594.73
Fawkham	278.40	0.993	276.45	269.51
Halstead	748.40	0.993	743.16	713.52
Hartley	2,473.10	0.993	2,455.79	2,436.35
Hever	593.10	0.993	588.95	584.92
Hextable	1,633.20	0.993	1,621.77	1,608.47
Horton Kirby & South Darenth	1,262.60	0.993	1,253.76	1,239.75
Kemsing	1,803.80	0.993	1,791.17	1,773.07
Knockholt	615.30	0.993	610.99	601.93
Leigh	786.60	0.993	781.09	778.76
Otford	1,675.50	0.993	1,663.77	1,647.13

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Penshurst	816.60	0.993	810.88	798.88
Riverhead	1,212.60	0.993	1,204.11	1,200.57
Seal	1,175.30	0.993	1,167.07	1,146.50
Sevenoaks Town	8,989.80	0.993	8,926.87	8,890.62
Sevenoaks Weald	610.90	0.993	606.62	601.48
Shoreham	982.90	0.993	976.02	958.50
Sundridge	907.90	0.993	901.54	887.81
Swanley	5,202.20	0.993	5,165.78	5,103.66
Westerham	1,945.80	0.993	1,932.18	1,892.17
West Kingsdown	2,259.80	0.993	2,243.98	2,212.39
TOTALS	47,964.80		47,629.02	47,052.88

- 10 The Council has previously resolved that its expenses are to be treated as general expenses. In addition the Council has formally to approve what are to be regarded as special expenses now that parish precepts are treated as part of the District Council's general fund and therefore its budget requirement.

Timetable for Setting the Tax

- 11 The County Council and Fire and Rescue Service have advised me of their budget meeting dates for 2014/15. Confirmation of the Police & Crime Commissioner's budget meeting date is awaited:

County Council	13th February 2014
Police & Crime Commissioner	Expected by 8th February 2014
Fire and Rescue Service	11th February 2014

- 12 The council tax for the Sevenoaks area cannot be set before the Fire, Police or County precepts have been ratified. There are several dates laid down in regulations on, or by which, certain tasks in relation to the budget process and tax setting have to be carried out. These key dates appear in the Appendix.
- 13 As part of the tax setting process, the Council is required to make an estimate of the collection fund surplus or deficit at 15th January 2014 or the first working day after this, for the year ending 31st March 2014.
- 14 The amount of any surplus or deficit which a billing authority estimates in its collection fund will not remain in the collection fund but will be shared and taken into account by both billing and major precepting authorities in calculating their basic amounts of council tax for 2014/15.
- 15 In estimating any surplus or deficit, items relating to community charge will not be taken into account. These are to remain with the billing authority and will be taken into account by it in calculating its basic amount of council tax for the year.

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- 16 An authority's share of any surplus or deficit relating to council tax is to be in the same proportion as its demand bears to the total demand and precepts on the collection fund for 2013/14. Payment is to be made during 2014/15 on the same dates as precept payments.

Key Implications

Financial

- 17 There are no financial implications.

Community Impact and Outcomes

- 18 There are no community impacts arising from this report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

- 19 Calculation of the tax base for the District is a statutory requirement. The information is used by other authorities in setting their precepts. The actual tax base will vary during the year as new properties are built and exemptions and discounts are granted or withdrawn. Any difference in the revenue raised to that needed to pay precepts remains in the collection fund to be distributed to or collected from major precepting authorities in the following year.

Equality Impacts

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Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The recommendation is concerned with setting the council tax base for the District and does not directly impact upon a service provided to the community.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	No	
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		No mitigating steps are required.

Conclusions

- 21 Members are asked to approve the calculation of the District's tax base for council tax setting purposes and to note the timetable for setting the 2014/15 council tax.

Appendices: Appendix A – Key dates in the council tax setting process

Background Papers: None

**Adrian Rowbotham
Chief Finance Officer**

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APPENDIX A

KEY DATES IN THE COUNCIL TAX SETTING PROCESS

- | | | |
|-------|---|--|
| i) | By 18th October 2013 | Notify tax base for grant settlement purposes to Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) |
| ii) | During December 2013 | DCLG notifies schedule of payment dates for Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Non-Domestic Rates (NDR). DCLG notifies the NDR multiplier (rate in £) for 2014/15 |
| iii) | By 31st December 2013 | Issue proposed schedule of payment dates to precepting authorities |
| iv) | By 31st January 2014 | Agree actual schedule of precept payment dates |
| v) | Between 1st December 2013 and 31st January 2014 | Notify tax base for tax setting purposes to KCC, Fire & Rescue Service and Police & Crime Commissioner |
| vi) | On 15th January 2014 | Estimate collection fund surplus or deficit for year and calculate the amount to be shared between SDC, KCC, Fire and Police (where applicable) |
| vii) | By 22nd January 2014 | Notify KCC, Fire and Police of their shares of the surplus or deficit and when amounts are to be paid or transferred during 2014/15 (where applicable) |
| viii) | During January and February 2014 | Notify Town/Parish Councils of tax bases for their areas within 10 days of them making such a request |
| ix) | During February 2014 | DCLG notifies entitlements and payment dates of Formula Spending Share (FSS), RSG and NDR |
| x) | By 1st March 2014 | KCC, Fire & Rescue Service, Police & Crime Commissioner and Town/Parish Councils issue their precepts |
| xi) | By 11th March 2014 | District sets council tax for 2014/15, taking account of its own budget requirement and those of the precepting authorities |